



676TH MEETING OF SENATE
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2025, 1:30 P.M.
IN PERSON AND BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

MINUTES

Chair: Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier

Present: Dr. Eva Bures, Julien Collin, Dr. Julie Desjardins, Dr. Valerio Faraoni, Rosalyn French, Dr. Jonas Goliash, Dr. Kerry Hull, Mirana Iliza, Catherine Lavallée-Welch, Dr. Heather Lawford, Dr. Jean Manore, Dr. Adrianna Mendrek, Emily Miller, Dr. Linda Morra, Dr. Matthew Peros, Dr. John Ruan, Hans Rouleau, Dr. Cranmer Rutihinda, Dr. Jade Savage, Dr. Margaret BK Shepherd, Liam Stewart, Dr. Maxime Trempe, Dr. Calin Valsan, Vivienne Webster, Dr. Steven Woodward

Regrets: Sonoma Brawley, Dr. Bruno Courtemanche, Dr. Anthony Di Mascio, Mathieu Garceau-Tremblay, Dr. Dawn Wiseman

Secretary: Geneviève Gagné

Principal Lebel-Grenier called the 676th Senate meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and welcomed Dr. Jonas Goliash, replacing Dr. Yanan Wang, to Senate.

676/1 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved with the removal of the motions at item 5.1. The item will proceed as a discussion only.

Moved by: Kerry Hull

Seconded by: Adriana Mendrek

Motion carried.

676/2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the 675th meeting of Senate held on September 12, 2025, were presented for approval. It was noted that minor typos were identified and will be incorporated into the final version. In addition, the word “*tenure*” was removed from item 5.2 to accurately reflect the five (5) to ten (10) year staffing plan. The Minutes were approved with amendments.

Moved by: Jean Manore

Seconded by: Steven Woodward

Motion carried.

676/3 BUSINESS ARISING

Senate Recommendation - Professional Librarian seat on Senate

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier reported that the Senate recommendation to add a seat on Senate for a professional librarian discussed as a *Business Arising* item at the 675th Senate meeting held on September 12, 2025, was reviewed by the Governance and Ethics Committee and the Board of Governors. It was decided by the Board of Governors to not proceed at this time, but rather revisit the matter during the next comprehensive review of the University *Statutes*.

Moodle Access for Student Accessibility Services

The Moodle access issue, raised under Business Arising at the 675th Senate meeting on September 12, 2025, will be brought back at a later date as consultations continue and alternative approaches are examined.

676/4 COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier noted the recent visit of the Supreme Court of Canada to the University for a public lecture. He acknowledged feedback regarding the extensive use of French and explained that, as this was the Court’s sole Québec stop on its national tour, a strong French-language presence was intentional, with roughly half of the remarks delivered in French. He also noted the significance of the visit as part of the Court’s wider initiative to enhance public engagement.

Government Relations

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier reported that, while progress on the French fluency mandate remains limited, discussions with the Government are moving in a positive direction, though slowed by the recent appointment of a new Minister of Higher Education. He added that further updates will be provided as information becomes available.

He also informed Senate that he testified before National Assembly Commission on October 21, 2025—both as Vice-President of the *Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire* and on behalf of Bishop’s University—regarding the government’s multi-year immigration planning and the inclusion of international students in the immigration plan, emphasizing its negative impact on universities’ ability to recruit and retain them. While the Government is expected to maintain international student quotas, there may be some potential—albeit speculative—flexibility, including the possibility of exempting graduate students from quotas and revising the application of the *Certificat d’acceptation du Québec* for renewals. He further highlighted the strong alignment among sector partners—including the Mayor of Sherbrooke—with consistent messaging that may help influence the Government’s position.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier provided an update on the evolving political context, including the newly proposed *Bill 1* on the Quebec constitution. He noted that the University is currently analysing the legislation to assess potential implications, particularly regarding provisions affecting institutional autonomy. He emphasized that no decision has yet been made on whether Bishop's will intervene in the public debate, but the situation is being closely monitored.

In response to a question regarding whether *Bill 1* on the Quebec constitution is being considered from the perspective of the consortium of English-language CEGEPS and universities, the Principal explained that while the consortium refrains from adopting political positions, the matter will be discussed at their upcoming meeting.

Town Hall

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier reminded Senators of the upcoming Town Hall on November 5, 2025, during which updates on the financial projections and preliminary Fall enrolment figures will be presented.

