New College Council

Meeting of Monday, April 19, 2021, 12:10 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

AGENDA:

1. Minutes of the Meeting of March 4, 2021  (attached)
2. Business Arising from the Minutes
5. Report from Student Councils
   i) NCSC
   ii) NCRC
   iii) Course Unions
6. Report of the Principal – B. McElhinny
7. Report of the Vice Principal – T. Goldstein
   i) Program Director Searches:
      - Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity Program Director
      - Buddhism, Psychology and Mental Health Program Director Search
   ii) UTQAP Program reviews:
      - Buddhism, Psychology and Mental Health
      - African Studies
      - TYP (Lance McCready)
   iii) Awards:
      - Kathleen O’Connell Award - Nominations up to April 30, 2021
   iv) Community-Engaged Learning Survey and Retreat Planning
   i) Annual Report
10. Report from the Office of Residence and Student Life – L. McCormack-Smith  (report attached)

11. Report from the Writing Centre – L. Newbery
   i) Annual Report

12. Report from the Advancement Office – C. Argiropoulos
   i) End of year updates

13. Report from the Communications Office – N. Cahill
   i) Identity/website project update (5 minutes)

14. Other Business

15. Adjournment
New College Council

Meeting of Thursday, March 4, 2021, 12:10 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Present: J. Newman (Chair), N. Dragicevic (Secretary), R. Vander Kraats, B. McElhinny, A. Todd, A. Bruce, B. Registe, C. Argiropoulos, D. Rodricks, T. Goldstein, H. Si, J. Stronghill, J. Kim, K. Huffman, L. McCormack-Smith, M. Levin, N. Cahill, N. Butler, S. Stewart, T. Patel, A. Wasike

Regrets: A. Guerson, S. Mojab, L. Newbery, B. Russell, B. Hambly

New members: Antoinette Reyes (NCRC), Devan Sehdev (NCSC), Lucy Zuo (NCSC), Ayomikun Ajayi (NCRC)

Introduction and Welcome to New Members

Business Arising from the Minutes

No comment or corrections. Minutes passed. No business arising from minutes.

Report of the Library Committee

J. Newman reported the following:

- The library committee has been participating in the curbside pickup program, ordering additional electronic materials to get students through, the library is still open and providing access to internet, computing, printing, study space, etc.
- Talked about proposing a motion to amend the college’s bylaws. The college’s bylaws state that the college librarian (J. Newman) sits on seven of the eight committees that exist as part of college council. Wanted to revamp that to put any college librarian on those committees now that there are three librarians at the college.
  
  J. Newman put forth a motion to amend the bylaws to any librarian now that there are three. D. Rodricks seconded. No discussion. No opposition, motion passed.

Report of the Building Committee

R. Vander Kraats reported the following:

- The building committee met recently to review the progress on four capital projects currently in the design stage. R. Vander Kraats has consolidated them into one larger university capital project.

  1) Accessibility upgrade project:

  - In the lower level of Wetmore Hall, there was no consideration for accessibility in the original design of the building over 50 years ago. There are two stairs that make virtually all new college classrooms, all of the ACE classrooms, the Stats Aid Centre and IT services, inaccessible.
The solution proposed are two vertical platform lifts, similar to what has been used at 40 Willcocks and the William Doo auditorium. A portion of a classroom will be lost resulting in five fewer seats.

2) Wilson Lounge renovation project:

- Three years ago, New College students voted on a capital levy to contribute $250,000 to this project. New College is receiving $50,000 a year from students every year for the next five to help pay for this project. As well, $250,000 was received from a competition from the Provost’s Office, the Student Space Enhancement fund.

