

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SENATE

### VOL. CXXXV

Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., via Zoom Videoconference

**PRESENT:** Jeremiah Hurley (Chair), Maxwell Altman, Sonia Anand, Catherine Anderson, Paul Andrews, Hfsa Awan, James Benn, Kusum Bhatta, Mark Boda, Blaise Bourdin, Dina Brooks, Arlene Dosen, David Farrar, Saher Fazilat, Carlos Filipe, James Gillett, Khaled Hassanein, Melanie Heath, Faiza Hirji, Suleiman Igdoura, Alfonso Iorio, Manish Kacker, Andy Knights, Lili Litwin, Graeme Luke, Sanamdeep Matharu, Michael McGillion, Neil McLaughlin, Alex Mourtiopoulos, Cameron Nolan, Joëlle Papillon, Stacey Ritz, Heather Sheardown, Shahram Shirani, Dennis Souder, Pamela Swett, Brenda Vrkljan, Zimo Wang, Renae Watchman, Kerry Yang, Andrea Thyret-Kidd (*University Secretary*), Michelle Zheng (*Associate University Secretary*), Alysha Sless (*Assistant University Secretary*)

**REGRETS:** Juanita Debarros, Saara Greene, Steve Hranilovic, Paul O'Byrne, Gianni Parise, Tracy Prowse, Kalai Saravanamuttu, Rachelle Sabourin, Jeff Weitz, Margaret Zanel

**GUESTS:** Sukhvinder Obhi, *Associate Vice-President, Research for Society & Impact*  
Amy Gullage, *Lead Educational Developer, Curriculum Development*  
Jake Nease, *Budget Committee Chair*  
Lou Mitton, *Controller*  
Omer Ahmed, *Associate Vice-President and Chief Financial Office*

**OBSERVERS:** Carolyn Brendon, Sandra Carroll, Rosa da Silva, David Estok, Darran Fernandez, Matheus Grasselli, Martin Horn, Bonny Ibhawoh, Vivian Lewis, Elisabeth Marquis, Melissa Pool, Piper Plavins, Sean Van Koughnett, Rob Walters, Sarah Wojkowski

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### OPEN SESSION

Jerry Hurley, *Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic)*, informed members that David Farrar, *President & Vice-Chancellor*, is ill and has asked J. Hurley to chair on his behalf.

D. Farrar welcomed everyone 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 thanked members for their support, and for their contributions to the university over his time as President.

D. Farrar noted that these past five years have brought significant and unprecedented challenges to McMaster and to the entire post-secondary sector. From the COVID-19 pandemic to global geopolitical events, to the advancement of AI to the financial challenges facing our sector, the past few years haven't always been easy. While we have faced challenges, we have also moved McMaster forward in important ways.

D. Farrar recognized some of McMaster's collective achievements including taking important steps toward embracing a culture of inclusive excellence across the university. Guided by the recommendations of Black faculty, staff and students, we implemented a number of initiatives to support Black academic and research excellence at McMaster, including the Black Student Success Centre, the Black Scholar Cohort hiring initiative, and the Black Student Mentorship Program. We also became a signatory to the Scarborough Charter on anti-racism and served as the Canadian co-lead of the Canada-Caribbean Institute. Thanks to the leadership of Indigenous faculty, staff and students, we also took critical steps to advance Indigenous scholarship and advance Truth and Reconciliation through key initiatives such as the creation of the Indigenous Studies Department and master's program in Indigenous Studies, the Indigenous student bursary, and the creation of a new Vice-Provost, Indigenous position.

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, McMaster established Global Nexus to accelerate vaccine research and support Canada's pandemic response. Our researchers were the first to isolate the SARS CoV 2 virus, and to develop a new inhaled vaccine, now in phase 2 clinical trials. Now we are using AI to identify new antibiotics to fight the world's most dangerous pathogens. All these are truly ground-breaking accomplishments. We invested in nuclear education and research and secured significant government investment in the McMaster Nuclear Reactor including more than \$20M to support the 24/7 production of medical isotopes, which are used to treat more than 70,000 cancer patients a year worldwide.

To transform our campus into a living laboratory for sustainability, we launched and are implementing McMaster's first ever sustainability strategy and net-zero carbon roadmap. Other initiatives have been developed, including embedding sustainability into the new campus plan, installing geothermal and working with community and Indigenous partners to protect and restore the Cootes to Escarpment Eco-Park system that surrounds our campus. Together, we have strengthened our long-standing global reputation for teaching excellence by continuing to develop new strategies and programs that support digital learning and the implementation of generative AI into our teaching practices. As well as growing experiential learning opportunities and supporting leadership education, such as the establishment of the Wilson College of Leadership and Civic Engagement, which welcomes its first cohort this fall.

