

McMaster University

SENATE MINUTES

VOL. LXXXV

Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 3:30 p.m.

Zoom

PRESENT: Dr. David Farrar, Dr. Anna Danielova, Dr. Carlos Filipe, Dr. Dina Brooks, Dr. Doug Welch, Dr. Graham Scott, Dr. Ishwar Puri, Dr. Janie Astephen-Wilson, Dr. Jeff Weitz, Dr. Jeremiah Hurley, Dr. Judy Fudge, Dr. Juliet Daniel, Dr. Karen Mossman, Dr. Katherine Cuff, Dr. Kathryn Mattison, Dr. Kim Dej, Dr. Laura Parker, Dr. Leonard Waverman, Dr. Lia Bronsard, Dr. Lorraine Carter, Dr. Maikel Rheinstadter, Dr. Martin Horn, Dr. Matthew Miller, Dr. Maureen MacDonald, Dr. Megan Brinkley, Dr. Nicola Nicolici, Dr. Nikolai Penner, Dr. Pamela Baxter, Dr. Pamela Swett, Dr. Patrick Bennett, Dr. Peter Miu, Dr. Peter Graefe, Dr. Sherman Cheung, Dr. Susan Tighe, Dr. Todd Hoare, Mr. Dalue Tang, Mr. Gary Collins, Mr. Jim McCaughey, Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, Mr. Roger Couldrey, , Ms Anita Acai, Ms Haleigh Wallace, Ms Beth Manganelli Staite, Ms Leah Allan, Ms Manisha Pahwa, Ms Mary Williams, Ms Moira Taylor, Ms Andrea Thyret-Kidd (University Secretary), Ms Michelle Zheng (Associate University Secretary), Ms Alysha Sless (Governance Coordinator)

OBSERVERS: Ms Andrea Farquhar, Ms. Carolyn Brendon, Dr. Elkafi Hassini, Ms Esme Davies, Ms Maanvi Dhillon, Ms Melissa Pool, Dr. Peter Mascher, Dr. Sandra Carroll, Mr. Sean Van Koughnett, Dr. Susan Denburg, Ms Vivian Lewis

REGRETS RECEIVED: Dr. Christina Baade, Ms Cassidy Bereskin, Dr. Melinda Gough

A. OPEN SESSION

OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Farrar welcomed everyone to the meeting and to the new academic year. Dr. Farrar noted the different kind of summer we all had and the very different Fall term and thanked everyone for their support and commitment as we continue to work through all the challenges facing us.

Dr. Farrar welcomed the following new Senators:

- *Dr. Anna Danielova, Ms Alyaa Abdelhalim, Faculty of Business*
- *Dr. Todd Hoare, Mr. Dalue Tang, Faculty of Engineering*
- *Dr. Melinda Gough, Dr. Nikolai Penner, Faculty of Humanities*
- *Dr. Peter Graefe, Dr. James Gillett, Faculty of Social Sciences*
- *Dr. Graham Scott, Dr. Maikel Rheinstadter, Dr. Lia Bronsard, Ms Haleigh Wallace, Faculty of Science*
- *Dr. Matthew Miller, Dr. Jeff Weitz, Faculty of Health Sciences*

Dr. Farrar reminded Senators that at the last meeting he spoke about the concrete actions and plans that the University is putting in place to support Black faculty, staff and students and to address systemic racism. This work has continued over the summer with the senior leadership of the University all invested in mobilizing and accelerating McMaster's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and 2019-2022 Action Plan as a key priority. Dr. Farrar noted that amongst other things the University leadership has engaged with the African & Caribbean Faculty Association of McMaster (ACFAM) and is working through a series of initiatives to address systemic institutional racism, as well as to enhance the climate for Black students, staff and scholars. Dr. Farrar reminded Senators that at the last meeting he noted that in response to serious concerns raised about racism within Athletics and Recreation, the University had commissioned an externally led review of the Black student-athlete experience at McMaster that is examining the culture within Marauder Athletics. That review is progressing well, with the interview phase complete, and the report expected within the next few weeks. The report will be provided to Mr. Sean Van Koughnett as Dean of Students and will also be posted publicly. The University is committed to taking action in response to any recommendations from the report as quickly as possible.

Dr. Farrar advised Senators of the Scholar Strike for Black Lives in Canada, which some members of the community are participating in today and tomorrow. The event was highlighted on the University's Daily News page over the weekend and includes a full program of digital teach-ins and other events intended to raise awareness about anti-Black racism and advocacy for change. As noted in the Daily News post, scholars are instrumental in advocating for and helping to construct solutions to these most pressing social issues. Dr. Farrar noted that we all have a role to play, so he would encourage Senators to review the EDI Strategy and Action Plan, and continue to consider the ways that we can challenge our own approaches and actions in eliminating systemic racism.

