

Minutes

Wednesday, February 14, 2024 23-24:06

Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at 2:30 p.m. in the Robert Vogel Council Room (Room 232) of the Leacock Building (future site of the Rimer Building).

PRESENT:

Ali, Genevieve	Juliet Johnson	Quitoriano, Nathaniel
Beaudry, Guylaine	Katchelewa, Lalia	Ramamurthy, Racchana
Bede, Jacqueline	Kochkina, Svetlana	Richard, Marc
Beech, Robin	Kopyscinski, Jan	Rohrbach, Petra
Behzadi, Houman	Krishnamurthy, Srinivasan	Saini, Deep
Ben Rejeb, Weeam	Leckey, Robert	Shapiro, Lisa
Bonneau, Josée	Levey, Margaret	Shevell, Michael
Borenstein, Bonnie	Levine, Alissa	Smeall, Cheryl
Campbell, Angela	Levy, Jacob	Snider, Laurie
Carrieri, Francesca	Lu, Catherine	Soehl, Thomas
Chan, Yolande	Manfredi, Christopher	Sparks, Tabitha
Cumming, Julie	Metallic, Janine	Stephens, David
Elbourne, Elizabeth	Meyer, Brett	Talwar, Victoria
Ellis, Jaye	Mittermaier, Anthony	Tumulu, Satish Kumar
Emami, Elham	Moore, Catriona	Türeli, Ipek
Fellows, Lesley	Morrison, Juliet	Vachon, Brigitte
Ferguson, Sean	Ndao, Momar	Van Hoof, Krystle
Flanagan, Tara	Nilson, Laura	Weil, Carola
Garofalo, Sophia	Nycum, Gillian	Winer, Laura
Geddes Rachel, Maiya	Nystrom, Derek	Yargeau, Viviane
Girard-Lauriault, Pierre-Luc	Orsat, Valerie	Zawati, Ma'n
Gomez, Natalya	Parish, Grace	Zorychta, Edith
Grütter, Peter	Pondicherry, Pavithran	

REGRETS: Chidimi Abakar, Annmarie Adams, Alexandre Ashkir, Manuel Balán, Maryse Bertrand, Mathieu Blanchette, Martha Crago, Beth-Ann Cummings, Matthew Diabo, Luciano D'Iorio, Diana Dutton, Eleanor Elstein, Mustafa Fakhri, Michael Fronda, Patrick Hansen, Terry Hébert, Miranda Hickman, Darlene Hnatchuk, Katherine Joseph, Amir Kalan, Lara Khoury, Fabrice Labeau, Bruce Lennox, Saku Mantere, John McCall MacBain, Josephine Nalbantoglu, Alexandra Nitu, Vaishnavi Parey, Naomi Pastrana Mankovitz, Hossein Poorhemati, Diletta Prando, Muhammad Qureshi, Jennifer Ronholm, Amanda Rosenberg, Sef Sarroub-Le Sueur, Eran Shor, Isabelle St-Arneault, Karsten Steinhauer, Manon Vennat, Alanna Watt, Marc Weinstein, Daniel Weinstock.

1. Welcoming Remarks

The Chair welcomed Senators to the sixth regular Senate meeting of the 2023-2024 governance year. He reminded Senators that, while the use of electronic devices was permitted for viewing meeting documents, the Standing Rules of Procedure prohibited the recording of sound and/or images, as well the communication or posting of Senate deliberations. He noted that the meeting was being livestreamed, and that the audio recording would be accessible until the meeting minutes are approved at Senate’s next meeting.

2. Memorial Tributes

The Chair informed Senators that three memorial tributes had been submitted for the February 14, 2024, meeting of Senate, for Professor Emeritus Brian Collier (FMHS), Professor Emeritus John Dealy (ENGINEERING), and Professor Jerry Pelletier (FMHS). He explained that the University Flag had been lowered on October 6, 2023, in honour of Professor Jerry Pelletier, on January 19, 2024, in honour of Professor Emeritus Brian Collier, and on the current day in honour of Professor Emeritus John Dealy.

