

667<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF SENATE  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2024, 1:30 P.M.  
MCGREER 100 AND BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

MINUTES

**Chair:** Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier

**Present:** Dr. Hafid Agourram, Sonoma Brawley, Dr. Eva Bures, Leana Ceresoli, Dr. Bruno Courtemanche, Dr. Julie Desjardins, Alpha Diallo, Dr. Anthony Di Mascio, Sophia Driscoll, Dr. Valerio Faraoni, Dr. Mark Gandey, Dr. Kerry Hull, Catherine Lavallée-Welch, Dr. Heather Lawford, Alex Mador, Dr. Jean Manore, Dr. Patrick McBrine, Dr. Matthew Peros, Dr. Jessica Riddell, Dr. John Ruan, Hans Rouleau, Dr. Cranmer Rutihinda, Dr. Maxime Trempe, Dr. Yanan Wang, Dr. Andrew Webster, Dr. Dawn Wiseman

**Regrets:** Julien Collin, Fiona Gaombalet, Roser Rise, Dr. Michael Teed,

**Secretary:** Geneviève Gagné

Principal Lebel-Grenier formally opened the 667th meeting at 1:32 p.m.

666/1 AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

Moved by: Andrew Webster

Seconded by: Alex Mador

**Motion carried.**

666/2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1 MINUTES OF THE 666<sup>TH</sup> SENATE MEETING

The Minutes of the 666<sup>th</sup> meeting of Senate, held on October 11, 2024, were approved with clarification regarding the voting rights mentioned in the introductory paragraph of the document.

Moved by: Heather Lawford

Seconded by: Dawn Wiseman

**Motion carried.**

#### 666/3 BUSINESS ARISING

Principal Lebel-Grenier invited Vice-Principal Academic and Research, Dr. Andrew Webster, to provide a follow-up on item 5.1 *Academic Standing and Admission Policy*, regarding the *ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur's* request to waive the requirement for medical certificates to justify absences of fewer than five (5) days, presented at the October 11 meeting. Dr. Andrew Webster clarified that the revised language will be presented at the December meeting due to time constraints preventing a meeting of the Academic Standing and Admission Policy Committee.

#### 666/4 COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Principal Lebel-Grenier highlighted his participation as Honorary President at a PROCURE event, a charitable organization dedicated to fighting prostate cancer. The event attracted 242 attendees, providing significant visibility for the University and fostering stronger community ties.

The Chair provided an update on the recovery plan, noting ongoing meetings with divisions including Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and the Williams School of Business. Meetings with Humanities and School of Education are scheduled in the coming weeks. These discussions aim to gather feedback, address questions, and give more information on the implementation process.

Principal Lebel-Grenier reported progress toward achieving \$2 million in savings within the non-academic sector, with this phase nearing completion. Targets were recently communicated to managers and directors, with instructions to propose solutions aligned with these goals. A review of the proposed options is underway, with initial measures expected to be announced by mid-November, followed by community updates. He stressed the importance of adhering to the scheduled timeline to prevent delays in the plan's implementation. A comprehensive Q&A document is also being finalized to provide clear and consistent responses and is expected to be released in the coming weeks.

Principal Lebel-Grenier announced the selection of a consulting firm to support the strategic planning process. The first phase will involve surveys across all University sectors, set to launch in the coming weeks. These surveys aim to identify what makes Bishop's unique and highlight key priorities for enhancing the student experience. The Principal stressed the importance of broad participation, noting that the data collected will play a crucial role in shaping the next steps of the strategic planning process and supporting the curriculum and academic structures review process.

Principal Lebel-Grenier stated that he will be testifying before National Assembly Parliamentary Committee on November 5 to express concerns on recently tabled Bill 74. This bill aims to provide government with the discretionary power to impose international student quotas on individual universities. The Chair noted that Bishop's University's supporting brief will emphasize that international students are an opportunity for Quebec and that they are not a draw on resources in the Eastern Townships. It will also focus on the very significant breach of university autonomy, a longstanding foundation of university-government relations in Quebec, created by Bill 74. Additionally, representations will seek to have language of instruction excluded from the bill, although this is unlikely to succeed.

Principal Lebel-Grenier explained that the National Assembly Parliamentary Commission is tasked with examining bills that have been tabled and that all recognized political parties are represented. He expressed concerns about inaccurate claims made by the Minister regarding international student enrollment numbers in Quebec. These inaccuracies will be addressed at the commission with factual data to ensure an accurate representation of the situation.