Following the agreed pause on finalizing the SMA3 documents, the Ministry decided over the summer that they needed to have the documents finalized and signed by August 31. The documents are the same as those reviewed and discussed at Senate earlier in the year, save that we were able to include a 100-word summary of the impact of COVID-19 on our operations. The Provost's Office worked through all the technical details and metrics to review the impact on the University and we have now signed off on the document. The signed version will be posted shortly on the President's and Provost's websites.

Dr. Farrar informed Senators of the recently announced launch of The Global Nexus for Pandemics and Biological Threats. This is intended as a pan-institutional initiative engaging McMaster experts from across all Faculties to help ensure that Canada and the world are better able to manage the human and economic devastation of COVID-19 and avert future pandemics. The goal is to position McMaster as a leader in this area, breakdown barriers between disciplines and provide huge positive societal impact. More information will follow as the detailed planning gets underway but any researchers interested in participating or in engaging with this work should speak to their Dean in the first instance.

Dr. Farrar reminded Senators that he is looking out to the future and thinking about the long-term vision for McMaster. A number of Senators have already been engaged in consultations around this and next week we will be launching a social media campaign asking for input on McMaster's long-term vision and the most important societal issues we should be seeking to address. Senators and all members of the McMaster community are encouraged to participate and provide feedback to this important discussion.

1 APPROVAL OF AGENDA – OPEN SESSION

Dr. Farrar confirmed that no requests had been received to move items from the Consent to the Regular agenda of the Open Session.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve the Open Session agenda for the meeting of September 9, 2020 and that items 2 and 3 be approved or received by Consent.

The motion was **carried**.

CONSENT

2 MINUTES of the Meeting of July 8, 2020 – Open Session

Motion:

that the minutes of the Open Session portion of the meeting held on July 8, 2020 be approved as circulated.

Approved by Consent.

3 COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Introduction to Senate – Senate Primer and Confidentiality
- b. Senate Meeting Schedule for 2020-21
- c. Senate Membership List for 2020-21
- d. Senate Committee List for 2020-21

Received by Consent.

REGULAR

4 BUSINESS ARISING

- a. **Covid-19 Update from Associate Vice-President (Students and Learning) and Dean of Students Follow-Up**

This item was for information.

5 ENQUIRIES

There were no enquiries.

6 COMMUNICATIONS**a. COVID-19 Update from Acting Vice-Provost, Faculty**

Dr. Kim Dej, Acting Vice-Provost, Faculty provided an update. Dr. Dej thanked the dozens of individuals involved in enabling things to happen. Twenty-four courses are hosting in person components. The Return to Work Group, facilities, libraries, human resources, and the whole campus are preparing spaces and ensuring that students adhere to safety protocols. Dr. Dej explained that an Ad Hoc group is looking at experiential learning and how students can be engaged in a remote environment. Dr. Dej thanked the Ad Hoc group looking at online proctoring tools. Their assessment will be made available to the McMaster community. Dr. Dej thanked everyone involved in the processes.

b. COVID-19 Update from Vice-President, Research

Dr. Karen Mossman, Vice-President, Research provided an update. Dr. Mossman thanked everyone involved across campus. The roll out for on campus research was smooth with no major issues. The next phase allowed for increases in some activities such as training of new graduate and undergraduate students. Dr. Mossman added they are appreciative to researchers for getting back to our new normal, and they are starting to see some new activities on campus. Provincial Ministers made an announcement on campus regarding funding. Dr. Mossman noted it was great to see funding come in and to host some of our provincial government colleagues.

Dr. Welch explained that he did not submit a written report as many items were still in flux. The main issues of uncertainty have been the arrival of international students. At least a dozen students have arrived at campus and are quarantining. Dr. Welch noted that they have been conversing with MCU who have been clarifying what their rules for a safe return to campus will be. The University is working hard to respond to these bits of information, but it is still the case that we have not reached an approved arrangement. Students are being welcomed virtually and the University is waiting for the travel ban to be lifted.

Dr. Welch advised that there was a decline in the overall enrolment figures with 5,038 enrolling this year compared to 5,254 last year. There tends to be a decrease of 5-10% depending on the faculty. Some of the gap will be students that will enrol late.