- Consultant’s vision for the space:
  - An architectural feature for the canopy.
  - An opened-up ceiling, so it is a much larger space.
  - The old-style lighting has been replaced with LED lighting.
  - South side of Willcocks, in the quadrangle, there will be chairs, bar stools and tables, for students who want to work by themselves. The space has been redefined to be a more comfortable lounge space.
  - Students want very functional furniture, so they can study, eat lunch, and gather in groups.
  - Classrooms 2008 and 2006 will be soundproofed.
  - There are thoughts around some very comfortable lounge furniture facing into the quadrangle.
  - Power is always important for students, so we are looking at some pull down, power outlets from the ceiling.
  - We are looking at repurposing the large, round ceiling lights.
  - Along the main staircase, from the 40 Willcocks entrance, looking at a welcoming wall of “Hello” or “Welcome” in various languages. Looking at indigenous languages of the region as perhaps the centerpiece of this with the settler languages surrounding.

3) Office renovation:

- Will be transforming some basement space into lower-level offices. Propose to open up the ceiling, using modern lighting.
- Focus groups have identified the real need at the College for small one-on-one space to meet students. This project will create eight new smaller offices, nine if the proposed pod is included, as well as two smaller meeting rooms.
- Moving to standardize on booking displays for meeting rooms, all driven by RRS Lite.

4) Wetmore Hall Fire Alarm System Replacement:

- The fire alarm system is due for replacement and this project will replace it.
- There are three major advantages of this replacement project. One is a new system will be more reliable and more serviceable. It also means speedier response to problem situations. In this design, every single detector has an address. We will know exactly which device triggered the alarm. Third, from an accessibility point of view, the system not only has audible alarms, but also visual alarms and strobe lights as an essential part of the alarm system. All three of our buildings will be up to date since we replaced the Wilson Hall system about six years ago.

- October 2021 is the expected completion date for these projects.

A. Wasike asked about Wetmore rooms (stations) and when they would be updated. R. Vander Kraats noted that they are a little behind and will make note.

T. Goldstein noted appreciation for the work being done.
A. Reyes asked about continuing to host events in Wilson Lounge and wondered if there was flexibility as Wilson remains one of the prime locations to host orientation or other events. R. Vander Kraats noted that there needs to be more discussion and engagement with users on the space. The focus groups only went so far in their discussions but noted that William Doo would be a good space to use.

B. Registe asked if convocation reception would continue to be held in Wilson Lounge. R. Vander Kraats noted this event trumps everything.

**Report from Student Councils**

- **NCSC** – L. Zhuo reported. Noted unusual year for council. In addition to programs and initiatives that various members are planning individually, they are looking to a second general meeting for the year, and then spring elections.

- **NCRC** – A. Reyes reported:
  - Have been successful in holding many virtual social events this year.
  - Main challenge this year has been engagement. Students feeling isolated and disengaged, experiencing zoom fatigue. Students experiencing Wifi issues in residence, 45 Willcocks. Requested New College to invest in digital technologies.
  - Students have also felt the impact of loss of space, Wetmore and Wilson lounges and the 45 Willcocks walk up study space. Have created a virtual NCRC lounge as way for students to connect, receive announcements and updates.
  - A COVID-19 townhall has also been scheduled.
  - Have experienced residents leaving and from an NCRC perspective, it has been challenging and troublesome because there is a transfer of signatory authorities and required by-elections for new house council members to fill those vacancies. Have been updating the NCRC roster as well. As of now, all of that has been settled.
  - Received some dining hall feedback from focus groups hosted by ORSL, for students to share their experiences about the dining hall.
  - Have made it a prime focus to use NCRC dining committee as they have been in constant contact with food services.
  - In terms of future programs, there is an NCRC and NCSC collaboration for a sustainability project.

- **Course Unions** – no report.

**Report from Standing Committees**

- No reports.