Questions were raised regarding the deficit's impact on students and the University's approach. The Chair emphasized ongoing efforts to minimize the effects on students while acknowledging that some impacts are unavoidable. Consultations with the Students' Representative Council (SRC) executive team have focused on updating students and developing effective communication strategies. He noted that upcoming announcements may include adjustments to course offerings, which could affect students' ability to enroll in certain courses. Principal Lebel-Grenier highlighted the importance of collaboration with the SRC and incorporating student input into strategic planning. He stressed the priority of aligning services with student needs, particularly given the significant on-campus population. Concerns about increased wait times for certain services were attributed to temporary staffing changes, with recruitment for the affected positions already underway. The Principal reaffirmed the University's commitment to maintaining high service standards and prioritizing student needs. He emphasized that all sectors must evaluate their operations to support the broader recovery effort. As an example, convocation has been identified as an area for potential cost reductions, with a review underway to explore savings while preserving its significance in a simplified format.

Concerns were expressed regarding the potential for survey fatigue in the strategic planning process, as well as skepticism about the use of external consultants. Principal Lebel-Grenier emphasized the importance of clear and effective communication. He underscored the need to encourage broad participation, presenting this process as a key opportunity for the University. The anticipated outcome will guide future priorities and strategic positioning. He clarified that the planning committee is actively guiding the process and emphasized that leadership of this initiative remains with the University ensuring that the outcomes align with institutional goals and priorities.

Dr. Jessica Ridell left at 2:00 p.m.

#### 666/5 COMMITTEE ITEMS

##### 5.1 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Dr. Heather Lawford presented the Nominating Committee updates, noting only a few changes were necessary due to the short timeframe between Senate meetings. She expressed gratitude to all members serving on committees.

#### MOTION

THAT Senate approve the new membership of Senate Committees for the 2024-2025 academic year as presented on November 1, 2024

**Moved by:** Heather Lawford

**Seconded by:** Sonoma Brawley

**Motion carried.**

## 5.2 SENATE PROGRAM ACADEMIC REVIEW COMMITTEE (SPARC)

The Vice-Principal Academic and Research, Dr. Andrew Webster, presented the final SPARC report for the Music Department, introducing a revised approach to Senate documentation. This approach includes summaries with key action items, implementation steps, and SPARC's response to recommendations, designed for Senate approval rather than solely information purposes. The process aims to enhance Senate's ability to prioritize and act on approved recommendations, establish concrete goals, and track progress over an extended timeframe, with a report back to Senate during this period.

The Dean of Humanities, Dr. Jean Manore, informed Senators of concerns raised during the review process regarding the feasibility of fulfilling certain commitments. Dr. Andrew Webster clarified that the mandate update has been extended to a 24-month timeline, with Chairs and Deans reporting back to Senate on action items as needed, as approved by Senate at the end of the last academic year.

A question was raised regarding the absence of references to the RAM score in the SPARC report's challenge and action plan section. Dr. Andrew Webster clarified that such details are not explicitly addressed in the report, which focuses on departmental summaries and feedback from external reviewers. He noted ongoing challenges within the SPARC process, including a perceived disconnect between departmental activities and the University's strategic priorities, as well as an unclear role for SPARC as a "process guardian." Discussions about adopting a more proactive approach to address broader institutional issues are ongoing within the Committee. Dr. Andrew Webster emphasized that such efforts would require alignment with divisional priorities and a clearer definition of the deans' involvement in the process. As SPARC is a Senate subcommittee, it is ultimately up to Senate to determine the Committee's relevance in adopting a more proactive role.

Dr. Jean Manore clarified that the report recommendations focus on organizational matters rather than addressing the RAM score or enrollment. She noted that while a stronger connection between the RAM score and programs could be included, it is for Senate to determine if it is relevant to the report. Additionally, she stated that the Music Department is actively exploring ways to increase student enrollment, acknowledging the significance of enrollment despite its absence from the report's explicit recommendations.

Sophia Driscoll arrived at 2:10 p.m.

Comments were made about the frequent mention of musical theatre in the report, highlighting its interdisciplinary nature across performing arts and arts administration. However, concerns were raised regarding the lack of clarity on necessary consultations, the absence of a timeline, and unassigned responsibilities for actions. It was suggested that the report include clear identification of stakeholders to be consulted to ensure effective progress on the initiative and exclusion of impractical items from the list to maintain focus on achievable goals.

Dr. Jean Manore clarified that the Musical Theater Program Review Committee, responsible for the review, is preparing recommendations for submission to the Senate Planning Committee.

