
Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee held on 16th October 2003, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Room 609, James (Administration) Building

Present: L. Vinet (Chair), A. Bryan, C. Bushnell, V. Choy, M. Crago, G. Demopoulos, M. Dowsley, J. Galbraith, M. Graham, W. Hendershot, H.G. Leighton, A.C. Masi, S. McDougall, J. Zucchi, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)
Regrets: J. Beheshti, E. Cooper, Ph. Depalle, F. Groen, H. Knox, M. Kuan, L. Proulx, R. Roy
Guests: N. de Takacsy (item 6)

Document circulated at the meeting:

- 03-APPC-09-14 Canada – European Community Project for Co-operation in Higher Education and Training

03.01 **Proposed agenda**

One item was added to the agenda under 04 Agreements: Canada – European Community Project for Cooperation in Higher Education and Training. Item c) Strategic Planning was added to 03 Business arising from the minutes of the meeting held on September 4, 2003. The agenda was approved as revised.

03.02 **Minutes of meeting held on September 18, 2003**

Adopted as circulated.

03.03 **Business arising**

- a) Proposed graduate programs in Law (D.C.L. and LL.M.) (03-APPC-09-05)
- **Revised Graduate Law Degree Proposals** (03-APPC-10-13)

The APPC Report which included the graduate program proposals in Law as approved by SCTP on May 29, 2003 and by APPC on September 18, 2003 was withdrawn by the Steering Committee of Senate from the Senate agenda for the meeting on October 15 with a request that the proposed labeling of degrees should be reconsidered. A more structurally logical process was subsequently devised involving three steps: 1) a change of degree name from D.C.L. in Comparative Law to D.C.L. in Law, and from LL.M. in Comparative Law to LL.M. in Law; 2) an option in Comparative Law in the D.C.L. and an option in Comparative Law (with thesis) in the LL.M. in Law; 3) a Non-Thesis option in both the LL.M. in Law and in the LL.M. in Law; Comparative Law.

It was noted that an option in Comparative Law in a generic program in Law makes more sense than an option in Law in a specialized program in Comparative Law. There are also historical reasons for keeping the Comparative Law degree label; the Institute of Comparative Law was responsible for the development of graduate studies and research in the Faculty and the Institute's teaching and research missions need to be preserved in a visible fashion through the preservation of a distinct option in Comparative Law. The Air and Space Law programs are being retained for similar reasons.

APPC approved the following proposals for submission to Senate:

- Change of degree name from Doctor of Civil Law (D.C.L.) in Comparative Law to Doctor of Civil Law (D.C.L.) in Law;
- Change of degree name from Master of Law (LL.M.) in Comparative Law to Master of Law (LL.M.) in Law;
- New option D.C.L. in Law: Comparative Law;
- New option LL.M. in Law; Comparative Law;
- New option LL.M. in Law; Non-Thesis;
- New option LL.M. in Law; Comparative Law – Non-Thesis.

- b) A+ grade (03-APPC-09-06)
- Response from Associate Dean of Science, Sept 19, 2003 (03-APPC-10-07)

APPC considered the response from Associate Dean of Science Morton Mendelson to APPC's decision that it was "not willing to reopen the debate on the A+ grading scheme in this academic year" and "would be willing to reopen it next year if it could be shown that McGill were out of step with the AAU and G10 university institutions."

In the discussion the information submitted by Associate Dean Mendelson was found to be interesting but not convincing enough to reopen the debate at this time. Furthermore it was noted that, in addition to many years of debate on the issue, a consultation of all McGill faculties had been conducted and the result was still very much split. APPC had taken a decision on the basis of that information, and challenging that decision and bringing the issue back so quickly in order to obtain the desired conclusion was unacceptable. APPC did not wish to hear about the issue before a whole year has gone by, when the Faculty of Science, if it so wishes, may make the case by gathering detailed information covering all 62 institutions of the AAU and specifying whether A+ is equivalent to 4.0 or 4.3. **The request to consider the A+ issue anew was declined.**

c) Minutes of September 4, 2003 – strategic planning process presentation

Following up on item 9 of the minutes of the APPC meeting on September 4, 2003, dealing with the strategic planning process, questions were asked regarding the document that had been circulated by the Office of the Provost to faculties as part of the budget process for next year. While the document outlined what the process will be, there was concern that the planning process had not been circulated to and discussed with the APPC in order to ensure academic input. APPC was uncomfortable with the process.

The Chair replied that the planning exercise was thought by the Principal to be an administrative process, ie. the setting up of a framework in which dialogue with faculties and other services would take place. Every-day decisions affecting the future were found lacking in a number of ways; multi-year budgeting was not easy to put into place; various sectors needed to be better integrated. The starting point was purely administrative and that was the main reason why the development of the process had not first been channeled through the Academic Policy and Planning Committee. Although it may be a good idea to have more people thinking about such issues, the concern is one of timing. If this process is to be tied to resource allocation, it has to be pushed quickly, so that budgets can be allocated and plans for the Capital Campaign can be made. The templates circulated to Deans were working documents that Deans have been asked to add input to. The Deputy-Provost added that the newly proposed process did not reflect a drastic or massive change in planning policy and that there was a difference between governance and administration. Deans and the Administration have been doing planning in one form or another for some time; discussions are intended to be at the level of Deans and Chairs. While Deans have been presenting proposals regarding staff hiring, space, computer equipment etc. no mechanism is now in place for coordinating and prioritizing plans. Broader issues of resource generation and allocation are being dealt with and priorities emanating from the exercise will be taken to appropriate bodies, such as APPC which will deal with teaching programs.

