

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SENATE

VOL.CXIX

Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at 3:30 p.m., Council Chambers, Gilmour Hall 111

PRESENT: David Farrar (Chair), Ahmed Abdalla, Maxwell Altman, Nathan Andrews, Paul Andrews, Hfsa Awan, James Benn, Mark Boda, Dina Brooks, Narat Charupat, Kim Dej, Wael El-Dakhkhni, Claudia Emerson, Saher Fazilat, Carlos Filipe, Saara Greene, Khaled Hassanein, Faiza Hirji, Steve Hranilovic, Jeremiah Hurley, Suleiman Igdoura, Alfonso Iorio, Manish Kacker, Andy Knights, Sarrah Lal, Siying Lu, Graeme Luke, Sanamdeep Matharu, Michael McGillion, John Medcof, Rick Monture, Brenda O'Connor, Heva Olfman, Joëlle Papillon, Pau Pujolas, Stacey Ritz, Kalai Saravanamuttu, Heather Sheardown, Chris Sinding, Stephanie Springgay, Pamela Swett, Susan Tighe, Brenda Vrkljan, Mark Walton, Zimo Wang, Renae Watchman, Kerry Yang
Andrea Thyret-Kidd (*University Secretary*), Michelle Zheng (*Associate University Secretary*), Alysha Sless (*Assistant University Secretary*)

REGRETS: Lili Litwin, Paul O'Byrne, Dennis Souder, Jeff Weitz, Margaret Zanel, Eugenia Zuroski

OBSERVERS: Catherine Anderson, Monique Beech, Carolyn Brendon, Sandra Carroll, Rosa da Silva, Matheus Grasselli, Bonny Ibhawoh, Vivian Lewis, Jack Mah, Elisabeth Marquis, Karen Richmond, Sarah Robinson, Sean Van Koughnett, Rob Walters

OPEN SESSION

David Farrar welcomed members to the meeting and acknowledged that we meet today on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations and within the lands protected by the Dish with One Spoon wampum agreement.

D. Farrar followed up on the remarks from the December Senate meeting where Senators were encouraged to work together to re-set the tone of meetings, engage with one another respectfully, and allow space for other voices to speak. Along with these important objectives, as Chair, D. Farrar has an obligation to ensure that good use is made of the Senate's time and that agenda items are addressed properly. The Senate By-Laws outline the meeting procedures so that the Senate can fulfill its responsibilities in an efficient and respectful manner. D. Farrar reminded Senators that questions should be directed through the Chair and to be efficient with their remarks.

As Chair, D. Farrar is responsible for ensuring that the meetings are held in a way that conforms with the by-laws. This includes maintaining order and limiting discussion to items relevant to the mandate of Senate. In accordance with the by-laws, the agenda and materials are prepared and distributed in advance of the meeting so that all Senators have the opportunity to review the materials and prepare for the meeting. It is difficult for Senators and University Administration to have a constructive conversation when topics are unexpectedly presented on the floor of Senate or are not connected with the mandate of Senate. Members of the University community may request an appearance before the Senate by submitting their request with the presentation materials to the Secretary. When such a request is made, D. Farrar has directed the Secretary to ensure that any request to appear aligns with the mandate of Senate. Where it does not, the

Secretary will redirect the request to the appropriate office or governance body. The work of Senate is important and time sensitive, and the matters before Senate must be dealt with within the allotted time.

D. Farrar noted that he looks forward to Senators continuing to engage in discussion on agenda items and reiterated that the Secretariat is always available to respond to questions from Senators, direct enquiries about specific agenda items to relevant offices, and advise on governance processes and procedures.

D. Farrar encouraged Senators to take advantage of the expertise and support that is available.

The impact of the Israel/Hamas war continues to be felt by many members of our community, and we have heard from many who have been impacted. As we begin a new academic term, D. Farrar reiterated McMaster's steadfast commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all members of our community. Each of us has a role in creating safe, supportive work and learning environments, and D. Farrar reminded everyone on our campus to act with compassion, and carefully consider the impact that their words and actions can have on members of our community. We will not tolerate Antisemitism, Anti-Palestinian racism, Islamophobia, harassment, racism or discrimination at McMaster.

