
Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee held on 22nd May 2003, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Room 609, James (Administration) Building.

Present: L. Vinet (Chair), J. Beheshti, A. Bryan, C. Bushnell, V. Choy, E. Cooper, M. Crago, G. Demopoulos, J. Galbraith, W. Hendershot, H. Knox, A. Lau, H.G. Leighton, P. Martineau, A.C. Masi, J. Zucchi, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)
Regrets: J. Bilec, Ph. Depalle, M. Graham, F. Groen, N. Peters, L. Proulx, R. Roy, F. Sagel

15.01 **Proposed agenda**

Accepted as circulated.

15.02 **Minutes of meeting held on May 8, 2003**

Adopted as circulated.

15.03 **Business arising**

None.

15.04 **Graduate Student Research Progress Tracking Policy**

- Policy, Guidelines/Regulations, and Forms (02-APPC-05-68)

Associate Vice-Principal Crago presented the document, a revised version of what was discussed on September 26, 2002. Since that date, an article in the February 2003 issue of University Affairs has focused on studies identifying factors leading to low graduation rates and long time-to-completion and time-to-withdrawal. Monitoring graduate student progress looks increasingly like an important activity. The proposed policy, forms and revisions to the guidelines were presented to the Deans in April. Most Deans responded that they thought standard forms ought to be used; it should be possible to add to the forms but not take away from them. Use of the verb “must” was preferred to “should”.

In the discussion on the proposed revisions to section v of the Guidelines, a number of changes were agreed to. Any mention of “advisory committee” should be replaced by “advisory/thesis committee”. The third sentence should read: “At least annually, there must be a meeting between the student, supervisor and the advisory/thesis committee, or in the case where there is no such advisory/thesis committee, there must be an annual meeting between the student’s supervisor and the departmental representative, at which objectives for the upcoming year are established and the prior year’s research progress is recorded and evaluated.” The fourth sentence should read: “A written record of such meetings must include the signature of the student, supervisor and the advisory/thesis committee member or a departmental representative, and this record must be retained in the student’s departmental file. The last two sentences should read: “In the case where the student does not make expected progress, the advisory or thesis committee or, minimally in the case where there is no such advisory or thesis committee, the student, supervisor and a departmental representative must meet at least once per semester for the subsequent year twelve months to review progress and if appropriate to set new objectives. On the occasion of a second unsatisfactory progress report, the student may be requested required to withdraw from the program of study.” This latter correction was to allow for administrative discretion and compassionate considerations. Further corrections were made to the texts on the forms:

- *Graduate Student Research Objectives Report Form*: the last two lines should read “Chair or Director of Graduate Studies (or delegate) or advisory/thesis committee member(s). Student did not sign form and does not agree with ~~evaluation~~ the objectives (explanation attached).”

- *Graduate Student Research Progress Report Form to be completed by the supervisor and/or supervisory committee*: The two options were replaced with: “Indicate here if this is an interim report following an unsatisfactory report.”

In the discussion, the question was again asked as to how to ensure that departments would comply with the policy. The proposed policy and forms provide means to monitor and measure time-to-completion. Only with the necessary documentation developed through consistent progress tracking will a department be able to fail a graduate student for reasons of lack of progress. The best way to have departments comply is to get academic staff to realize how important it is to monitor and document graduate students’ progress. Some universities require that forms be submitted to the Dean’s office. It was noted that although committees probably do meet with graduate students once a year, the review process may not necessarily entail writing reports, ticking off students’ names on a list, and putting something in the students’ files. At the moment many departments require graduate student supervisors to meet with students individually, set objectives for the year and review progress etc. It was reiterated that the Office of Graduate and

Postdoctoral Studies should circulate lists of students with a reminder regarding the policy, and a request that the date of review should be entered on the list; this will provide confirmation by the GPSO at the Dean's level that student and supervisor are sitting together at least once a year. It was acknowledged that the policy would help ensure that students and supervisors have that opportunity to talk and identify problems if there are any. It was also noted that with the involvement of another departmental member the student's objectives and progress will be monitored by more than one professor, which should help to ensure that objectives as well as the scope of the thesis are appropriate. **The proposed Graduate Student Research Progress Tracking Policy (guidelines and regulations and forms) will be revised and submitted to Senate for approval.**

15.05 **SCTP Report on May 1st, 2003 meeting (02-APPC-05-69)**
 - B.A.; Minor Concentration in Jewish Law

Professor Crago presented the proposed Minor Concentration in Jewish Law, stating that the new integrated Law program allows students to take minors and that no new resources would be required for offering this minor. In the discussion, however, mention of "The Gisia Kisilevsky Program in Jewish Law (named after the donor's grandmother", in the section on Rationale, raised questions. It was suggested that this matter should be investigated before APPC approval could be granted. It was noted that if the name is indeed intended to apply to the teaching program, APPC could not approve the proposed program since the naming of programs at McGill is not permitted at this time. APPC members recalled earlier discussions on the naming of academic programs and units: a proposal by former Vice-Principal (Research) Pierre Bélanger was submitted to Senate and referred back to APPC; after seeking advice from the Deans, APPC withdrew its earlier recommendation to Senate. (Excerpt from APPC's 342nd Report to Senate: *At its meeting on May 15, 2002, APPC agreed to withdraw the recommendation it presented to Senate on February 13, 2002 that the University include academic entities, such as faculties, schools, centres, institutes and programs in the list of items that may be named after a donor. Rather than propose a policy and procedure for naming academic units and programs, APPC concluded that it would be best to consider proposals to name academic units and programs after donors in an ad hoc fashion.*)

It was not known whether the use of the endowment fund is conditional on the naming of the minor program in Jewish Law; it was also not known how the naming came about and what should happen to the money if the program disappeared. **It was agreed that the matter and funding of the proposed program should be clarified. The Chair of SCTP will contact Professor Gershon Hundert, Chair of the Department of Jewish Studies, to seek clarifications on "the Gisia Kisilevsky Program in Jewish Law".** (Note: *Professor G. Hundert assured the Committee Secretary that there had been no expectation or commitment re. naming of the program; funds will support courses in Jewish Law; reference to the donation will be deleted from the text submitted to Senate.*)

15.06 **CSP Report #6 Recommendations** on Communication, études et productions cinématographiques (02-APPC-04-59)

Associate Vice-Principal Crago stated that the initial recommendations reflected the familiar concern about removing inter-institutional bylaw obstacles to interuniversity collaboration in the joint delivery of doctoral programs and removing financial obstacles to interuniversity exchanges. A survey revealed that there were very few external supervisors at McGill. Professor Crago suggested that the bureaucratic entanglement could be circumvented by working out compensations for exchanges through CREPUQ.

15.07 **CSP Report #7 Recommendations on Engineering (02-APPC-05-67)**
 The report was found to be satisfactory.

15.08 **Other business**

Gratitude was expressed to Mr. Arthur Lau for his much appreciated service as Board of Governors representative on the Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.