**Report of the Principal**

B. McElhinny reported the following:

- Fall planning: McGill and UBC have announced that they will be meeting in person to the extent that public health guidelines support that and that they anticipate staff will be returning to campus. We will receive an announcement by the end of the week on what the University will be doing. B. McElhinny anticipates a very similar announcement. Acknowledged that it is hard to anticipate having a significantly increased in-person presence at the moment when we’re still in lockdown. Flagged two things that make it possible to imagine. One is a new vaccine which was approved last week, that means vaccine supply will be markedly increased. Public health protocols are changing. In Canada with the vaccines that require two doses, there is now a
protocol that allows administration of the first one, then a four-month waiting interval. The Prime Minister this morning said that he optimistically anticipates that everyone over 16 may be able to get a vaccine by the end of June. That’s a markedly advanced timeline.

- Calls for accountability: Two accountability statements were received from the college, one from black and allied students who are New College students, and a second accountability statement from faculty and students in African Studies and Caribbean studies. Work is being done on some of the items on each of those in conjunction with those who prepared the statements of accountability. A key request from the students was that there be trainings for all student facing staff. In December and January, a needs assessment was done, run by the anti-racism and cultural diversity office and they have now shared their results. They propose a training plan. B. McElhinny emphasized that this is a response to the student request, the accountability statement from African Studies and Caribbean studies also sounded some notes of caution about training - if it is a strategy for certifying people, without actually transforming institutional practices that are problematic, without making sure that resources are clearly available and information about them widely shared. The conversations are not in and of themselves, necessarily actions.

- This work is coupled with a series of ongoing other initiatives. There is a workplace systems review. A recruitment and hiring review has been completed, that looked precisely at what New College has been doing in conjunction with the Faculty of Arts and Science, human resources, and some strategies have been identified for changing postings and changing interview strategies to ensure that the broadest possible group of candidates is being attracted, that we are especially proactively recruiting groups that are underrepresented in college staff. And that we are thinking about the ways our interviewing guidelines ask people to be responsive to anti-racist practice.

- Mental health resources in recent years have been very broadly circulated, but resources that are available to people who are experiencing racism and might need immediate support are probably less widely known. We need to think about who benefits if those resources are not as widely known and will be working on that campaign.

- Needs assessment summary report prepared by ARCDO:

  - 69 people completed the survey sent out. The survey asked what kinds of education members of the college felt would be helpful for themselves and others. There were five key items that respondents thought were critical: deconstructing institutional racism, understanding responsibility to prevent racial discrimination and harassment in the work environment, understanding anti-black racism, identifying and addressing racial microaggressions, and identifying and addressing racial harassment in the work environment.

  - 37 respondents identified as black, indigenous, or people of color. Of that group of 37, the five things that were identified as critical sessions are tools for speaking up, strengthening racialized community through movement and dialogue, exploring shared healing and shared resilience, navigating and healing through anti-black trauma, releasing re-centering and rebuilding through meditation.

  - 50 to 75% of respondents have not had education or training on the following topics: restorative practices in the workplace, racial microaggressions, internalized racism, application of the Ontario Human Rights Code, intersectionality and institutional racism.

  - Approximately 50% of people had, and 50% of people had not, had training or education in thinking about racial discrimination and harassment, anti-black racism, white privilege, systemic racism, and power and privilege.

  - There were comments on the ways in which anti-black and anti-indigenous racism are especially critical that are distinct, and there need to be distinct strategies in some ways for thinking about responses.
Focus on systemic issues within New College - ensuring that the workshops are not abstracted away from the new college environment, so that people do not imagine that the issues that have been described are issues that are happening elsewhere. The issues that need to be addressed on systemic racism, white privilege, the need to challenge anti-black racism are issues that need to be worked on and supporting students in the ways that they want to work through these topics.

There was a request for specific training for management and leadership teams. They need to develop actionable strategies.