Senator Fellows presented a memorial tribute for Professor Emeritus Brian Collier, following which Senate unanimously endorsed a motion of condolence:

“It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Dr. Brian Collier, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at McGill University’s Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. After earning his PhD from the University of Leeds, Dr. Collier completed postdoctoral training at Cambridge and McGill, in physiology. In 1968 he was recruited to the Department of Pharmacology at McGill, where he would remain for the duration of his career, rising to the rank of Full Professor in 1978 and Emeritus Professor following his retirement in 2006. Dr. Collier’s research focused on the study of the regulation of presynaptic function at sites of cholinergic synaptic transmission. He published extensively in first rate peer-reviewed journals, over a career spanning four decades. His research led to important early contributions to the field of neurochemistry, in particular showing how the neurotransmitter acetylcholine is synthesized, stored and released by neurons- a topic of particular relevance to Alzheimer’s disease. He served the neurochemistry community throughout his career, including spending 10 years as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Neurochemistry, where he proved to be a conscientious and incisive evaluator of submitted manuscripts. In 1994, he chaired a large and highly successful congress of the International Union of Pharmacology in Montreal. At McGill he served as Acting Chair of the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics from 1983 to 1985 and served on Senate and numerous committees across the university. Dr. Collier was particularly supportive of younger faculty, graduate students, and postdocs, dedicating countless hours to mentorship. He was also an early advocate of mentorship for equity-deserving groups, well before EDI practices were commonplace. In 1994, he was awarded McGill’s first David Thomson Award for Excellence in Graduate Supervision and Teaching. He was also committed to the teaching of medical students, being an early promoter of self-directed learning. His colleagues note that he was a blunt-speaking Yorkshireman with an incisive wit as well as a penchant for

practical jokes. He was universally respected for his keen intellect. For example, they note that, despite appearing to sleep through seminars, he consistently came up with the most searching questions. He read people well and was a keen observer of human folly. With his enormous experience and abundance of common sense, his unsparing advice was frequently sought by colleagues and students alike. He was a mentor to many, before mentorship was much talked about. He was a humble man, completely uninterested in self-promotion, and took great pleasure in the successes of trainees and colleagues. After a successful and deeply committed academic life, he made a clean break and reinvented himself as an avid gardener and enthusiastic grandfather. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Dr. Collier's family, colleagues, friends and all those whose lives he touched. He will be greatly missed."

Senator Yargeau presented a memorial tribute for Professor Emeritus John Dealy, following which Senate unanimously endorsed a motion of condolence:

"It is with deep sorrow that I inform you of the passing of a distinguished member of our academic community, Professor John Dealy, from the Department of Chemical Engineering. Professor and former Dean John Dealy, passed away on January 15, 2024, in Montreal at the age of 86. Born in Waterloo, Iowa, Professor Dealy earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Kansas and went on to complete his M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in Chemical Engineering from the University of Michigan. Joining McGill University in 1964, he quickly rose to the rank of full Professor within a mere nine years. Throughout his illustrious career at McGill, Professor Dealy made indelible contributions to our academic community. He served as the Chair of the Department of Chemical Engineering (1993- 1994) and later as the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering (1994-1999). In 2004, he was honored with the title of Professor Emeritus, a testament to his exceptional dedication and accomplishments. Professor Dealy remained an active and engaged member of the Department and the University until the challenges brought forth by the pandemic. Professor Dealy has made numerous significant contributions to the science of rheology establishing himself as a leader among rheologists. Recognized by the Society of Rheology as one of the most influential figures in the processing of polymer melts, Professor Dealy's impact is particularly evident in his development of a shear stress transducer which allowed for the measurements of non-linear viscoelasticity in concentrated polymer solutions and melts. He has been recognized with numerous academic awards as well as serving as President of The Society of Rheology (1987-1989). Professor Dealy was a fellow of the Polymer Processing Society and the Royal Society of Canada. He was known for teaching rheology in an understandable and logical way, as demonstrated in many of his manuscripts and multiple textbooks. Professor Dealy was a dedicated teacher and mentor. He contributed to the training of over 130 graduate students and other researchers in his field, many of whom went on to notable careers. He was known to be an inspiring and encouraging supervisor and mentor. Professor Dealy mentored many young colleagues at McGill and as an Emeritus Professor represented the McGill retirees on the MAUT Council. Professor Dealy leaves behind his brother David, daughter Pamela (David Rees) and his two cherished grandchildren Emily and John. He is predeceased by his beloved wife of 46 years Jacqueline Déry. He also leaves in mourning a wonderful life partner in the last years of his life, Andrea Deardorff.

Professor Dealy's impact as a mentor, leader, and distinguished McGillian will be profoundly missed. His legacy will forever inspire us. Our thoughts and condolences go out to his family and friends during this difficult time.”

