
Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee held on 4th September 2003, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in the Faculty of Engineering Conference Room, Room 388, Macdonald Engineering Building.

Present: L. Vinet (Chair), J. Beheshti, A. Bryan, V. Choy, M. Crago, M. Cudnoch, G. Demopoulos, Ph. Depalle, M. Graham, F. Groen, W. Hendershot, H.G. Leighton, A.C. Masi, S. McDougall, L. Proulx, J. Zucchi, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)
Regrets: C. Bushnell, E. Cooper, J. Galbraith, H. Knox, M. Kuan, R. Roy
Guests: C. Fraenkel, A. Fuks

01.01 **Proposed agenda**
Accepted as circulated.

01.02 **Minutes of meeting held on May 22, 2003**
Adopted as circulated.

01.03 **Business arising**
None.

01.04 **Report on the external evaluation of new programs**

a) Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy program restructuring

The Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy program dossiers have been going through the first phase of the external evaluation process, i.e. the evaluation of academic quality for which the Commission d'évaluation des projets de programmes (CEP) of CREPUQ is responsible. The dossiers followed the lighter route (*évaluation modulée*) for which no site visit is required (it has to be shown that existing courses make up at least two-thirds of the credits content of the proposed programs for this lighter process to apply). A recommendation as to whether or not to recommend approval will be formulated by CEP at its October meeting. If the "Avis" is positive, the two dossiers will be submitted to the Ministry of Education for the second phase of the external approval process and final approval. Access to the profession at the master's level has not yet been formalized in Quebec; it is therefore unclear how the MEQ might deal with the proposals.

b) M.Sc. (Applied) in Biotechnology

This new program proposal is currently going through a complete evaluation by CREPUQ's CEP. A site visit was held on June 19 and a recommendation as to whether to recommend approval is also expected in October, after which the dossier will be forwarded by the University to the Ministry of Education for the second phase of the evaluation and final approval.

01.05 **Change in degree designation**
B. Ed. Kinesiology to B. Sc. (Kinesiology)
(SCTP Report on April 17, 2003 meeting considered by APPC on May 8, 2003, 03-APPC-05-66)

Formal approval by APPC of the change in degree designation from B.Ed. Kinesiology to B.Sc. (Kinesiology) was required. The parentheses mean that the B.Sc. program is not exclusive to the Faculty of Science. The Department of Physical Education and Kinesiology in the Faculty of Education is responsible for that program.

The change in degree designation was approved for submission to Senate, on motion by Professor Hendershot, seconded by Ms Macdougall.

01.06 **SCTP Report on meeting held on May 29, 2003 (03-APPC- 09-01)**
- B.A.; Minor Concentration in Philosophy & Western Religions (18 cr.)
- B.A.; Major Concentration in Philosophy & Western Religions (36 cr.)
- B.A.; Honours in Philosophy & Western Religions (60 cr.)
- B.A.; Joint Honours - Philosophy & Western Religions Component (36 cr.)

Professor Carlos Fraenkel from the Department of Jewish Studies joined the meeting and presented the program proposals. He stressed that the proposed programs are different from anything else that touches the subject of philosophy and western religions. They use an interesting combination of courses that are suitable to this kind of focus. Professor Fraenkel emphasized that McGill offers an excellent academic environment and has the necessary resources for focusing on the interaction between the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions; given how intertwined those religious traditions are, it does not make sense to teach one without relation to the other; the proposed programs pull those academic areas together. In terms of the current international political circumstances, it is important to teach students the interconnections between the Christian thought and Jewish and Islamic traditions. The programs should appeal to students who are curious in exploring those traditions and their interaction, as well as the necessary language component.

In the discussion it was further noted that all resources were in place: only three new courses were introduced. The Faculty of Religious Studies is one of the units involved in offering the proposed programs and the Dean of the Faculty is supportive of this initiative. It was noted that McGill now had the possibility of bridging two units which are not present at all universities (Islamic Studies and Jewish Studies) and of tying a unique group of academic resources to teaching programs; it was further suggested that it may be possible to connect this to teaching developments at the doctoral level in the Faculty of Education by means of the Faculty's interest in culture and values. There was concern that the course contribution on the Islamic side may look a little thin; in response to a suggestion that a topics course and visiting staff might be considered, it was stated that attempts are being made to hire a specialist in Islamic philosophy who would contribute significantly to the programs. Teaching in the Institute of Islamic Studies is limited to graduate level; the Institute therefore contributes 500-level seminar-courses to the proposed programs. The subject of library resources was raised: McGill has historical strength in the field of the history of philosophy but Professor Fraenkel was invited to inform University Libraries of any material found to be lacking. While the inter-faith approach was appreciated, it was suggested that the rise of modern science and its interaction with religious philosophy could be an interesting seminar topic. A few technical points were clarified: "Joint Honours" means that the other part of the student's program comes from another field; on the subject of inactive courses, it was made clear that courses are given in rotation over three years, thus allowing students ample choice; only courses that have not been offered for a few years are deleted from calendars.