Mr. Van Koughnett explained that most international students are now here and studying or staying overseas. Nineteen international undergraduates have arrived and two thirds are staying in residence. McMaster is paying for their quarantine stay to

encourage them to quarantine. Mr. Van Koughnett explained that there are a lot of questions of uncertainty around enrolment figures. Looking at Level 1, there is uncertainty around the family's ability to invest in education, the economy and deferrals. Level 1 registration is up 18% over last year. 7,100 students have enrolled this year and 95% of those that accepted in June have enrolled. Visa registration is up 25% over last year. There were 70 deferrals last year and 108 this year, which is still within ordinary range. There have been conversations over course registrations which are up over last year. Mr. Van Koughnett noted the next admission cycle will provide a number of challenges and international recruitment poses challenges.

A member asked which programs saw a decrease in enrolment. Mr. Van Koughnett advised that some programs in the social sciences decreased but they do not have a breakdown yet. Enrolment numbers will be finalized after the November 1st count.

A member asked where enrolment has increased. Mr. Van Koughnett explained that Science and Life Sciences has seen an increase. Dr. MacDonald advised that they are over their planned enrolment increase in Life Sciences and Kinesiology, and slightly over their target in Math and Stats. Some of the increase had already been planned in the targets. Dr. Waverman noted that the Bachelor of Commerce is up 15%. Dr. Hurley noted that Level 1 registration is up in all programs in Social Sciences and that actual course registration is down. Dr. Swett noted that Humanities is up a bit over target in Level 1. Dr. Denburg noted that Bachelor of Health Science is up. Dr. Puri explained that they do block registration, so their numbers are unknown until the students show up. If all enrolled students show up, they will be over by 30%. Dr. Carroll noted that Nursing is up 10%. Dr. MacDonald advised that the combined impact of Level 1 business and Level 1 engineering, together with science, results in substantial increases in sciences courses that are taken by all three groups of students. The cumulative effect is that there will be an additional 800 students for some courses than what was planned. Dr. Dej noted that Arts and Science is up 15%. Dr. Carter noted that enrolment for adult education is 10% higher than targets.

c. COVID-19 Update from Provost and Vice-President, Academic

Dr. Susan Tighe, Provost and Vice-President, Academic provided an update. Dr. Tighe advised that they have formed a small task group that has representation from different areas of campus to look at winter 2021 planning. The group has met once and is meeting today. They are working to gather information to make a decision and broadly communicate it. The group is working to balance a number of issues that have come forward and will provide an announcement by the end of September.

A member asked for an idea of what the group is deciding and whether they are waiting for the government to make a decision. Dr. Tighe advised that they are receiving information from Public Health and ensuring that they are following what is recommended. Dr. Tighe noted that it is fair to say there is not going to be a dramatic shift back to a large number of individuals on campus. They are reviewing courses that had on campus components or labs that were shifted to winter term.

A member noted that on the first day of classes there were a lot of glitches. The member noted that it is difficult to have interactions and to cover material as they normally do. Dr. Tighe noted that she understands and hopes that everyone can share best practices. The university wants to deliver a high quality education and experience. Dr. Farrar added that it has been a complex year and recognizes the extreme situation.

A student senator noted that there is a lot of negativity from students and that they are not enjoying the online aspect. They understand it is a matter of public safety but would rather be on campus with professors.

A member asked if there have been any discussions with U15 about changing requirements to obtain a professional degree. The member noted that students have a sense that they have to take a full course load and wondered whether the U15 leaders are discussing this topic. Students are stressed about taking five courses to go to law school or medical school, and unless those schools change the requirements, the stress will continue. Dr. Farrar advised that it has not been on the agenda for the U15 presidents. Dr. Denburg noted that she is unaware of changes to admissions to medical school. They are focusing on trying to meet the requirements of clinical placements and equity. Dr. Farrar noted that the U15 presidents do not meet that often but he will raise the concerns with the group of 6. Dr. Dej agreed that there are external changes that need to be made. Changes to OSAP is being discussed at the ministry level, and internally at McMaster they are thinking about the expectation of 5 courses per term. They are moving to increase the number of course in the spring, and to identify core courses that could be offered in the spring/summer so that students could spread courses more evenly throughout the year. Dr. Dej advised that they are trying to do things internally to enable students to make choices. Dr. MacDonald noted that this topic came up at a COU meeting in the summer and that she would bring it up again.

d. Preliminary Enrolment Figures

This item was discussed under the COVID-19 Update from Vice-President, Research.

7 OTHER BUSINESS

A member questioned why McMaster and other Canadian universities did not close for half a day so that individuals could attend the Scholars Strike. The member noted that for the strike to be impactful, all universities should have closed instead of leaving it up to the individuals to attend. Dr. Farrar explained that they decided it to allow individuals to decide if they wanted to go on. The university acknowledged the strike, posted information, and left it with individuals to make their own decision.