Dr. Andrew Webster noted the significant progress in the departmental reviews that were backlogged by the COVID-19 pandemic. He encouraged Senators to provide feedback on all SPARC reports ahead of meetings, if possible, to allow for adequate preparation by the Chair or the relevant stakeholders. Dr. Andrew Webster underscored that Senate retains the authority to reject or request for further review of reports before adoption.

Catherine Lavallée-Welch left at 2: 15 p.m.

A question was raised regarding the SPARC process, specifically whether the template provided to departments before reviews originates from Senate or the SPARC Committee. Vice-Principal Academic and Research clarified that the template was developed by the SPARC Committee and approved by Senate last year. Principal Lebel-Grenier added that the template aligns with the *Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire* (BCI) guidelines while being adapted to Bishop's specific context.

Principal Lebel-Grenier highlighted the process as peer-led oversight, emphasizing its role as an independent quality assurance mechanism. He warned that ineffective self-regulation could risk governmental intervention.

#### **MOTION**

That Senate approve the departmental response as presented in **Appendix 2** for the Department of Music.

**Moved by:** Andrew Webster

**Seconded by:** Alex Mador

**Motion carried.**

#### 5.3 GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Dr. Kerry Hull presented the report on thesis submission and defense confirmation, highlighting feedback gathered by the Graduate Studies Committee. She clarified the use of two repositories: Scholaris for thesis defenses and Borealis for research data retention. Both are managed by the Scholars Portal, and are a collaboration involving key library organizations. They operate on the DSpace and Dataverse platforms respectively. These repositories are used by many universities.

#### **MOTION**

THAT Senate approve the proposed revision to the Academic Regulations describing the submission of a thesis for deposit in the Institutional Repository.

**Moved by:** Kerry Hull

**Seconded by:** Alpha Diallo

**Motion carried.**

#### 5.4 SENATE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Vice-Principal Academic and Research reported that the Senate Planning Committee had reviewed spring-summer part-time course offerings. Due to financial constraints and anticipated fall-winter demands, the Committee approved 15 spring-summer courses instead of the usual 35 course offerings. The recommendation was based on a comprehensive review of data on enrollments, revenue, course relevance to academic programs, as well as input from Deans and Chairs. He emphasized that extensive discussions ensured a balanced approach across divisions and programs, focusing on essential offerings and mitigating overload enrollment in fall-winter courses.

A question was raised about the support system for students who would have graduated if their classes had not been cancelled due to the current situation. The Vice-Principal Academic and Research confirmed that the existing support system remains in place, and any affected students would be contacted individually. Accommodations may be considered if necessary. He also noted that, per the Contract Faculty Collective Agreement, courses with fewer than 12 students may be cancelled.

A clarification was requested regarding the funding source for courses described as being funded by "other means." Dr. Andrew Webster explained that such courses are supported by alternative funding sources, such as being offered pro bono or through targeted funding. These funding sources are distinct from the part-time teaching budget overseen by the Senate Planning Committee. The Vice-Principal Academic and Research emphasized the need to achieve \$1.5 million in savings for the next fiscal year, noting that spring-summer courses are accounted for in the 2025-26 fiscal year, not the 2024-25 fiscal year.

A question was raised about whether spring-summer courses are offered online or in person. The Vice-Principal Academic and Research explained that the spring-summer term includes a significant number of online and hybrid courses, while some, such as those in fine arts, are held in person. This approach is designed to accommodate students' diverse needs, including accounting for many students having left Sherbrooke following the end of the Winter semester.

A question was asked regarding the minimum of student's enrollment in a course. Dr. Andrew Webster clarified that as per article 6.2.8 of the Contract Faculty Collective Agreement, part-time courses with fewer than twelve (12) students may be cancelled. Unlike fall-winter courses, spring-summer courses are more susceptible to cancellation under this provision.

### **MOTION**

On behalf of the Senate Planning Committee, I move that Senate approve the following 15 part-time courses for the 2025 spring-summer session and the following 22 courses funded by other means.

**Moved by:** Andrew Webster

**Seconded by:** Alex Mador

**Abstention:** Bruno Courtemanche

**Motion carried.**

### 666/6 OTHER BUSINESS

#### 6.1 ACADEMIC REPORT

The Vice-Principal Academic and Research (VPAR) announced that the Evaluation Committee has approved faculty sabbatical requests for the upcoming academic year, and that these were now posted on the VPAR webpage.

He noted that the Senate Committee on Student Evaluations of Teaching expected to present a paper at the December Senate meeting, addressing the wording of the current set of survey questions and the issue of low student response rates.

He also noted that an update on the French language and culture in Quebec at Bishop's project will be presented at the December meeting.