It was argued that the priorities or strategic directions devised several years ago and outlined in the documents that were circulated to Deans, and which APPC members had no access to, did not provide guidance as to directions for the future; instead of driving the planning, they essentially listed goals that have already been worked on and described what had been done so far. It was thought that they did not stimulate forward-looking thinking and did not develop in units a sense of direction. Lack of time for consultation was another issue; it was not allowing faculty members to avail themselves of the opportunity to report back to their Deans within the set deadline.

The Provost responded that the working papers were used in the iterative process with Deans in order to get the exercise going. Those were planning documents produced for the CRC/CFI exercise, fully vetted by faculties and used as a first shot for developing fund-raising plans. The point was not to get swamped with information that was useless but to identify priorities and ensure that all components converge to make those priorities happen, lest they become meaningless and we delude ourselves. Not everything could be a priority; adding something means removing something else. The Provost added that all comments would be welcome and APPC could discuss the issue more at length.

It was strongly urged that planning should be on APPC's agenda. It was remarked that although planning is an important part of APPC's terms of reference, no item on planning had been included in the Committee's "Statement of problems, plans and priorities" intended for Senate (03-APPC-10-11). The Chair was uncertain as to where APPC would find its place and how the University should

organize the discussions on resources so as to optimize them. Those discussions will generate academic choices that will need to come to APPC. He stated that it would be difficult for a committee to second guess what is occurring in faculties. The development of an institutional plan, as a second stage, will include funding priorities which will have to be vetted; APPC could offer advice on this and may be useful in inputting documents that are intended to go to faculties. The question was one of time. It was further mentioned that comments on process and procedure would be useful and necessary, and that committees had an ability to provide important input, especially a committee which has planning in its name and mandate. While the immediate process is under a time squeeze, the longer-term process could come to APPC. The Provost agreed, although in his view it would be difficult to tie APPC's advice to the movement forward of planning decisions. But the issue could be on the agenda; APPC's input would be informative for those who are steering the planning process. While the University Administration could not always wait for APPC's advice for making decisions, it should at least be possible for APPC members to voice their opinion about decisions being taken whenever possible.

It was further stated that planning follows different dynamics in different faculties, and that it may be difficult sometimes to see how a plan fits in the larger plan; it is therefore good to have several sources of input. It was noted that the APPC terms of reference includes reporting to Senate "on planning and priority issues including regular review of and recommendations relating to resource distribution within the University, following consultation with the University, and the possibility of reviewing and making recommendations on administrative processes and related resource requirements." As the APPC is mandated to do much more than what it is currently doing, it was suggested that the work of APPC might need to be restructured. It was also agreed that **the meeting on October 30th should be dedicated to planning**. At that meeting, the Provost would present to APPC the proposed strategic planning process as it currently stands, before the same presentation is made to Senate on November 5th.

03.04 Agreements with other universities

a) Visiting-student agreement with the University of Bergen , Norway (03-APPC-10-08)

Associate Vice-Principal (Academic) Nicholas de Takacsy presented the proposed visiting-student agreement with the University of Bergen. This is not an exchange agreement as it is not clear how many students could be sent to Norway from McGill. Students from the University of Bergen will be received as visiting students paying fees and will be treated in exactly the same way as exchange students except for their fees; students shall pay the same tuition fees and other related fees as international students at McGill University. It is expected that a student exchange agreement will follow if a stronger demand by McGill students for studies at Scandinavian universities is expressed. According to the agreement, the University of Bergen may send up to five semester/term students to be enrolled at McGill University for a period not exceeding twelve months with credit to be transferred back to their University.

Dr. de Takacsy stressed that student mobility was a high priority for European countries, Scandinavian countries in particular. Students' entitlement to study abroad is an integrated part of their study program and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was developed to facilitate student mobility within Europe. Norwegian universities are attracting more international students by offering more courses in English which is becoming the common language of study as Latin once was. In response to questions, Dr. de Takacsy stated that exchange or visiting-student agreements are open to both undergraduates and graduate students, unless specified, and that most students in this case are expected to be undergraduates. According to this agreement, the University of Bergen would select its applicants and the group would be treated as a privileged set of visiting students.

A broader discussion took place regarding the opportunities afforded McGill students: are they being sufficiently encouraged to study abroad? Is the "Student exchanges and study abroad" website user-friendly? It was suggested that McGill may wish to consider redesigning its own website and making use of its student listserv to reach and encourage students to take advantage of opportunities to study abroad as part of their McGill experience. The idea of appointing student mobility advisors in faculties or departments was also raised. Although each faculty has its own way of advising its students on particular exchanges (the Faculty of Management for example deals with its own selected subset of institutions) it would be useful to have all the information pooled together in one place.