676/5 COMMITTEE ITEMS

676/5.1 ACADEMIC STANDING AND ADMISSIONS POLICY COMMITTEE (ASAP)

“With Distinction” Notation

Registrar Hans Rouleau reported on the ongoing discussions regarding revisions to the academic distinction categories. He noted that the options previously considered by Senate included raising the threshold for “*With Distinction*” to 85% or adopting a tiered model based on the top 5% and top 20% of graduates. Following consultations with student Senators and the need for further review by the Academic Standing and Admissions Policy Committee and academic units, the previously submitted motion was withdrawn pending additional consultation.

A question was raised on the rationale for a hybrid model. Registrar Hans Rouleau explained that combining a fixed percentage threshold with a percentile-based designation aims to balance consistency with the recognition of exceptional achievement across programs.

Subsequent questions were raised regarding the current reference to a “first undergraduate degree”, with a suggestion that distinctions should apply regardless of whether the degree is a student’s first or subsequent undergraduate degree. Concerns were also noted about divisions offering multiple degree types and whether small graduating cohorts might create challenges in applying percentile thresholds. It was clarified that distinction designations will be calculated annually.

In response to questions about the comparative practices among universities and the impact of percentage thresholds, he noted that benchmarking revealed significant variation across institutions, with no single model predominating. He added that an 85 % cutoff would modestly reduce the number of students receiving “*With Distinction*”, and confirmed that the proposed percentile-based approach would be applied by degree and by division.

Comments were made about the terminology (division/faculty/school), institutional consistency, and the reputational impact of broad use of distinctions. Senators discussed the merits of a hybrid model versus a percentile-based model approach. Hans Rouleau noted that student Senators had expressed support for a percentile-based model, provided that historical Grade Point Average (GPA) ranges be published annually to ensure transparency.

Course Withdrawal – “W” Notation

Registrar Hans Rouleau provided an update on the proposal to add a “W” transcript notation for courses withdrawn within the official deadline—initially presented at the 675th Senate meeting on September 12, 2025—noting that students would be permitted a maximum of ten (10) withdrawals over the course of their studies before triggering a meeting with a Student Services Counsellor. He also indicated that, in addition, students withdrawing from all courses in a semester would need to meet with a Student Services Counsellor before re-registering, and in exceptional cases may be required to pause their studies. He also clarified that “WP” withdrawals will not count toward the ten-course limit. Following consultations with student Senators, a reduction of the permitted withdrawals to three (3) was proposed to support an early alert system. In light of this feedback and the need for further review by the Academic Standing and Admissions Policy Committee, the motion was withdrawn and will be resubmitted to Senate at a later date.

Concerns were expressed about reducing the withdrawal limit to three (3) in a single semester, citing issues related to student flagging and instructors’ experiences with frequent “WP” designations. A return to a hybrid model—three (3) withdrawals per semester up to a maximum of ten (10)—was proposed. Hans Rouleau clarified that the initial removal of the ten-course cap stemmed from the plan to monitor “W” notations each semester. He also noted that the proposal will be referred to the ASAP Committee and the Vice-Principal Student Affairs team for further discussion and consultation.

Concerns were conveyed about whether the required meeting with a Student Services Counsellor might impede timely course registration, including cases involving medical notes.

Comments were raised regarding Student Services’ capacity to take on additional students, noting current workload pressures and the need to assess the potential volume generated by this new mechanism.

Hans Rouleau concluded his report by outlining the Winter 2026 and Fall 2026 admissions guidelines, including key deadlines and processing timelines for undergraduate applications.

A technical issue was raised regarding the Canadian application deadline in the admissions guidelines, which falls after the course registration period - making it difficult for departments to forecast enrolment AND limiting course access for students wishing to register. The concern was acknowledged, and it was noted that the matter remains under active discussion.

676/5.2 SENATE PLANNING COMMITTEE (SPC)

The Interim Vice-Principal Academic and Research Dr. Kerry Hull presented a revised SPC report, noting that further analysis necessitated adjustments and that additional clarification was required regarding the inclusion of Ministry-funded courses in the institution’s targeted course numbers.

Three (3) year Teaching Plan

An overview of the three (3) year teaching delivery plan relative to projected teaching capacity was presented, highlighting the growing gap between departmental plans and the number of courses the University can afford to offer. While departments project offering between 732 and 734 courses between 2026-2029, the funded capacity will decrease from 712 down to 644 over the next three years. A divisional breakdown was provided, showing initial reductions in proposed course offerings in some areas and increases in others. It was noted that funded teaching capacity is determined by tenure-stream faculty, limited-term appointments and part-time courses, forming the basis of the 644- course target. Dr. Kerry Hull emphasized that further alignment work will be required to bring departmental teaching plans in line with the University’s funded capacity, particularly in light of anticipated program changes and ongoing budget constraints.

A question was raised regarding the inclusion of alternative funding sources for part-time courses. Dr. Kerry Hull clarified that should additional funding become available, the model would be revisited and recalculated accordingly.