Building on McMaster's long history of discovery, we have strengthened McMaster's innovation ecosystem through introducing new programs like the Marnix E. Heersink School of Biomedical Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the McMaster Seed Fund, and the Entrepreneurship Academy, which support faculty and students as they launch startups and commercialize their research. This ecosystem helped support McMaster's

first unicorn, Fusion Pharmaceutical, located in the Innovation Park and which was acquired by AnstraZeneca for \$2B US. These achievements represent just a small fraction of what we have accomplished collectively over the past five years. None of this would have been possible without the dedication and commitment of Senate, senior leaders, faculty, staff and students across McMaster.

D. Farrar highlighted that there have also been extensive discussions at Senate about the role of a university in promoting freedom of expression. The purpose of a university is to support the spirit of inquiry, to provide space for and safeguard the widest possible expression of ideas and opinions, and to promote open discussion and the exchange of views, even though those views may be painful for some to hear and may challenge existing positions. Universities are places where ideas are shaped, debated and exchanged.

D. Farrar expressed that as we prepare for transition on July 1, he believes that the university has built a strong foundation that will enable McMaster under the leadership of incoming president, Susan Tighe, to explore unbelievable opportunities and achieve incredible accomplishments. D. Farrar added that it has been an immense privilege to serve McMaster University as President, and he is deeply grateful to everyone for all that they have done to support him, and to move McMaster forward.

J. Hurley thanked D. Farrar for his leadership and six years of service.

The following retiring and resigning Senators were acknowledged:

- Faculty of Business: Narat Charupat, Siying Lu
- Faculty of Engineering: Mohamed Ezzeldin, Jialiang Hu
- Faculty of Humanities: Joëlle Papillon, Claudia Emerson, Juanita Debarros, Hfsa Awan
- Faculty of Social Sciences: Neil McLaughlin, Renae Watchman, James Benn, Zimo Wang
- Faculty of Science: Suleiman Igdoura, Maxwell Altman
- Faculty of Health Sciences: Dina Brooks, Alfonso Iorio, Kerry Yang, Sanamdeep Matharu
- Board Representative: Brenda Vrkljan
- Alumni Representative: Cameron Nolan
- Ex-Officio: David Farrar, Catherine Anderson

Senators were informed that a Senate Survey will be circulated this week. The intention is to gather anonymous feedback from members on how Senate has operated and to improve effectiveness.

## **1. Approval of Agenda – Open Session**

J. Hurley confirmed that no requests had been received to move any items from 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 June 11, 2025 and that items 2 through 4 be approved or received by Consent.**

The motion was **Carried**.

**CONSENT**

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – May 14, 2025 (Open Session)**

Motion:

**that the minutes of the Open Session of the meeting held on May 14, 2025 be approved as circulated.**

**Approved** by Consent.

**3. Report from the University Planning Committee**

**a. Report from Student Affairs**

**Received** by Consent.

**4. Report from the Committee on Appointments**

**a. Terms of Reference**

1. Revised Terms of Reference and Name Change – Dorothy C. Hall Chair in Primary Health Care Nursing

Motion:

**that Senate approve, for recommendation to the Board of Governors, revised terms of reference for the Dorothy C. Hall Chair in Primary Health Care Nursing and the name change to Dorothy C. Hall Chair in Nursing Research, as circulated.**

**Approved** by Consent.

2. Revised Terms of Reference – David Braley and Nancy Gordon Chair in Family Medicine

Motion:

**that Senate approve, for recommendation to the Board of Governors, the revised terms of reference for the David Braley and Nancy Gordon Chair in Family Medicine, as circulated.**

**Approved** by Consent.

3. Revised Terms of Reference and Name Change – Farncombe Family Chair in Microbial Ecology and Bioinformatics

Motion:

**that Senate approve, for recommendation to the Board of Governors, the revised terms of reference for the Farncombe Family Chair in Microbial Ecology and Bioinformatics and the name change to Farncombe Family Chair in Microbiota and Gastrointestinal Motility, as circulated.**

**Approved** by Consent.

## **REGULAR**

### **5. Business Arising**

There was no business arising.

### **6. Enquiries**

There were no enquiries.

### **7. Communications**

#### **a. Institutional Quality Assurance Process Cyclical Program Reviews (IQAP)**

1. 2024 IQAP Reviews
2. 2023 IQAP Reviews

Catherine Anderson, *Acting Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning*, and Melanie Heath, *Acting Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies*, presented the report.