Senator Fellows presented a memorial tribute for Professor Jerry Pelletier, following which Senate unanimously endorsed a motion of condolence:

“It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Jerry Pelletier, James McGill Professor in the Departments of Biochemistry and Oncology in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and member of the Rosalind and Morris Goodman Cancer Institute, on September 23. A brilliant researcher, his landmark discovery revealing the mechanism used by polio and related viruses to hijack the host cell’s mRNA translation machinery made during his time as a PhD student is highly relevant to the modern quest to design antiviral drugs and RNA therapeutics. Born in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and raised as a self-described army brat, Prof. Pelletier completed his BSc in Biochemistry and PhD at McGill, the latter under Prof. Nahum Sonenberg. This was followed by postdoctoral work in the lab of David Housman at the MIT Cancer Center, where he immersed himself in genetics, focusing on Wilms’ tumour, a kidney cancer that mainly affects young children. He was involved in the discovery of the WT1 gene, which is frequently mutated in Wilms’ tumour. Predating the modern genomics era, this accomplishment was the result of painstaking work using difficult techniques. Prof. Pelletier’s subsequent groundbreaking studies showed how the WT1 protein functions in normal development and how changes in WT1 cause cancer. In 1991, Prof. Pelletier returned to Montreal and to McGill to establish his laboratory. Soon after, along with colleagues Philippe Gros and Michael Dubow, he co-founded a biotech company focused on developing a new class of antibiotics, culminating in the FDA approval of the drug Oritancin. By 2002, Prof. Pelletier had risen to the ranks of full professor and become one of Canada's top molecular biologists. He and his team explored the therapeutic potential of new classes of natural and synthetic molecules, discovering and characterizing several drugs that inhibit a key regulator of mRNA translation known as eIF4A. He showed that these drugs prevent the production of proteins required by cancer cells, important work that enabled ongoing clinical trials of eIF4A inhibitors in cancer patients. Prof. Pelletier was also instrumental in bringing the RNA-guided genome editing technology known as CRISPR/Cas9 to McGill, and in ongoing efforts to exploit the chemical and biological properties of RNA to develop new therapies for cancer and other diseases. Prof. Pelletier was honoured as a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2017 and in 2019 he was the recipient of the Robert L. Noble Prize from the Canadian Cancer Society for his groundbreaking work in elucidating the initiation and control of protein synthesis. Prof. Pelletier was a world-renowned, trailblazing and collaborative RNA researcher who would generously share insight, ideas and reagents. To his colleagues at McGill, he was also a friend, a companion in ambitious initiatives, and, in many cases, a mentor. He was known for getting things done quickly and efficiently without taking shortcuts, favouring direct, person-to-person interaction, with a strong do-it-yourself approach when required. He had an innate ability to get the best out of everyone, enabling them to make the most of their particular individual skills and talents to the benefit of the lab and their work. Prof. Pelletier's contributions to the field of RNA biology and therapeutics are a testament to his unwavering commitment

to scientific research and unyielding curiosity. A fun-loving person, he loved nature and music, especially classic rock. The lively holiday parties that took place in his lab for years are recalled fondly by people in the Department of Biochemistry. He was also responsible for a number of McGill academics embracing Kyokushin Karate. Adept in the discipline, he would proudly share stories, and bruises, and approached Karate as he did science: with commitment, determination, discipline and irreproachable ethics. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Prof. Pelletier’s wife Muriel, to his children, Fiona, Dylan and Eric, his grandchildren, as well as to his entire family, friends, colleagues, friends, and all those whose lives he touched. May his legacy continue to inspire our community. He will be greatly missed.”

3. Report of the Senate Steering Committee [Consent Item] (23:24-06)

Senate approved the recommendations contained in the Report of the Senate Steering Committee as a consent item. The recommendations concerned the following:

Minutes of Senate. Meeting of January 17, 2024.

Speaking Rights. Upon approval of the report, speaking rights were granted to Professor Christopher Moraes, Interim Ombudsperson for Students for item IIB4.2 (Annual Report of the Ombudsperson for Students).

Meeting Agenda. Present meeting.

The Report of the Senate Steering Committee also contained the following items, for information:

Review of Questions and Motions. Two questions and one motion were received for the February 14, 2024, meeting of Senate. The two questions were accepted for inclusion on the present meeting’s Agenda, while the motion was not accepted for inclusion on the meeting’s Agenda.