A follow-up question sought clarification on the methodology used to determine teaching capacity in relation to full-time faculty complement. Dr. Kerry Hull mentioned that it is based on tenure-stream faculty and ongoing limited-term appointments.

A clarification was sought regarding whether the 644-course target presumes stable or rising enrolment. It was clarified that the figure represents what the University can support within existing revenue levels. Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier added that teaching capacity would grow only if enrolment exceeded the recovery plan's targets.

It was noted that the presentation focused primarily on instructional costs rather than on revenues, particularly in programs where additional course offerings would generate higher per-course funding. In response, Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier noted that updates on revenue projections will be presented at the upcoming Town Hall. He emphasized that while final course numbers evolve, the modelling highlights the need for more intentional cross-departmental collaboration and course alignment to maintain academic standards within a constrained funding formula. He reiterated that although moderate enrolment growth remains possible, long-term financial stability cannot rely on growth alone.

Concerns were raised about the need to balance essential small classes with the pressure of larger course sized. The importance of maintaining economically sustainable program profiles while recognizing that some small classes support broader enrolment across the University was emphasized.

Long-term Staffing Plan

Interim Vice-Principal Academic and Research Dr. Kerry Hull presented an overview of the preliminary long-term staffing plan developed in response to the second Financial Modelling analysis and tenure-stream distribution range previously reviewed at the September 12, 2025, Senate meeting. She highlighted several innovative "lighthouse practices" emerging from the plans.

Key elements for ongoing discussion include determining the appropriate target for tenure-stream complement, clarifying the role of limited-term appointments, and identifying ways to encourage joint appointments. She noted that the Senate Planning Committee may develop a template for long-term staffing plans reflecting best practices.

The Senate Planning Committee will continue to consult with Chairs and Deans and will report back to Senate in November.

A question was raised regarding the staffing numbers presented, specifically for the Williams School of Business. Clarification was provided that the figures reflect the complements as of September 1st and include adjustments related to the recent appointment of the Dean. Further review will be undertaken to confirm the numbers.

A Senator raised the concern that cross-department teaching may be less effective in upper-level courses when disciplinary expertise does not align.

676/5.3 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Dr. Heather Lawford provided an update on Committee membership.

MOTION

That Senate approve the new membership of Senate Committees for the 2025-2026 academic year as presented on October 24, 2025.

Moved by: Heather Lawford

Seconded by: Adriana Mendrek

Motion carried.

676/5.4 SENATE TASK FORCE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Dr. Jean Manore presented the Senate Task Force on artificial intelligence's first report, summarizing benchmarking findings and preliminary recommendations related to teaching, learning, and academic integrity. She noted that Senate input will be required on whether artificial intelligence literacy should become a graduation requirement and, on the University's institutional responsibility for oversight. Further consultation will occur at the upcoming Academic Sphere meetings.

A concern was raised about the increasing incidents of academic misconduct linked to both the use and detection of artificial intelligence tools, highlighting gaps in current policies and sanctions. Senators emphasized the resulting impacts on faculty workload, pedagogy, and student equity, underscoring the need for clearer institutional guidelines, stronger support for instructors, and updated academic integrity procedures.

Comments were also made regarding the importance of developing clearer policies, enhanced support mechanisms, and educational resources for both students and faculty. The value of existing library expertise in artificial intelligence literacy was noted, along with the need for more robust institutional messaging to guide appropriate use and reinforce academic integrity expectations.

676/6 OTHER BUSINESS

676/6.1 VICE-PRINCIPAL ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT

Interim Vice-Principal Academic and Research Dr. Kerry Hull provided four (4) brief updates. She presented preliminary Fall 2025 enrolment data, noting that final numbers will be presented at the November Senate meeting. She highlighted the data on the percentage of admitted students who ultimately do not register across divisions and emphasized the efforts made by all to retain admitted students. She updated Senate on measures addressing tuition non-payment, explaining that students who did not seek payment plans or contacted the Registrar's office by October 21, 2025, were deregistered. Finally, she introduced the draft guidelines for "appointments in residence" noting that the guidelines aim to support units interested in developing such appointments.

In response to a question regarding the appointment in residence, Dr. Kerry Hull clarified that any teaching would be compensated through limited-term appointments of contract faculty stipends and be subject to the relevant Collective Agreement, and that additional financial supports would apply only when pre-arranged – such as when a donor funds expenses for an appointee.

Concerns were raised concerning the use of Moodle deregistration, noting significant dissatisfaction with the approach. Dr. Kerry Hull acknowledged the issue, reiterating that while the measure is imperfect, timing and communication were improved, and the decision reflected the least disruptive option among available alternatives.