Dr. Andrew Webster provided an update on the financial recovery plan for the academic sector, highlighting feedback focused on student engagement, addressing concerns, aligning curriculum with marketing, and ensuring proposed changes appeal to current and prospective students. He reported significant progress toward the \$1.5 million savings target for the 2025-2026 academic year, despite some challenges. Dr. Andrew Webster added that the Senate Planning Committee report to be presented at the

December Senate meeting will address both part-time courses for 2025-26 and provide recommendations on tenure-stream positions and their feasibility within the current financial context.

Dr. Andrew Webster mentioned that the Senate Planning Committee's current working target was to reduce budgeted part-time courses by 45 offerings for the 2025-2026 fall-winter semesters, with additional savings anticipated in other academic activities.

Dr. Andrew Webster announced that a discussion paper on the future of the University's curriculum, with a particular focus on its alignment with the institution's mission to promote liberal education, is being finalized and he hoped would be ready in order to be circulated to the academic community during the week of November 11, 2024. This document will serve as the foundation for discussions across all academic levels, supported by broad, formal, and structured consultations scheduled from January to April 2025, with final approval to be considered at the May Senate meeting. The Senate retains ultimate governance authority over all academic decisions from this process. Dr. Andrew Webster emphasized that curriculum changes should be viewed as a collective responsibility rather than individual decisions, warning that failure to implement significant changes will very likely exacerbate the financial challenges over time.

Concerns were raised about the sense of community and dialogue in the decision-making process up to this point. While significant challenges are being addressed and changes implemented, it was noted that opportunities for meaningful discourse and feedback appear limited and time-constrained, emphasizing the need for greater transparency and collective understanding in decision-making.

Dr. Eva Bures arrived at 2:50 p.m.

Dr. Andrew Webster accepted the point that was being made. He clarified the distinction between the two ongoing processes: short-term decision-making for the 2025-26 academic year and long-term curriculum and financial planning beyond 2026. The former process was following all established processes, working through the mechanism of the Senate Planning Committee. It was indeed quite directive in the taking of immediately necessary decisions to reduce costs for the next academic year. The longer-term process, which deals with potential changes to curriculum and academic structures from 2026 on, would be highly consultative of the academic community. The explanation for this process would be contained in the discussion paper that would be released in mid-November. He acknowledged that these challenges would impact all areas of the University and agreed on the importance of broad participation and meaningful dialogue to shape a long-term strategy.

Dr. Kerry Hull left at 2:55 p.m.

Principal Lebel-Grenier recognized concerns about the pace of decision-making and the perception of insufficient consultation. He highlighted the difficulty of balancing urgency with dialogue, which is further complicated by tight timelines and structural constraints. The financial targets were established through a top-down approach, informed by detailed analysis, to quickly assess the institution's financial situation. Efforts to implement a thoughtful bottom-up consultation process are ongoing and will become more visible as they are communicated in coming weeks.

Dr. Jean Manore emphasized that the recovery plan must be finalized as a matter of urgency to avoid further potential financial claw back from the government. This immediate pressure limits the flexibility for consultation at this phase, as the focus is on meeting external financial requirements. In contrast, the

strategic planning process will allow for more extensive consultation and engagement with the community to address longer-term goals and institutional priorities.

Comment was made as of the importance of establishing a clear and shared vision to guide the processes and the implementation of strategic adjustments, as without a strong, unified vision, the process risks recurring challenges and misalignment.

A concern was expressed about whether external consultants would effectively articulate the shared vision.

Catherine Lavallée-Welch arrived at 3: 00 p.m.

Principal Lebel-Grenier clarified the role of the consultants as a supportive body for addressing issues and emphasized that key decisions and vision will be determined by the University community. The strategic planning aims to define and clarify the University's identity as a liberal education institution, ensuring a shared understanding and consistent implementation across programs and delivery models. The focus will also be on the student experience as this aspect remains a top priority for the institution. He emphasized that this clarity and alignment are essential for making strategic decisions that reflect the University's core values and identity.

Comments were made on course reductions and potential alternatives such as offering online courses for students.

Principal Lebel-Grenier clarified that the immediate cuts are a necessary component of the financial recovery plan aimed at cost savings. He noted that online courses are not inherently cost-effective, as their expenses are comparable to those of regular course offerings.

Dr. Andrew Webster noted that the approved course reductions for the upcoming spring-summer semesters were guided by budgetary adjustments, prioritizing essential offerings critical to student progression. Course prioritization was evaluated by each division, ensuring key academic needs were protected. He acknowledged the annual challenges in staying on budget and mentioned that deans have been actively engaging at divisional level to address these issues.

