
Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee held on 11th December 2003, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Room 609, James (Administration) Building

Present: L. Vinet (Chair), J. Beheshti, C. Bushnell, V. Choy, E. Cooper, M. Crago, Ph. Depalle, M. Dowsley, J. Galbraith, F. Groen, M. Kuan, A.C. Masi, S. McDougall, L. Proulx, R. Roy, J. Zucchi, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)
Regrets: A. Bryan, G. Demopoulos, M. Graham, W. Hendershot, H. Knox, H. Leighton
Guests: J.J. Clark (item 4)

06.01 Proposed agenda

Adopted as circulated.

06.02 Minutes of meeting held on November 27, 2003

Approved as circulated.

06.03 Business arising

06.04 Subcommittee on Course and Teaching Programs (SCTP)

Report on meeting held on November 20, 2003 (03-APPC-12-26)

- *Inter-university B.Eng. in Microelectronics*

Professor James J. Clark joined the meeting and stated that the proposal responds to a perceived need in industry for university graduates who are skilled in the microelectronics area. Université de Sherbrooke, Ecole Polytechnique, and McGill University have been working on this inter-university program initiative for a few years and areas of specialization at each institution were reflected in the program. He noted that 700-800-900 level courses at Université de Sherbrooke were not graduate courses. The program consists of a base program of 86 credits taken at McGill, and two specialization blocks, each worth 12 credits, to be taken either at McGill, U. de Sherbrooke, or Polytechnique. In response to a concern that McGill students might encounter a problem with offerings in French, Professor Clark noted that McGill students were not having a problem in the Mining Engineering inter-university coop program and that a large proportion of students in the Faculty of Engineering were at ease in the French milieu. Another concern was the logistics of commuting from/to Sherbrooke and the need to address the practicality of this. It was also commented that McGill's strength in Biomedical Engineering was not present in the program. The reason given for this was that the discipline at McGill is located in the Faculty of Medicine and course offerings are at the graduate level; only three courses are currently accessible to undergraduate students in Engineering. Professor Clark reassured the Committee that the inclusion of Biomedical Engineering would be addressed in the future; a number of new courses were being developed; three or four staff members had been hired and it is a growth area for the Department.

Further concerns included a lack of choice for McGill students who may happen not to be quite at ease in French and the wish to see McGill offer more so that its international students are not shut out; it was suggested that McGill should expand its offerings at least to as much as Sherbrooke was offering. Francophone students have six block choices open to them, while students who have only English have only two blocks available to them; another block or two should be offered in English, even if there is some degree of overlap, just as both Sherbrooke and Polytechnique have both included Biomedical Engineering with different flavours. The possibility of courses being offered in English at the other two institutions was raised. While the Department's will to be original and to complement the offerings of the two other institutions by contributing what other universities were not giving was appreciated, it was agreed that more could be added to ensure that McGill students have a greater choice.

Resources were also discussed. It is anticipated that 60 McGill students will take the program and most of the labs would be in the new Trottier Building which was intended for software and microelectronics and which, it was said, is far from being used at capacity. Demand for McGill graduates was also mentioned:

the perception is that graduates from universities such as Waterloo are more hands-on, but it could be argued that programs in the microelectronics field quickly become obsolete and that it may be better to teach students how to think.

Asked how long it would take for McGill to expand its offering in the proposed program, Professor Clark pointed to the time-pressure. Each university had wanted to put on its own program and pressure from the Ministry of Education for an inter-university program caused the three universities to work together on one proposal, and this made sense. But good note was taken that offerings should be expanded for McGill students, and the program could be improved once it was approved.

The proposed inter-university B.Eng. in Microelectronics was approved for submission to Senate with a recommendation that the Faculty of Engineering expand its offering of specialization blocks.

It was noted that this program was a good move on the part of the Faculty of Engineering. It was suggested however that the Faculty should think more about its relation to the medical sector and draw a roadmap so that its students get more skill training in the biological area. It was also suggested that if the University is contemplating more such inter-university programs, it should think about putting in place the necessary infrastructure for students' transportation and accommodation; an important aspect of offering such programs was to make them appealing.

- *Concurrent B.Sc./B.Ed.*

This proposal was a restructuring of existing programs to make them conform to new MEQ teacher certification requirements. New combinations have been introduced; instead of two concentrations, only one is now allowed. **The proposed restructuring was approved for submission to Senate.**

06.05 Comité de suivi sur les programmes

1) Report # 8 Theology and Religious Studies (03-APPC-12-24)

In the discussion it was noted that in the Quebec university network McGill's Faculty of Religious Studies appears somewhat isolated. Earlier discussions to bring together Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies, and Religious Studies were referred to (Report by Professor Bruce Trigger); the strategic planning exercise may provide an opportunity for reviewing the situation.

2) Report # 9 Biology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Biomedical Sciences and Environmental Science (03-APPC-12-25)

Recommendations 3 and 4 on support for graduate students and on collaboration at the graduate level were thought to have little meaning. Graduate students in those fields are generally well supported, at least at McGill. Co-supervision of students by professors at other universities is also common. It was reported that work on programs in Bioinformatics was making good progress.

06.06 Other business

None.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.