676/6.2 RESEARCH AND GRADUATE REPORT

Interim Associate Vice-Principal Research Dr. Matthew Peros reported on ongoing consultations on the draft guidelines for internal research Chairs. The draft guidelines have been circulated for comments and feedback are being incorporated. A revised version will return to Senate for information.

Dr. Matthew Peros also noted that work is underway to assess the feasibility of establishing an individualized doctorate program. A working group will be formed, with a draft mandate under development to examine academic, administrative, and resource implications.

Clarifications were provided regarding ethics approvals for course-based research involving human participants. Existing guidance documents are available on the “Research with Human Participants” webpage, and a streamlined application is now available on ROMEO research portal to accelerate the review process.

Senators were informed that the graduate micro-program in Climate Change, offered in collaboration with the Université de Sherbrooke, has been indefinitely suspended due to limited departmental resources.

Dr. Matthew Peros concluded his report by highlighting recent research achievements, publications and scholarly contributions, and extended congratulations to all faculty involved.

676/6.3 LEARNING AND TEACHING REPORT

Dr. Jean Manore, Interim Associate Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching, reviewed ongoing work on degree regulations, including double-counting rules, options for students unable to complete a major, potential breadth and depth requirements, honours-upgrade pathways, degree-completion timelines, and the credit value of minors. Benchmarking and preliminary analyses were shared, and further consultation will take place at the Academic Sphere meetings.

Support was expressed for a 21-credit minor; however, concerns were raised about the rigour of graduating with only two minors, and a proposal to require three minors was suggested. It was noted that the double-minor pathway serves primarily as an exit strategy for a small number of students rather than a recruitment mechanism.

Questions were raised regarding the imposition of a time limit for degree completion, with emphasis placed on ensuring curricular relevance over extended periods. Additional comments underscored the importance of maintaining both breadth and depth requirements in any revised framework.

Interest was also conveyed in facilitating clearer and more accessible pathways for graduates returning to complete honours requirements.

Dr. Jean Manore concluded her report by updating Senators on the ongoing work to revise the teaching evaluation questions, undertaken to address concerns regarding clarity, relevance, and the feedback received.

676/6.4 PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF THE SENATE ACADEMIC AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE (SACC)

Interim Associate Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching Dr. Jean Manore reported on updates to the proposal for the creation of the Senate Academic and Curriculum Committee. The revised draft presented to Senate incorporated feedback from the September 12, 2025, meeting, including the addition of an alternate student representative and the inclusion of an equity representative in the Committee's composition. It was also noted that consultation with the Decolonization Circle will be undertaken.

A question was raised regarding the long-term attribution of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion responsibilities within the executive structure. Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier clarified that this designation is not defined in the University *Statutes* and falls under the prerogative of the Principal, with the possibility that responsibility may shift over time.

675/7 DIVISIONAL ITEMS

675/7.2 FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Dean Jean Manore presented the recommendation to suspend admissions, effective immediately, and definitively close on July 1st, 2028, the Honours and Major programs in Religion, Society, and Culture due to the department's declining faculty complement and the anticipated retirement of one (1) of the two (2) faculty members in July 2028. It was explained that replacing the second position is not feasible under the current circumstances, and that Dr. Daniel Miller has agreed to transfer to the Department of Classical Studies. It was noted that discussions regarding the future of the Minor program are ongoing.

MOTION

That Senate approve that the admission into the Honours and Major programs in Religion, Society and Culture be suspended and that as of July 1st, 2028, these programs be removed from the Academic Calendar.

Moved by: Jean Manore

Seconded by: Jade Savage

Motion carried.

MOTION

That Senate approve that the Department of Religion, Society and Culture be closed on July 1st, 2028.

Moved by: Jean Manore

Seconded by: Adrianna Mendrek

Motion carried.

Interim Dean Dr. Valerio Faraoni presented a recommendation from the Department of Computer Science to introduce a new course, designed as an artificial intelligence-supported coding course with no prerequisites and open to all students. The course aims to equip students with fundamental artificial intelligence coding skills.

In response to a question concerning the timeframe to bring the recommendation, Dr. Valerio Faraoni explained that the recommendation was brought forward outside the regular curriculum cycle to allow for a Winter 2026 offering.

MOTION

That Senate approve the curriculum changes submitted by the Computer Science department.

Moved by: Valerio Faraoni

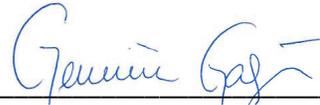
Seconded by: John Ruan

Motion carried.

The meeting ended at 4:17 p.m.



Sébastien Lebel-Grenier, Chair
Principal and Vice-Chancellor



Geneviève Gagné, Secretary General