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Minutes of the meeting of the **Academic Policy and Planning Committee** held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2004 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Room 609, James (Administration) Building

Present: L. Vinet (Chair), B. Arciero, J. Beheshti, A. Bryan, L. Butler-Kisber, W. Caplin, R.F. Clarke, M. Crago, V. Errunza, J. Feine, J. Galbraith, J.C. Hurtubise (replacing L. Proulx), P. Holland, A.C. Masi, S. McDougall, M. Mendelson, J. Zucchi, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)

Regrets: M. Dowsley, W. Hendershot, A. Husain, A. Kenjeev, G. McClure, L. Proulx

Guest: N. De Takacsy (item 5)

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The Chair welcomed new members to the meeting.

**01.01 Proposed agenda**

Approved.

**01.02 Minutes of meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004**

The minutes were approved with two corrections: Professor J. Beheshti was not present at the meeting; and on the second page, fourth line from the bottom of the second paragraph, "or 3.9 (for the last two years)" should be deleted.

**01.03 Business arising**

a) APPC terms of reference.

The Nominating Committee of Senate will be considering the revisions to APPC's terms of reference at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2004.

b) Centre for University Teaching and Learning - update

Deputy-Provost Anthony Masi reported that the four academics formerly appointed to the CUTL have been reintegrated into the Faculty of Education, and a search for a new director has been launched. The unit will no longer have an academic function, only a service one, and will be called Teaching and Learning Services (TLS). It will be staffed by non-tenure-track researchers, although for this transition year some of the academics formerly on CUTL's staff will continue serving. The University is also looking for physical space for the TLS in the McLennan-Redpath Library complex.

c) Proposed Research Centre for Biorecognition and Biosensors

A revised document will be presented to APPC at a forthcoming meeting.

**01.04 APPC Subcommittee memberships (04-APPC-09-01)**

a) Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP)

Associate Provost Martha Crago presented the SCTP membership; this is a relatively small committee on which not all faculties are represented and membership terms are for three years.

b) Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning (SCTL)

Deputy-Provost Anthony Masi reminded APPC that the SCTL which functioned as a Senate Committee from fall 2001 to spring 2004 on a three-year trial basis, is now a subcommittee of APPC. Its business will be more integrated into the work of APPC, and APPC will provide a channel for bringing SCTL business to Senate. The membership overlap with SCTP and APPC will facilitate that integration. Deans nominate faculty representatives on the SCTL. A work plan will be presented to APPC.

It was noted that the Research Policy Committee also reports to APPC. It was therefore **agreed that the Research Policy Committee should be asked to submit its membership and its work plan.**

#### 01.05 Student exchange agreements

##### a) Renewal of agreement with the University of Liverpool (04-APPC-09-02)

Associate Provost Nicholas De Takacsy explained that the University of Liverpool had requested the modification of two clauses in the standard text of the agreement with McGill University.

- 1) Addition to clause 6: "Exchange students shall pursue an academic program developed in consultation with the student's home institution. Transcripts of results will be provided to the home institution as soon as possible after the completion of the exchange. *A mechanism for translating marks is to be agreed between the two institutions.*" Professor De Takacsy stated that the University's ability to interpret the grades received is a relevant concern and although it is not an easy process, McGill is willing to undertake it, using the ECTS scheme, as explained in his memo. As more and more students spend part of their studies abroad, McGill faces the same question, having to map and translate marks for credit-transfer and scholarship candidacy purposes, and has been doing so on an *ad hoc* basis. In the discussion it was agreed that this was a "can of worms" that may have to be opened. **The addition to clause 6 requested by the University of Liverpool was therefore approved.**
- 2) The second change requested by the University of Liverpool and integrated into the renewal agreement was submitted in a separate memo from Associate Provost De Takacsy. It is the addition of a sentence at the end of article 5 of the agreement which now reads: "5. Exchange students must meet the admissions requirements of the host institution. Each institution reserves the right to refuse candidates although the host institution will endeavour to minimize such refusals by communicating its criteria and standards before the home institution selects its applicants. *Each institution reserves the right to refuse to accept students into particular departments or subject areas.*" Dr. Takacsy explained that "There is no change to our practices since this is what we do anyway. Normally information about such restrictions is simply communicated between the student exchange offices of the partners but there is no harm in including an explicit statement in the agreement." **The renewal of the agreement with the University of Liverpool, with modification of those two clauses in the standard text of the agreement, will be reported to Senate as having been approved by APPC.**

##### b) Mobility in Higher Education: North American Studies (04-APPC-09-03)

Associate Provost Nicholas De Takacsy presented a proposed multilateral exchange agreement linking eight universities within the Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education. The project, entitled "North Americans Studying North America: A Continental Curriculum" was approved for funding by HRDC. The partner institutions are: the University of Alberta, Carleton University, and McGill University in Canada, the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas A.C., and the Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa in Mexico, and American University, the University of California, San Diego, and Columbia University in the United States. The project is aimed at developing shared elements and a shared vision in the curricula of the partner universities and at fostering exchanges of students, both graduate and undergraduate. Among other things, the consortium will develop a joint course "Introduction to North American Studies" offered by means of distance learning technologies. For McGill, this pooling of resources means a substantially strengthened North American Studies Program. **This proposal was approved by APPC and will be reported to Senate.**

#### 01.06 Academic Program Reviews

- Framework for Academic Program review and Development Plans, May 2004 (03-APPC-05-58)
- McGill University Academic Program Review and Development Process, August 2004 (revised version of May 2004 document) (04-APPC-09-04)
- McGill Academic Program Review – detailed procedural guidelines (for input) (04-APPC-09-05)

Associate Provost Martha Crago reminded Committee members that they approved the basic framework for program reviews (03-APPC-05-58) at their meeting on May 27, 2004. Over the summer, specific guidelines were developed in consultation with the Deans (04-APPC-09-05) and the framework document has been revised (04-APPC-09-04) as a result of meetings with Deans, further reflection, and conversations with CREPUQ. The issue of the use of external experts in particular was debated: a number of deans believe that it is an important element, although it should not be absolutely compulsory. A conversation with CREPUQ confirmed that the CREPUQ policy calls for at least two external experts. At McGill the

use of external experts will be recommended, but will be flexible and optional if appropriate justification is provided.