A proposal was made to implement a system for submitting questions or comments on potential cost-saving measures. This would help identify and address unforeseen long-term impacts, ensuring decisions that appear cost-effective initially do not lead to greater expenses over time.

Principal Lebel-Grenier mentioned that the process that is being mapped is designed to address these challenges and is intended to capture potential impacts and minimize negative effects on the academic and non-academic sectors. He stressed that the process for the non-academic sector is near completion, without plans for additional consultations to avoid prolonging stress and uncertainty. However, targets that are set now could be revisited as the situation evolves even if the current plan aims to avoid recurring cuts in the future.

A reflection was shared on the potential of online spring-summer courses as a revenue-generating opportunity. Popular cross-disciplinary courses were highlighted as examples demonstrating the revenue potential of strategic online offerings during this period. Revisiting the online course model was suggested to address financial challenges while better meeting student needs.



Dr. Andrew Webster emphasized that most students enrolled in spring-summer course are already pursuing their degree at the University and will typically complete the required credits. These courses do not generally attract a significant number of students from other institutions. The focus remains on strategically offering courses that align with both student needs and institutional objectives. He noted that a proper reflection on online offerings requires deeper analysis and thorough examination to ensure an effective approach.

## 6.2 RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES REPORT

Dr. Andrew Webster presented the Research and Graduate studies report on behalf of Dr. Kerry Hull. The Individualized Master's program process is being streamlined to enhance its rigour and efficiency, with revised forms expected by January. He noted that discussions are underway with the Ministry of Education to explore the feasibility of an individualized doctorate program.

He continued by mentioning that a working group, co-led by Dr. Valerio Faraoni, is being created to increase external research awards, and another group will develop a proposal for research centers. He added that key initiatives under the strategic research plan include an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) action plan in collaboration with different stakeholders and a financial analysis of research activities. He concluded by informing Senators that representatives from Université de Sherbrooke will be visiting Bishop's on November 19 as part of recruiting efforts for summer projects.

## 666/7 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 William School of Business

#### New Course Proposal – CA 410 Cybersecurity Management

Dr. Mark Gandey presented the new course proposal which focuses on financial and electronic fraud.

A question was raised regarding potential overlap with the Computer Science Department and course prerequisites. Dr. Mark Gandey confirmed that, following consultations with the Computer Science Department, no changes were deemed necessary to address concerns about overlap or accessibility.

Clarification was provided on the course's objective, emphasizing a managerial approach to data protection tailored to business leaders, rather than a technical focus on software development.

A comment was made regarding the absence of the departmental approval date on the submitted form. Dr. Mark Gandey affirmed that the date would be added.

A clarification on eligibility for enrollment in the course was sought. Dr. Gandey confirmed that the course is open to Computer Science students and that the prerequisites do not pose a barrier. However, it was noted that, based on feedback, most Computer Science students may not be particularly interested in the course, as it primarily focuses on data management and cybersecurity from a managerial perspective rather than on technical standpoints.

A suggestion was made to explicitly state the prerequisite as "BCS 220 or permission of the instructor" to address potential ambiguity and ensure clarity in the course requirements. Dr. Hafid Agourram mentioned that a statement on the prerequisite or permission will be added to the document.

Principal Lebel-Grenier asked for clarification on whether the prerequisite must be explicitly stated as part of the course requirements or if recognized equivalencies sufficed to ensure clarity in the process.

Dean Jean Manore confirmed that, as listed in the calendar copy of the form, the prerequisite needs to be present. She further noted that the current practice of including the permission from the Dean, Chair

or instructor can also be added to ensure clarity.

It was agreed that an amendment to the propose new course form will be added to reflect the requirement.

### **MOTION**

On behalf of the Williams School of Business, that Senate approve the new course included in document 666/7.1i.

**Moved by:** Mark Gandey

**Seconded by:** Hafid Agourram

**Motion carried.**

7.2 Faculty of Humanities – No recommendation

7.3 Faculty of Social Sciences – No recommendation

7.4 Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics – No recommendation

7.5 School of Education – No recommendation

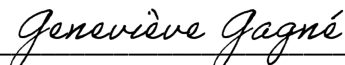
It was announced that Senator Bruno Courtemanche was awarded his PhD from Université de Sherbrooke. The Senators congratulated him warmly.

The meeting ended at 3:28 p.m.



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Sébastien Lebel-Grenier, Chair  
Vice-Chancellor and Principal



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Geneviève Gagné, Secretary General