APPC expressed its support for collaboration among the three units involved in teaching the proposed programs and **approved the four proposals for submission to Senate.**

01.07 **Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office - Plagiarism and academic integrity:**

Proposal to amend policies relating to Ph.D. Studies (03-APPC-09-02)

Background (350th APPC Report to Senate, April 2, 2003 and Senate minutes, April 2, 2003)

Blanket statement on academic integrity;

Excerpts from Thesis Preparation and Submission Guidelines

www.mcgill.ca/gps/programs/thesis/guidelines: Doctoral oral exams (a) and Thesis failures (b)

Excerpts from Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies General Information, Regulations and Research Guidelines 2003-04 www.mcgill.ca/courses: Failure Policy (c); Ph.D. Comprehensives Policy (d)

Dean Crago presented the proposals to amend the policies, regulations and guidelines applying to Ph.D. studies. Senate had objected that the amendment to the Ph.D. Comprehensives Policy submitted in March 2003 circumvented the "Green Book" (Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures). The proposal, prepared in consultation with Dean Shore, Associate Dean Mendelson, and Professor Lydia White, was an attempt to establish a just process, and was intended to be reported to Senate for information.

In APPC's discussion it soon appeared that the proposed amendments were judged to be much too lenient and it was thought that the guidelines were not the right place for such policies on academic integrity to be located and that they should likely not go to Senate in this form. It was stated that it is the students' responsibility to find out the rules governing academic integrity at the University; students could no longer argue that they do not know about plagiarism; informing and educating students on the subject of academic integrity is the most effective approach; should students break the rules, they should face the consequences. It was also noted that various degrees of plagiarism could be encountered: copying sentences out of a textbook in a thesis introduction may surely be considered as a less severe offense than plagiarizing results; flexibility should therefore be applied and a range of judgments should be exercised.

On the whole, it was felt that the proposals were sending the wrong message and weakening the policy. Given the amount of available information on academic integrity, the University should push for the hardest approach when infractions are encountered. Given APPC's unease with the proposed amendments, Dean Crago was invited to reconvene Associate Dean Morton Mendelson, Dean Shore, and Professor Lydia White in order for them to consider other alternatives to the March 2003 proposal.

01.08 **Proposal to merge the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and the Department of Occupational Health (03-APPC-09-03)**

Dr Fuks, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, joined the meeting and presented the proposal to merge the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and the Department of Occupational Health. The merger effectively took place several years ago (1996-97) when Dr. Gilles Thériault, Chair of the Department of Occupational Health, took on the chair of Epidemiology and Biostatistics as well. Epidemiology has been in existence at McGill for decades. A School of Occupational Health used to report to the Vice-Principal (Research) and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. When the School was moved to the Faculty of Medicine (*September 1993*), it became a department. It has evolved over time; its mission has changed from traditional occupational health and toxicity in the workplace (with two of the best toxicologists in North America developing techniques and running analysis service) to a broadening of the public health aspect and the development of a highly successful web-based Master's in Occupational Health program. The department is too small to function effectively on its own but its reputation continues to grow because of recent public health crises. Given the close working relationship with the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, a formal merger of the two departments makes sense.

In response to a query as to whether teaching programs would adopt one degree name, the Dean stated that the degrees would be kept separate and retain their current designations.

The merger of the two departments was **approved for submission to Senate**. The Dean will provide a fuller document that can be appended to APPC's 354th report for consideration by Senate on October 1st.

01.09 **Strategic Planning process**

Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) Luc Vinet and Deputy-Provost and Chief Information Officer Anthony Masi informed APPC as to how planning is now intended to be conducted. New leadership has caused a review of McGill's position and a reassessment of the vision that determines the actions to be taken and structures the way in which that vision is expressed.