D. Farrar noted that they are continuing to meet with Jewish, Palestinian, and Muslim student groups and leadership, including McMaster Hillel, the McMaster Muslim Student Association and the Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights student group, to provide support. A range of additional supports have also been put in place to support the physical and psychological safety and well-being of our community, including the hiring of a Jewish counsellor and a Muslim counsellor through the Student Wellness Centre.

This month, the Equity and Inclusion Office, in partnership with Student Affairs, the Faculty of Health Sciences, and Employee and Labour Relations, are launching a series of webinars focused on inclusion, belonging, effective intragroup dialogue, and human rights. Information about the webinars can be found on the Daily News

D. Farrar noted that he has announced that his tenure as president will conclude when his current 5-year term ends on June 30, 2025. This news was shared now because the Committee for Recommending a President will begin meeting next week and at McMaster, presidents are asked to provide notice of whether they intention to seek another term 18 months before their current term concludes. D. Farrar stated that it has been an incredible privilege to be McMaster's president and emphasized that there is still much to do between now and June 2025, including undertaking a process to refresh McMaster's Strategic Plan, along with continuing to move forward a number of other important priorities. When D. Farrar's terms ends, he will be able to spend more time on his research and other pursuits. Until then, D. Farrar looks forward to continuing to work with everyone.

D. Farrar reported that Paul O'Byrne, *Dean and Vice-President, Faculty of Health Sciences*, has been appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada. P. O'Byrne is a world-renowned respirologist whose research focuses on the mechanisms and treatments of asthma, particularly the role of environmental allergens. This honour is a testament to his extraordinary dedication to research and clinical excellence, as well as his deep care for his patients. D. Farrar congratulated P. O'Byrne.

Members were informed that a federal judge recently upheld the denial of a student visa to a prospective Ph.D. candidate from China on the grounds that the student could be pressured into spying by the Chinese Government. The student had applied to a Ph.D. program in mechanical engineering at the University of

Waterloo. Going forward, we can expect more of these cases, and this could have significant impacts across Canada's post-secondary sector. D. Farrar explained that they are monitoring this issue closely to assess how cases like this – coupled with the federal government's increasing focus on research security overall – could impact our research programs and international student recruitment.

D. Farrar explained that the Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRACT) was announced by the federal government yesterday and invited Andy Knights, *Acting Vice-President, Research*, to speak to the policy. A. Knights explained that the policy includes a list of research topics and subjects plus entities. It is available through the federal government website and is posted on McMaster's research security page. A. Knights noted that the list is more comprehensive than they expected, and staff are working through the information. Specific feedback will be communicated shortly, and the priority is to support faculty members in accessing research funding.

1. Approval of Agenda – Open Session

D. 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 the Senate approve the Open Session agenda for the meeting of January 17, 2024 and that item 2 be approved by Consent.

The motion was **Carried**.

CONSENT

2. Minutes of the Meeting of December 13, 2023 – Open Session

Motion:

that the minutes of the Open Session of the meeting held on December 13, 2023 be approved as circulated.

Approved by Consent.

REGULAR

3. Business Arising

There was no business arising.

4. Enquiries

D. Farrar advised that two Senators contacted the Secretariat with concerns arising from the last meeting.

A Senator re-raised their enquiry from the December meeting and noted that not all aspects were addressed. The member raised concerns with an email that was sent to select Senators recommending who to vote for in the Senate elections for representatives on the Committee to Recommend a President. The member expressed that Senators have a right to convey to their Senate colleagues their views and voting preferences, but the email went beyond that and was sent by an individual who is also a member of the McMaster University Faculty Associate (MUFA) Executive. The member suggested that Senate consider developing principles or guidelines that would help guide behaviour in the future.

Another Senator noted that their enquiry was on the same item, expressed that they had similar concerns, and that they supported the proposed recommendation to develop a set of principles or guidelines for elections.