ARCD-O can offer a series of workshops, approximately one a month starting from this month and then going through to December. There are some workshops they cannot provide, and the suggestion is an outside provider. The first workshop will be for college leadership on understanding our responsibility to prevent racial discrimination and harassment. The outside provider being recommended is Hill Studio. If this seems like an appropriate way forward, Hill Studio would be contacted for a workshop on grounding strategies for release and preparing for the end of the semester, knowing the toll that challenging racism takes. There would then be a workshop on deconstructing institutional racism, again, for leadership and management teams. Then training for all on responsibility and preventing racial discrimination and harassment. A workshop on navigating and healing through anti-black trauma in April. In May, this training will continue through to the summer, identifying and addressing attitudinal barriers for all and addressing racial microaggressions. In July, tools for speaking up for yourself. Accompanying this campaign there will be a list of resources and there will be recourse when someone has experienced racism and it will be regularly circulated. In October, a workshop specifically on anti-black racism, challenging anti-black racism, another workshop for BIPOC community members. This sequence of workshops ends in December with a workshop on what allyship means as a daily practice.

D. Rodricks commented that it is sometimes the doing that helps to connect the concept to theory. Also wondered about the size of these groups, smaller groups can be more helpful, as well as immersive roleplay. Also mentioned the need for this to be sustained, to be an ongoing thing. D. Rodricks noted the power differentials in the work environment and what that might mean for how people do or do not participate in trainings and workshops.

J. Kim noted that issues with past New College sessions have been related to not being able to attend due to timing, sessions being offered in very particular timeslots that are not necessarily convenient for everybody. May be helpful to canvas people to see what works for them. Also noted from experience in other places that it seems the people who voluntarily sign up for trainings such as these, are not usually the people who really need to be attending the sessions, rather the people who do not sign up are likely the ones that need the trainings.

B. McElhinny noted that there is recourse if people have experienced racism, and everyone in the college needs to know this. We will support people robustly if they need to seek that recourse.

B. McElhinny noted that the strongest emphasis of these workshops is on workplace issues. They are not focused on curriculum. Curricular issues are related, but they require another set of strategies.

- Next steps - B. McElhinny will put together a cover letter that will take into account comments received from New College program directors and from professional managers. An email will go out early next week, describing this work. Working with ARCD-O to schedule some dates for specific workshops. Will continue to work with others in the college to ensure broad outreach to all in the community.

- Mandatory leave policy is currently up for review. The policy was implemented three years ago. In the past, where students were engaging in actions that could potentially have significant consequences on others, the only strategy that was available was the implementation of the code of conduct. The mandatory leave policy was enacted to support a leave that would not be a disciplinary action. It was controversial at the time. Many
Report of the Vice-Principal

T. Goldstein reported the following:

- June Larkin Award for Pedagogical Development – awarded to A. Guerson, who has great ideas for working through ways of supporting students experiencing stress, mental health issues and isolation.
- Kathleen O’Connell Award - nominations are open to April 30th. This award is for sessional instructors.
- Site visits are being planned for Buddhism, Psychology and Mental health, and for African Studies. The dates have not been set but are expected to happen in May and June. The visits will involve several people from New College, faculty, staff, and students. They are going to help the reviewers make recommendations for how both of those programs can move into the future and build on strengths.
- Fall planning - five more program director meetings have been booked based on news of upcoming in-person learning.
- Senior Doctoral Fellowship Program – there are several senior doctoral fellowships associated with each of our programs and they typically have an opportunity to talk about their research in the spring.

Report from the Registrar’s Office

K. Huffman reported the following:

- Grant application for the fall winter session is going to be open and available until March 31st. Does not have to be COVID related expenses, it is to address any kind of financial need.
- The deadline to late withdraw or add a CR notation has been extended to May 7th.

Report from the Office of Residence and Student Life

L. McCormack-Smith reported the following:

- For the next NCC there will be more information about fall planning for resident’s orientation and transition, there should more solidified plans by the next meeting.