Steering Committee Discussion Items. Updates concerning revisions to the Senate Calendar of Business, as well as planning for the upcoming Senate Open Discussion.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes of the January 17, 2024, Meeting (23-24:05)

There was none.

5. Chair’s Remarks

As a precursor to his remarks, the Chair informed Senators that the Board of Governors had approved the appointment of the University’s 21st Chancellor. He thanked current Chancellor John McCall MacBain for his ongoing service to the University, and noted that his term will conclude on June 30, 2024. The Chair encouraged Senators to watch for an announcement to be communicated soon, which will reveal the identity of the 21st Chancellor.

The Chair then began his remarks by discussing Government Relations. He shared that he had met with Premier François Legault and Minister Pascale Déry, and between them a frank discussion was undertaken that touched upon all the issues of concern to the University, including the tuition fees increase and the *françisation* program. He regretfully noted that, while no significant progress was made, the University remained committed to maintaining an open line of communication and will continue to take any opportunity to engage with the government on these matters. The Chair then informed Senators that the Federal government had recently announced that it is imposing a cap on the number of new international undergraduate students it will accept into the country. He explained that each province and territory will be allocated a portion of the total amount of study permits, based on population sizes. From there, the provinces and territories are intended to allocate these study permits to their various universities and colleges. At the time of the meeting, Quebec's quota was not known. The Chair went on to share that Eric Girard, McGill Alumnus (BCom '89) and Quebec Minister of Finance and Minister Responsible for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers, visited the University on February 2, 2024, and participated in an armchair discussion that was hosted at the Desautels Faculty of Management. It was noted that the goal of the visit was to offer students an opportunity to gain insight into the Province's economic policies and to raise awareness of the potential contributions that McGill graduates can make to economic growth in the province.

Concerning External Relations, the Chair reported that a meeting of the U15 Executive Heads had recently been held in Ottawa. He shared that he had met with various Ministers and Ambassadors, and highlighted that Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship had expressed his support considering the challenges being faced by the University. He went on to note that he had participated in the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, which was also attended by several thousand leaders from various governments, businesses, civil societies, academia, and the Arts. He reported that he had served as a moderator for a panel on Biodiversity, and also worked to advance some of the University's global engagement priorities.

On the topic of Community Relations, the Chair informed Senators that, on January 25, 2024, the University had hosted its second annual International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration, which featured a testimony by Holocaust Survivor and McGill alumna Rae Gropper. Another commemoration was also held to solemnly commemorate the seven-year anniversary of the Quebec City Mosque Attack. He noted that these two events marked an important step in transforming the commitments made in the 2022 Initiative against Islamophobia and Antisemitism into meaningful action. It was highlighted that February is Black History Month, and for the eighth year, the University was hosting a series of related events. A keynote address was delivered by Professor Melanie Newton, McGill alumna, and Associate Professor of History at the University of Toronto. The Chair went to report that the ninth edition of McGill24, the University's annual day of giving, would be held on March 13, 2024. Last year, \$4.4M was raised as a result of over 7,000 donations supporting to a great number of efforts across the University. The Chair then shared that a total of \$413,000 was raised for Centraide of Greater Montreal through this year's charitable effort undertaken by the University, led by Vice-President Martha Crago and Interim Vice-President Anja Geitmann.

The Chair went on to highlight the achievements of several individuals, including Professor Raquel Zegarra del Carpio-O'Donovan, Department of Radiology, Neurology and Neurosurgery, and four other McGillians for being recently appointed to the Order of Canada, Professor Nancy Heath, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, for winning the Dr. Suning Wang Award for Outstanding Graduate Mentorship, a team of five Undergraduate Students for placing first in the International Artificial Intelligence Competition ProjectX, and Professor George Massenburg, Schulich School of Music, for receiving the GRAMMY for Best Immersive Audio Album resulting from his work as immersive mix engineer on the album *The Diary of Alicia Keys*, and football graduate Dr. Jean-Philippe Darche (BSc '97), for earning his third Super Bowl ring whilst working as team physician for the Kansas City Chiefs.