C. Anderson explained that some of the reviews included in the report were from several years ago. The self-studies and site visits took place at the appropriate times however the reporting through governance process was missed.

This item was for information.

### **8. Report from Graduate Council**

Melanie Heath, *Acting Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies*, presented the Report.

At its meeting on May 13, 2025, Graduate Council approved the following items:

**a. New Graduate Academic Certificates**

1. Graduate Certificate in Data Science, Applied AI & Organizational Leadership

M. Heath noted that this is the first non-degree academic certificate of this kind.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the establishment of the new Graduate Academic Certificate in Data Science, Applied AI, & Organizational Leadership, as circulated.**

The motion was **Carried**.

**b. Curriculum Revisions**

1. Faculty of Health Sciences – Health Policy Ph.D.

The revision includes the addition of a part-time option for the Health Policy Ph.D. program.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the curriculum revisions, for inclusion in the 2025-2026 Graduate Calendar, as circulated.**

The motion was **Carried**.

**9. Report from Undergraduate Council**

Catherine Anderson, *Acting Vice-Provost, Teaching & Learning*, presented the report.

**a. New Non-Academic Microcredential Programs**

1. AI Essentials for Marketing Professionals
2. Digital Marketing Strategy for SMB (Small and Medium sized Businesses) Growth

At its meeting on April 29, 2025, the Undergraduate Council reviewed and approved two non-academic microcredential programs.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the non-academic microcredential in AI Essentials for Marketing Professionals, as circulated.**

The motion was **Carried**.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the non-academic microcredential in Digital Marketing Strategy for SMB Growth, as circulated.**

The motion was **Carried**.

The remainder of items were for information.

#### **b. Terms of Award**

### **10. Report from the Executive Committee**

#### **a. Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)**

Sukhvinder Obhi, *Associate Vice-President, Research for Society & Impact*, spoke to the item.

S. Obhi advised that DORA encourages more thoughtful assessments of research outputs and recognizes a broader range of research contributions beyond publications. Signing DORA will bring McMaster in line with the Canadian research ecosystem, encourage examination of practices and incorporation of a wide range of research outputs, and will place McMaster in a leading group of U15 institutions. Members were provided with a list of organizations that have signed DORA and a list of groups that have been consulted throughout the process.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve McMaster University signing the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), effective June 11, 2025.**

Members thanked S. Obhi for his work and outreach and noted concerns with moving to another system, that the actual DORA statement was not provided, and questioned how DORA is going to be implemented. S. Obhi advised that the initial signing is not triggering any policy changes, only that McMaster supports the principles of DORA. Signing DORA triggers conversations about what being aligned with DORA looks like across the university and it will

involve working groups with different disciplinary backgrounds. Policy changes will go through normal procedures.

Members discussed the challenges around implementing DORA and the importance of being explicit about the criteria being used.

The motion was **Carried**.

## 11. Report from the University Planning Committee

Jerry Hurley, *Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic)*, presented the report.

J. Hurley explained that at its meeting on May 28, 2025, the University Planning Committee received an overview of the 2024 Research Centres & Institutes Annual Report and a presentation on the 2025-2026 Consolidated Budget. The Committee also approved two microcredentials and a graduate academic certificate which were included in the reports from Undergraduate and Graduate Council.

### a. Research Centres & Institutes Annual Report 2024

Martin Horn, *Acting Deputy Vice-President, Research*, spoke to the item.

M. Horn explained that the Research Centres & Institutes (RCI) Report comes out of the 2021 Guidelines for Research Centres and Institutes that Senate approved. There are 70 RCIs on campus and they are subject to 5-year reviews. M. Horn suggested that the ad hoc committee examining the RCI Guidelines may want to consider the mechanism of external reviewers as they are challenging to find, and consider the termination or alteration of RCIs.

This item was for information.

### b. 2025-2026 Annual Consolidated Budget

Jake Nease, *Chair of the Budget Committee*, and J. Hurley presented the report.

J. Hurley provided an overview of the consolidated budget and highlighted the six distinct funds. Members were provided with an overview of how McMaster's budget model works and trends. J. Hurley noted that the budget is in a better position than what was anticipated last year.

J. Nease shared the operating budget projections noting that provincial grants are increasing, tuition is decreasing, and salaries, wages and expenses are

increasing. Salary inflation is partially offset by refined hiring practices and operational excellence initiatives. They are projecting a \$18 million deficit next year. Members were provided with an overview of the consolidated budget. J. Nease advised that the key matters going forward include limitations on international student growth which limits revenue support for inflationary pressures, SMA performance-based funding has activated a system-wide proportion of 25%, and the uncertainty in the geopolitical environment including tariffs and investment return impacts.