Dr Vinet presented the key elements of this approach, one of them being the integration of the planning process; the various facets or sectors of the universities, i.e. teaching, research, space and other resources, should all be considered at the same time. Integration of all planning aspects and increased communication among units are viewed as critical in order to optimize the use of resources, avoid duplicating efforts, and seize opportunities. Another key element is that of allowing enough time for those plans to unfold. The annual discretionary allocation exercise, in response to specific Faculty projects and needs, would balance off from one year to another; longer-term budget commitments may be necessary for Faculties to realize decisive planning visions. Given the current academic staff renewal phase, McGill finds itself at a junction which more than ever requires a well coordinated planning process. In the spring and throughout summer discussions have been held with deans regarding the key values of the exercise; the University is now about to get this planning process underway. Tied to the budget process, it will include benchmarking for comparing McGill's performance to that of peer institutions and for accountability purposes. At a meeting on September 3rd, Deans were given a time line for the first steps of the proposed planning process which will involve interaction on details and signing off on faculty plans. The link between academic priorities and budgets will be worked on in a coordinated fashion. A budget model will be presented on November 6, incorporating macroeconomics aspects, public policy assumptions and various parameters. Teaching-program reviews will be part of the new process; new guidelines are being developed.

Dr. Masi explained that in Principal Shapiro's tenure, planning had shifted to the short-term, tactical kind which many universities resorted to in the face of tightening government funding. Budget cuts could not be planned for; when Deans would be asked to cut even more they would ask for the funds to be reinstated through discretionary allocations that were initially intended for specific development purposes. Parameters have now changed for the better; expectations have grown, and so has the necessity of reverting to a more formalized planning process and accountability structure for taking decisions and making

choices. A dialogue with Deans is necessary for thinking about which areas to invest in, which ones to be active in or emphasize, which strengths to build and which ones to move forward at a different speed. As the vision for the University is being enlarged, Principal Munroe-Blum felt it was time to change the way in which the University talks about planning and the structure it uses for driving planning. Dr. Masi, as Deputy-Provost, was given the responsibility to organize the planning process. Not all needs and wishes can be accommodated. Deans are now working with Chairs to develop a picture of where they stand and where they would like to go. Emphasis should be placed on activities that cut across the University. Advancing the education of students also has to be assessed constantly; it is crucial to review and rethink teaching programs in order to meet the University's responsibility to itself (as per its commitment through CREPUQ) and to the Ministry of Education of Quebec. McGill also has to make sure it has the right research agenda in place. This is an opportunity to be flexible and yet not so flexible as to embrace everything. The competition for resources worldwide is driving this exercise. McGill wishes to be strong in its teaching programs, enhance research, and tie research to teaching in a meaningful way. Rather than have everything formula-driven, Deans will develop and negotiate proposals for contract-agreements for the University administration to sign on and for which Deans will be held accountable (they will not be held accountable for things over which they have no control). Agreements will be signed with the Provost with funding provided over a number of years for specific aspirations to be realized; the way in which performance will be measured (and against whom) is also up for negotiation; Faculties will propose appropriate benchmarks. Over the next six weeks, meetings will be held with every dean individually to review written proposals. Budget proposals will be finalized six weeks thereafter and presented to the Board. Those are procedural changes towards a clearer formalization of plans. The University's overall mission remains unchanged.

In the discussion, skepticism was expressed regarding involvement in the planning process: it was noted that planning works best when it involves everybody and it succeeds only when everyone in the group, unit or Faculty becomes part of the process. Furthermore when it comes to identifying areas for growth and shifting resources, government funding cannot solely be relied on; fundraising efforts have to be intensified. In response it was stated that this was fully understood; at a recent meeting with over one hundred new academic staff members, all of them were invited to participate in the planning process. Individuals' ideas will have to be solicited. In answer to a comment that staff members should be empowered to do their own fundraising, it was noted that fundraising efforts have to be coordinated or else conflicting and embarrassing situations might occur and might undermine efforts to land larger donations. It was further commented that a more integrated planning process will be very useful in terms of providing context for proposals leading to new teaching programs or the establishment of new research centres. Fitting all the pieces together with a sense of direction as to where individual proposals are leading to will allow APPC to review proposals no longer in an isolated way. Multiple requests will now be put on the table all at one time so that it is possible to ascertain whether academic priorities are driving those aspirations. McGill cannot go on not reviewing the quality of its programs (in fall 1999 a moratorium was imposed on cyclical reviews): program reviews will be part of the overall planning exercise. In addition, towards the end of each exercise, faculty plans will be synthesized into a University plan tied to a development plan with which to approach donors.

The Chair stated that APPC, because of its planning mandate and the key role it should be playing, would be kept informed of developments.

01.10 Other business
None.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.