It was stated that not all teaching programs allow for the possibility for students to spend a semester

or year abroad. A three-year program may not allow much time for students to participate in an exchange program. The Committee on Student Affairs (CSA) will be dealing with issues relating to ways of increasing the proportion of McGill students who participate in student exchanges or study abroad opportunities; at the moment only about 10% of McGill's students do. Each department could develop a set of priority partners whose academic courses and programs are well understood, therefore making effective advising possible. It was noted that program adjustments may be possible only when an increase in the number of outgoing students reaches such a level as to raise problems that have to be dealt with. In response to concerns about extra work being unloaded onto departments, it was argued that each department would have to make that kind of adjustment; the Student Exchanges and Study Abroad office is not able at the moment to double its load. It was suggested that this was a planning question: if this activity is indeed a University priority, adequate resources should be allocated for supporting it. The Chair responded that the question should be put to departments as to whether this is an important area. Decisions on choices have to be made through dialogue; the role of central administration is to put questions to faculties and departments. It was mentioned that student mobility in Europe occurs at a structural level; university programs are being standardized to facilitate student mobility.

It was remarked that APPC's discussion raised the role of APPC in planning. It was suggested that while the proposed planning process limits itself to discussions with the Deans who are responsible for faculty budgets, such discussions with Deans may be missing the necessary amount of detail, such as implications of decisions on individual staff.

The proposed agreement with the University of Bergen was approved.

- b) Mobility project in higher education: Canada – European Community Project for Co-operation in Higher Education and Training (03-APPC-10-14)

Associate Vice-Principal (Academic) Nicholas de Takacsy presented a proposed multilateral exchange agreement linking seven universities in the framework of a European Community/Union - Canada Mobility Project in Higher Education, funded by the HRDC, "Promoting Faculty Development to Enhance the Quality of Learning in Higher Education". This exchange will allow the Faculty of education to develop a program component in the area of higher education at the doctoral level with partners with whom the Faculty has been working with already.

In the discussion it was pointed out that the Memorandum of Understanding should make explicit the requirement for Canadian students to take the common component, not at Université de Sherbrooke or University of Manitoba, but at one of the European partners, and vice versa in the case of European students. Other details required further investigation and clarification. It was **agreed that the proposal should be revised and resubmitted to APPC.**

03.05 Subcommittee on Course and Teaching Programs (SCTP)

- Report on meeting held on September 25, 2003 (03-APPC-10-12)
- B.Sc.(Ag.Env.Sc.); Major in Agricultural Sciences; Agricultural Biotechnology
- B.Sc.(Ag.Env.Sc.); Major in Agricultural Sciences Internship; Agricultural Biotechnology

The proposed majors programs were described as nice leads into the Master's (Applied) in Biotechnology and as nice fits within the priorities of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. They were **approved** for submission to Senate.

03.06 Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning mandate review

- SCTL Terms of reference (03-APPC-10-09)
- APPC Terms of reference (03-APPC-10-10)

Associate Vice-Principal (Teaching Programs) Martha Crago informed APPC members that the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning (SCTL) was currently revisiting its mandate, given that the Committee was established in 2001 on a three-year trial basis and is expected to submit recommendations to the Nominating Committee of Senate regarding its terms of reference in March 2004. The SCTL is attempting to evaluate the scope of its own mandate and whether it should function as a Senate Committee. Its predecessor was a subcommittee of APPC, the SCUTL (Subcommittee on University Teaching and Learning) which, it was thought, tended to be a sounding board for the CUTL. The issues the SCTL deals with should be of interest to APPC and might more easily be brought to the APPC agenda if the Committee were an APPC subcommittee rather than a committee reporting directly to Senate.

The SCTL has been working with enthusiasm on a number of issues: the preparation of Teaching Assistants for teaching; the development of a policy on on-line distance education; the teaching of large classes; the integration of research in teaching; and revisions to departmental annual report guidelines. It has also identified a series of questions concerning Teaching and Learning which would be relevant to the Strategic Planning Process. It nevertheless feels caught in a limbo land as a Senate committee. Its terms of reference stipulate that its Chair is selected from among faculty representatives on the Committee; the Provost, Deputy-Provost, and an Associate Vice-Principal are ex-officio members. It meets six times a year, has set up a number of workgroups and generates its own material. It has established a workgroup that will review the SCTL's mandate and report back in December. In APPC's brief discussion on the subject some of the reasons that led to replacing the SCUTL with the SCTL were raised. The question remains as to how best to keep the importance of teaching at the forefront. However, APPC felt that bureaucracy should be minimized and that it would seem appropriate for a committee on teaching and learning to become a subcommittee.

03.07 Draft Statement to Senate of problems, plans, and priorities for 2003-2004 (03-APPC-10-11)

A list of items that APPC is currently dealing with or planning to deal with was prepared in response to a memorandum from the Secretary-General. The Committee agreed that Item C) Planning and Priority issues – Role of the APPC in the strategic planning process should be part of the list, in keeping with the APPC's terms of reference.

03.08 Other business

None.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.