Members discussed the budget noting concerns with the budget model, citing cultural erosion, administrative bloat, and increased competition rather than collaboration. Members enquired about the decrease in the cost centre. It was explained that the Budget Committee is aware of some of the challenges being faced and that support units were asked to reduce their budget last year. Many of the costs are fixed and do not change greatly.

A member addressed academic and non-academic salaries, noted an increase in spending towards non-academic staff, and asked about pauses in staff vacancies. J. Nease advised that decisions made in staff gapping are approved by Deans and submitted by support units. Members discussed the budget model noting that activity-based budgeting is more transparent than incremental budgeting and allows individuals to have informed discussions about underperforming units or programs. It was also noted that over the past ten years, there has been an increase in other income which is income from the government, services and activities, that must be directed to other services and cannot be directed to academics. Through attrition, there is a decrease in the overall staff numbers from this year to last.

This item was for information.

- c. **Non-Academic Microcredential in AI Essentials for Marketing Professionals**
- d. **Non-Academic Microcredential in Digital Marketing Strategy for SMB Growth**
- e. **Graduate Academic Certificate in Data Science, Applied AI & Organizational Leadership**

## 12. **Report from the Committee on Appointments**

Joëlle Papillon, *Chair of the Senate Committee on Appointments*, presented the report.

At its meeting on May 26, 2025, the Committee on Appointments approved the following recommendations and now recommends them to the Senate for approval:

**a. Revisions to Policies****1. Tenure and Promotion Policy**

The proposed revision is to remove a sentence in section III (11) which contradicts section III (26) and (27).

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve, for recommendation to the Board of Governors, the proposed revision to Section III, paragraph 11 of the Tenure and Promotion Policy, effective July 1, 2025, as circulated.**

The motion was **Carried**.

**2. Policy on Recruitment and Selection of Faculty Members (SPS A1)**

The proposed revisions relate to clinical faculty and highlights and clarifies differences.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve, for recommendation to the Board of Governors, the proposed revisions to SPS A1 – Policy on Recruitment and Selection of Faculty Members, effective July 1, 2025, as circulated.**

The motion was **Carried**.

**13. Report from the Committee on By-Laws**

Blaise Bourdin, *Member of the Committee on By-Laws*, presented the report.

Senate accepted Notice of Motion for the amendments to the Faculty of Engineering By-Laws and the Senate By-Laws at its meeting on May 14, 2025.

**a. Amendments to the Faculty of Engineering By-Laws**

At its meeting on May 28, 2025, the Committee on By-Laws reviewed and recommended that Senate approve the amendments to the Faculty of Engineering By-Laws.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate, on the recommendation of the Committee on By-Laws, approve the proposed amendments to the Faculty of Engineering By-Laws, as circulated.**

The motion was **Carried**.

**b. Amendments to the Senate By-Laws**

At its meeting on May 28, 2025, the Committee on By-Laws reviewed and recommended that Senate approve the amendments to the Senate By-Laws.

The Committee made some additional revisions around removing the reference to the Board By-Laws under the University Planning Committee (119), removing the statement that the Budget Committee is in closed session (125), and removing the Graduate Scholarships and Awards Committee under Schedule E2 as this committee is not active and the work is completed at Graduate Council.

A. Thyret-Kidd added that quorum for the Senate Board for Student Appeals needs to be amended from seven to twelve to reflect the increase in committee size.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate, on the recommendation of the Committee on By-Laws, approve the proposed amendments to the Senate By-Laws, as amended.**

In response to a question regarding the word normally being changed to typically, it was explained that it was an EDI initiative to use the word typically as opposed to defining what is normal and abnormal.

The motion was **Carried**.

**14. Report from the Committee for Nominating a Chancellor**

**a. Revised Duties for the Chancellor**

D. Farrar, President of the Committee for Nominating a Chancellor, presented the report.

At its meeting on May 30, 2025, the Committee for Nominating a Chancellor discussed and approved proposed revisions to the "Role and Functions of the Chancellor of McMaster University". A name change to the document is being suggested along with several revisions that reflect the current duties and expectations for the role.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate, on the recommendation of the Committee for Nominating a Chancellor, approve the revisions and a new title to The Role and Functions of the Chancellor of McMaster University, effective January 1, 2026.**

In response to a question about removing the Chancellor's responsibilities on the Board of Governors, A. Thyret-Kidd explained that the University Act puts the Chancellor on the Board of Governors and gives them a vote. That responsibility will remain however this is a Senate document, and Senate should not be dictating to the Board of Governors how it operates.

The motion was **Carried**.

**15. Other Business**

There was no other business.