Senator Richard shared his view that the Provincial government seemed to be turning the ongoing talks with the University to its advantage, citing that press coverage had been used to portray agreement on the matter of the alleged decline in the use of French in the Province. He went on to express that, in light of this, the ongoing talks could be seen as counterproductive. The Chair noted that the University engages with the Government on many fronts, and that there are both positives and negatives resulting from this engagement. He continued, reporting that the University will continue to ask for evidence that may serve to back up the government's actions and claims, and that the position of the University is that decisions should be made based on real evidence, and not on a whim or flight of fancy. Conversely, the University remains forthcoming and open in sharing evidence and data that it believes should be considered valuable when assessing ways forward. Senator Shevell requested more information regarding the Province's allotment of international students. The Chair responded by noting again that while no further information was currently available, Senate would be kept apprised of any updates.

SECTION II

Part A – Questions and Motions by Members

1. Question regarding Decision-making on Mitigating the Impact of the Quebec Tuition Increases and the French Proficiency Requirement (D23-41)

Senators Morrison and Garofalo submitted the following questions:

“How is the McGill administration involving broader stakeholders, such as students, faculty, and staff, in its decisions around mitigating the impact of the tuition increases? If broader stakeholders have not been involved in decision making thus far, does the administration have plans to involve or consult with them in the future? What is the makeup of Provost Manfredi's working group that is exploring options to ensure financial stability? President Saini has described the French proficiency requirement as “utterly unrealistic” and noted that “students with no knowledge of French would need a full semester of courses, on average, to reach an intermediate level.” How will McGill ensure the process to obtain French proficiency is least burdensome for students? How will students and faculty be involved in the decision-making process around how programming for French learning will be applied?”

The Provost and Executive Vice-President (Academic) provided the following written response prior to the Senate meeting:

“Thank you, Senators Morrison and Garofalo for your questions, which deal with two separate issues arising from the policy changes formally communicated to the University on January 24, 2024. Several measures are being undertaken to involve broader stakeholders in budget planning for FY25 in the context of anticipated revenue losses due to expected lower enrolment associated with the tuition changes for Canadian students from outside of Quebec. On January 24, I made a presentation, answered questions, and heard preliminary ideas from the Academic Leadership Forum—a gathering of academic leaders from across the university. Later this month I will be making a presentation on budget planning to our series entitled “Faculty Matters,” to which all faculty members are invited. I have also formed an Ad hoc group called the Faculty Engagement Consultative Group, which includes ten faculty members from across the university. This group has met once and will meet three more times before the budget is presented to the Finance and Infrastructure Committee of the Board in early April. Planning is also under way for a University-wide townhall. There will, of course, be the second Budget Planning presentation to Senate to provide information on the FY25 budget’s development and gather input. Deans play an important role in these consultations, and each Dean will develop their own Faculty specific consultations. I have not yet been invited to present to student leaders or student governance bodies, but I would be happy to receive such invitations. Similarly, invitations to speak to employee groups and associations would also be welcome. The Budget Working Group, which consists of subject matter experts from Analysis, Planning, and Budget Office and the Office of the Vice-President (Administration and Finance) is providing technical support for budget planning. Few details have been provided by the government with respect to the new francisation requirement. The *Ministère de l’Enseignement supérieur* (MES) is establishing a joint working group between the ministry and the three anglophone universities to discuss implementation of the requirement. McGill has signalled to the MES its intention to appoint representatives to that working group. As the working group’s discussions progress and more information emerges about the government’s intentions with respect to the requirement, we will be sharing information and reaching out to members of the community.”

Following a request for clarification from Senator Morrison, Senator Manfredi explained that the Faculty Engagement Consultative Group was assembled at his request for the purpose of contributing to this year’s unique budget planning exercises. He went on to share that subject matter experts from the Budget Working Group are meeting with the Faculty Engagement Consultative Group to provide data, which informs the generation of feedback at the Faculty level. Senator Nystrom inquired as to who was intended to teach the French language courses in question. Senator Manfredi reminded Senators of the University’s view that the 80% intermediate proficiency requirement laid out by the Provincial government is impractical, and noted that there were currently no available details with respect to how this requirement would be monitored and/or assessed, and what penalties may be enacted upon an institution who failed, by an unknown metric, to meet the requirement. The Chair noted that, while engagement with the government continues in good faith, the University had made explicitly clear where its boundaries lie. Senator Van Hoof