Report from the Advancement Office

C. Argiropoulos reported the following:

- Spring campaign launched March 1st, annual giving campaign. Theme was “Trailblazers”, and the work of Dr. Ursula Franklin was featured. A student’s work was also showcased, looking at his accomplishments and work.
- There is a new bursary award fund, for donors who are interested in supporting students in financial need.
- Virtual alumni engagement – recently hit 100% of newly engaged alumni metrics, measuring the number of new alumni that participate in our events. The Bonnie Stern event had over 100 people attend online.
- Mentorship program work being done by B. Registe – there was a virtual reception last week with over 60 alumni and students.

Report from the Communications Office

N. Cahill reported the following:
• The design stage of the project is well underway. Digital Echidna came up with three initial design concepts. The working group provided feedback, what they liked, what did not work, etc. Digital Echidna was asked to revise the three concepts based on the feedback and bring back something that we can move forward with.

• All three design concepts had green as the core colour or some version of green. Digital Echidna stayed with this, they understood the deep connection that our community has to green and how people feel it is a recognizable New College element, so we will be moving forward with it. The concept most liked was the monochromatic green. There should be some design boards to share at the next meeting. Once the design concept is finalized, it will be used to build our network and choose a font system, and then those are going to be the building blocks that go into the new website.

• Website work is rolling out. There is an audit of current web sessions with units throughout the college, who might have some specialized needs. This information is being used to create the navigation system for the new site.

• Tree testing will be done in April. The community will be asked to go into the navigation system, move around, see if it is intuitive, see if there are things that do not work.

• Students are the main users.

• S. Atkinson has been starting work with some units to clean up their sections of the website.

D. Rodricks asked what the rational was for removing the gold from New College colours. Stated that removing the colour is removing the history.

N. Cahill commented that the feedback received was that people were more connected to the green. Have to look at how we are viewed externally rather internally.

D. Rodricks asked if the three concepts were pitched to NCSC, NCRC and the student body at large.

N. Cahill will take this feedback to Digital Echidna. Clarified that the concept chosen was the one that was overwhelmingly popular. Happy to connect with appropriate stakeholders.

L. Zuo noted that students who are really involved in student life and leadership are attached to the green and gold, but students who are less involved with the college are less attached to the colours, especially the gold.

Other Business

No other business.

Adjournment

On a motion by M. Levin, seconded by S. Stewart, the meeting was adjourned at 1:59pm. CARRIED.
Office of Residence and Student Life Update:
- Todd Le Blanc has left ORSL and taken the role of Assistant Director, First Year Student Success and Transition at the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering. I want to personally thank him for all of his dedication and vision over the last four and a half years. He has left a definite mark on portfolio of Student Life and Leadership at New College, and has been a wonderful colleague. We wish him luck on his next adventure, and look forward to welcoming him back for a proper goodbye when we can return to campus.

- Residence planning for next year is currently in progress:
  - We have hired 15 Residence Dons for the 2021-22 year
  - We have hired nine Residence Academic Programmers
  - We are currently planning on 450 available beds (of 880) going into September of 2021. We have the capacity to open more if public health advice is it is safe to do so.
  - Of the 450 beds:
    ▪ 25% have been offered to returning/upper year students – including offers to first year students who were unable to come to campus this year, but followed through on their housing guarantee in hopes of arriving for the 2020-21 academic year.
    ▪ Approximately 15% rooms reserved for International Foundation Program students.
    ▪ Remainder are anticipated for incoming first year students with housing guarantees.
  - We also have 4 floors reserved for later admits, that will be used for isolation spaces at the beginning of the year, if necessary.

- Orientation hiring and planning is underway:
  - Two Orientation Coordinators have been hired
  - Eight Orientation Executives have been hired
  - Head Peer Leader and Peer Leader hiring will happen upon completion of the final assessment period
  - Planning of the virtual components of Orientation is happening now, including the International Student Orientation, and Academic Orientation.
    ▪ In-person components are being prepared, and will be announced if/when we know we can have in-person engagement on campus, and what capacity restrictions exist for that planning.
    ▪ In-person residence components (run by Residence Life Staff) will be planned in tandem as well to compliment Orientation programming