Senators discussed many aspects of the situation including: one member who felt the email was not influential, while other Senators questioned the timing of the email, perception with who the email was from due to the author being the Vice-President of MUFA, concerns if Senators do not think the work of the Senate Committee on Appointments is valid, agreement that guidelines would be helpful, concerns that the email recommended not voting for some candidates, and concerns with the impact on collegiality and democratic elections. The author of the email explained the email was sent in their capacity as a Senator and not as the Vice-President of MUFA, stated the email did not violate any rules, and spoke to the importance of free speech.

D. Farrar concluded that the By-Laws Committee would consider the suggestion of guidelines.

5. **Communications**

1. **Letter from Dr. Watts**

This item was for information and was addressed during enquiries.

2. **Report from the Provost**

Susan Tighe, *Provost & Vice-President (Academic)*, presented the report.

S. Tighe shared a presentation and provided members with an update on advocacy work and the budget framework. Senators learned that McMaster is one of two institutions operating in a surplus, however financial challenges include reduced undergraduate enrolment and reducing discretionary spending. S. Tighe also highlighted three working groups which included the Indigenous Ancestry Verification Working Group, Community Partners Finance Working Group and the OMBUDS Working Group.

In response to a question concerning McMaster's risk margin, S. Tighe explained that McMaster benefits from an activity based funding model that promotes transparency. McMaster has a senior team that is very engaged, and discussions are regularly held around alternative revenue sources and risks.

A Senator acknowledged the hard work and asked how to reduce operating costs while enhancing faculty recruitment. S. Tighe explained that McMaster is one of the few schools with a surplus because we tend to have a higher student to faculty ratio and other institutions are looking at faculty reductions and layoffs. In terms of faculty recruitment, McMaster is competitive in salaries and offers.

This item was for information.

6. Report from Graduate Council

1. Faculty of Health Sciences – Calendar Copy Revisions

This report was for information.

Steve Hranilovic, *Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies*, advised that the task force on graduate funding work is still underway and they are anticipating to have the report available shortly.

7. Report from Undergraduate Council

Kim Dej, *Chair of Undergraduate Council*, presented the report.

1. Major Curriculum Revisions for Inclusion in the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Calendar

- a. Faculty of Health Sciences
- b. Faculty of Social Sciences
- c. Faculty of Science

K. Dej explained that at its December 12, 2023 meeting, the Undergraduate Council reviewed and approved the following major changes for inclusion in the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Calendar:

- the name change of the Honours Biochemistry-Biomedical Research Specialization Co-op to the Honours Biochemistry Co-op
- the major modification of the three-year Combined Indigenous Studies and Another Subject B.A. to a three-year Indigenous Studies B.A., which includes the name change
- major revisions to admission requirements for entry into Level II Social Work programs
- the establishment of the Honours Kinesiology Co-op as a major modification to Honours Kinesiology

An omnibus motion was proposed for the major curriculum revisions.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the Senate approve all major curriculum revisions and changes to admission requirements for inclusion in the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Calendar, as circulated.

The motion was **Carried**.

Motion:

that the Senate approve the change in name of Honours Biochemistry- Biomedical Research Specialization Co-op to the Honours Biochemistry Co-op for inclusion in the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Calendar, as circulated.

Approved by omnibus motion.

Motion:

that the Senate approve the major modification of the Combined Indigenous Studies and Another Subject B.A. to an Indigenous Studies B.A., which includes the name change, for inclusion in the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Calendar, and as circulated.

Approved by omnibus motion.

Motion:

that the Senate approve the revisions to admission requirements for inclusion in the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Calendar, as circulated.

Approved by omnibus motion.

Motion:

that the Senate approve the establishment of the Honours Kinesiology Co-op as a major modification to Honours Kinesiology for inclusion in the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Calendar, and as circulated.

Approved by omnibus motion.

2. Minor Curriculum Revisions and Calendar Submissions for Inclusion in the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Calendar

This item was for information.

3. Sessional Dates for 2024-2025

This item was for information.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.