requested that the membership list of the ten Faculty members comprising the Faculty Engagement Consultative Group be made available to Senate, as well as background information concerning the processes by which they were selected to serve in this capacity. Senator Manfredi confirmed that this would be shared with Senate (*see Secretary's Note below*). Senator Van Hoof inquired as to any plans to proactively engage and consult with non-Faculty staff and students, either through the Faculty Engagement Consultative Group, or by some other means, and, in the absence of any such plans, a clarification as to why these groups were disregarded. Senator Manfredi responded, stating that the Mandate of the Faculty Engagement Consultative Group was to consult broadly with Academic and Administrative and Support Staff colleagues within members' Faculties. He went on to note that he would be pleased to receive invitations from other cohorts to speak with them directly about the university's ongoing budget planning for the 2025 fiscal year. Senator Flanagan suggested that the University cultivate relationships with French-language secondary institutions elsewhere in Canada as a means of increasing the baseline number of proficient students. Senator Manfredi informed her that this was something that Enrolment Services was investigating in detail with respect to admission decisions. He underscored the idea that, regardless of any imposed government action as it may be currently understood, no student will have to pass a French proficiency test as part of a graduation requirement.

Secretary's Note: Following the meeting, Senator Manfredi provided this response further to Senator Van Hoof's inquiry:

"The Faculty Engagement Consultative Group (FECG) was established as an informal group of engaged faculty colleagues. The FECG includes ten tenured academic colleagues from across diverse Faculties and the Libraries, drawn primarily from participants in mentorship programs currently in place, and/or from faculty members who either hold, or have held, academic leadership appointments. The FECG's members were identified based on their exceptional leadership promise and record, integrity, judgement, academic excellence, and institutional knowledge and commitment.

The ten members of the Faculty Engagement Consultative Group (FECG) are:

- 1. Professor Elena Bennett (Natural Resource Sciences/Bieler School of Environment, Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences)*
- 2. Professor Nicholas Cowan (Physics/Earth and Planetary Sciences, Faculty of Science)*
- 3. Professor Samantha Gruenheid (Chair, Microbiology and Immunology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences)*
- 4. Ms. Lorie Kloda (Vice-Dean of Libraries, McGill University Libraries)*
- 5. Professor Richard Leask (Chair, Chemical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering)*
- 6. Professor Jacob Levy (Chair, Political Science, Faculty of Arts)*
- 7. Professor Tina Piper (Associate Dean [Academic], Faculty of Law)*
- 8. Professor Amélie Quesnel-Vallée (Chair, Equity, Ethics and Policy, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences/Sociology, Faculty of Arts)*
- 9. Professor Brian Rubineau (Area Coordinator, Organizational Behaviour, Desautels Faculty of Management)*
- 10. Professor Alanna Watt (Biology, Faculty of Science)"*

1. Question regarding the New Vic Project and its reflection of the University's Academic Mission (D23-42)

Senators Pastrana Mankovitz, Garofalo, and Diabo submitted the following questions:

“Does the objection of students and Kahnistensera supporters to McGill’s response to this situation have an effect on McGill’s actions, which must reflect our mission?”

In what ways will the University ensure a spirit of reconciliation as the situation moves forward?”

The Provost and Executive Vice-President (Academic) provided the following written response prior to the Senate meeting:

Thank you for the question, Senators Pastrana Mankovitz, Garofalo, and Diabo.

“Since its inception, the New Vic Project (NVP) has reflected and embedded McGill’s commitments to truth and reconciliation, which are set out in [52 Calls to Action in the University’s Task Force Report on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education](#). Alignment between the NVP and reconciliation efforts is evidenced by ongoing consultations with local Indigenous community leaders, ceremonies that have taken place at the site, integration of Indigenous epistemologies and knowledges in project planning and design (including, for example, classroom designs conducive to Indigenous pedagogies), and the plan to launch four Canada Research Chairs earmarked for Indigenous scholarship tied to the two disciplinary priority areas at the NVP: sustainability and public policies. In addition, the University provided expedited access to its archives, including restricted files as permitted by law to the Kahnistensera. These steps exemplify the measures that McGill has taken, and will continue to take, to ensure that the NVP will incorporate Indigenous perspectives and meaningful reconciliation practices. McGill shares the goal that the Kahnistensera and their supporters hold, which is to ensure that no building on the NVP site occurs without first ensuring that it was never the site of unmarked graves. To this end, we must “let the ground speak” through qualified archaeological work. Archaeological work conducted at the site has followed the recommendations of a panel of experts appointed by the parties to the litigation involving McGill and the Kahnistensera as well as the site’s owner, the *Société québécoise des infrastructures*. To-date, this work has yielded no evidence of human remains. The University has endeavoured to be transparent throughout the execution of the archaeological work, principally through ongoing communications. [This site](#), which includes a range of frequently asked questions about the archaeological investigation at the site, is regularly updated. The NVP is fully aligned with and indeed, stands to advance tremendously, the University’s academic mission. The project’s pursuit shall be fully aligned with the principles and actions that we are called to apply through our ongoing and profound commitments to truth and reconciliation.”

Senator Garofalo posited that the [52 Calls to Action](#) set out by the Provost’s Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education in 2017 had been deliberately worded to exclusively apply in academic or scholarly contexts. She went on to ask about the specific benchmarks that the University will employ to measure success, and if the Office of Indigenous Initiatives had been consulted, along with Indigenous members of the University community, on the development of the New Vic Project as well. Senator Manfredi stated his disagreement with the premise that the 52 Calls to Action relate only to academic matters, highlighting that they are underpinned by deep engagement with neighbouring Indigenous communities and their elected and traditional leadership. He went on to share that the University remains in constant engagement with Indigenous communities, and that consultations by and within the Office of Indigenous Initiatives had indeed been undertaken. The Chair highlighted that Senator Manfredi’s written response outlined the steps by which consultations, engagement, and involvement with Indigenous communities had been undertaken as part of the conception of the New Vic Project.

Part B – Motions and Reports from Organs of University Government

Open Session

1. Report of the Senate Nominating Committee [Consent Item] (D23-43)

Senate approved the recommendation contained in the Report of the Senate Nominating Committee as a consent item. The recommendation concerned the following:

Item 1. Recommendation for an appointment to a Senate Standing Committee.

2. Report of the Academic Policy Committee (D23-44)

Senator Manfredi presented this report for information. He explained that it provided an overview of matters considered by the Committee at its meeting of January 25, 2024.

3. Report of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (D23-45)

Senator Leckey presented this report for information. He explained that it provided an overview of matters considered by the Committee at its meeting of February 5, 2024.

4.1 Annual Report on Student Life and Learning (D23-46)

Senator Beech presented this report for information, on behalf of Senator Labeau, who was unable to attend the meeting. He explained that it provided an overview of matters considered and activities undertaken over the period 2022-2023 by the various units comprising the portfolio of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning). Senator Pondicherry suggested that a reference manual for students be created and distributed with the goal of raising awareness of the resources and services available under the umbrella of Student Life and Learning, and that a minimum stipend policy be put in place to support all students involved in research. Senator Beech replied, stating that a rigorous review of all Student Life and Learning unit websites was underway, with the intention of improving convenient access to current information regarding unit resources and

services and allowing for greater interconnectivity between pages. He went on to explain that it was his hope that this online compendium would serve as the manual suggested by Senator Pondicherry. It was noted by the Chair that a response to Senator Pondicherry's suggestion regarding mandated stipends would be addressed by the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

4.2 Annual Report of the Ombudsperson for Students (D23-47)

Professor Christopher Moraes, Interim Ombudsperson for Students, presented this annual report for information. He explained that it provided an overview of activities undertaken by the Office of the Ombudsperson for Students over the period 2022-2023, and also contained relevant statistics. He shared a summary of the Office's mandate as it related to informal conflict resolution. Senator Quitoriano asked for clarification regarding the nature of service requests made by Faculty and Staff to the Office, and if the Ombudsperson for Student's mandate should be expanded to serve those groups as well. Professor Moraes explained that some students may not feel comfortable seeking help on their own, and are thus assisted by a trusted Faculty or Staff member. Senator Richard speculated that since an operational objective of the Office is to provide guidance, directing individuals seeking assistance to most appropriate resources, it stood to reason that any Faculty or Staff member who requested service from the Office would technically receive the same guidance- though it would be stipulated that said guidance was provided due to the requester falling outside of those groups which the Office is mandated to serve. Senator Quitoriano then inquired again if, regardless of financial constraints, the mandate of the Office should be expanded to include services for Faculty and Staff. Professor Moraes agreed that there may indeed be a need for informal conflict resolution resources within the broader University community, though he could not say whether or not those should be provided by the Office of the Ombudsperson for Students.

5. Other Business

There being no other business to deal with, on a motion duly proposed and seconded, the meeting ended at 3:38 p.m.

END

The complete documents, including presentations at Senate, are kept as part of the official minutes. presentations at Senate, are kept as part of the official minutes.