Another issue still on the table was what to call the document: a policy, a framework, or a process. In the discussion it was stated that although the word “review” may raise connotations from the past “cyclical reviews” which may not always be positive (ie. taking a snap-shot picture and making recommendations accordingly), “review” was a meaningful and appropriate term for the process, as “academic program review” is indeed what the process is about. “Program development” is a possible outcome but the word “development” relates to other means as well; program reviews should not be viewed as the necessary and only route to program development. The word “planning” had also been rejected as not being a popular concept. It was also stated that the document is mostly procedure, not policy. A policy would be a two-to-three line statement that McGill will be instituting academic program reviews; the CREPUQ policy fulfills that role.

Associate Provost Martha Crago reviewed further changes made to the text. For example under “Objectives”, a sentence was added to indicate that “It is an exercise that is designed to maximize excellence and resource allocation” and Principles were rephrased into sentences. External experts will now “normally be required” unless justification for not using any is provided and approved. In the discussion **it was suggested that the text should specify which person (the Associate Provost –Academic Programs) or committee (APPC) would be giving that approval. This will be part of approving the faculties’ program review plans.** This point will be clarified, ie. that “using or not using external referees should be justified in the proposed plan.” Professor Crago mentioned a few cases where the use of external reviewers may not be appropriate or necessary. The Provost stated that it is always good to listen to the opinion of wise external experts but consulting external experts is costly to the University and takes time to organize. McGill is currently running five or six dean-searches; while the University solicits the views of external experts regarding directions, such visitors could at the same time take a look at the faculty’s programs. In other instances, some of McGill’s programs are unique (the multi-track program in Arts exists nowhere else), and in such cases it might be interesting to have new hires who have taught in it for one year voice their opinion. It was argued that arms-length advice sets a tone and creates a dynamic that does not occur with internal reviewers. The Provost explained that the assumption is indeed that external experts should be used, but the process should not be over-designed, ie. the creative aspect of the reviews should not be undermined. Funds should not be wasted on bringing in external experts for reviews of programs that are doing very well. Rather than imposing a rigid framework, faculties should be able to organize their reviews in the most meaningful way.

Associate Provost Martha Crago further mentioned comments received by Associate Dean John Galaty regarding the naming of the two kinds of “groups” and the review document. The document is not a “self-study” document and “self-study groups” should be changed to “Program Study Groups” and include members drawn from the relevant units as well as members not involved in the program(s) under review, and the potential external. The paragraph on membership pertaining to the Program Study Groups should be rewritten accordingly; it is important that there should be students and a mix.

Asked about the inclusion of benchmarking in the program review process, the Associate Provost responded that faculties will be sent benchmarking data whenever they are available, degree time-to-completion for G10 universities, for example.

How much of the Program Review documents should be submitted to APPC was not clear. Should it be: a) a summary page, b) the complete report, including the external reviewer’s report, or c) all the reports or centrally integrated reports? It was estimated that approximately thirty program review reports would be generated over the next two years. Various suggestions were made: the Deans could decide what would be necessary for APPC to have a useful discussion; the program review documents could be posted on a secure pre-publication website; an APPC subcommittee could be struck to review the program review documents and produce a summary for APPC, as used to be the procedure for cyclical review reports.

Another suggestion made by Associate John Galaty was that the Program Review Report be allowed to be revised on the basis of the comments made by the Faculty Program Review Group and the Dean, and thus bear the faculty *imprimatur* before it reaches APPC. Instead of having a report fixed in stone from beginning to end with layers of comments appended, the report would go back to the Program Study; there would be an inside loop for revising the report before it could come to APPC. It was noted that this additional step might slow down the process.

Regarding the detailed guidelines appended to the Program Review process document, the Associate Provost noted that these would be allowed to evolve and would be submitted to Senate for information and discussed only by APPC.

Given that it would be impossible for faculties to review all teaching programs, it was suggested that the document should state clearly what program reviews are intended to focus on, ie. programs leading to a degree; it should explain how majors, minors, options should be considered. It was also suggested that Deans should provide APPC with an inventory of their programs and a statement on what programs are offered and which programs were reviewed. Faculties should be expected to provide the full story.

**It was agreed that the Program Review Process document should be revised in light of the discussion and submitted to Senate. The procedural guidelines will be appended for information on the understanding that they will be evolving and will be further discussed by APPC.**

#### **01.07 Strategic Planning Process - update**

The Provost and Deputy-Provost updated APPC members on the Strategic Planning Process. Faculties have been receiving drafts of their compacts with a budget dimension. All facets of planning, ie. capital alterations, academic renewal, start-up funding, etc. have been integrated. Budget planning is moving into a multi-year perspective; a solid indication of the 2005-06 budget has been provided, with a commitment to firming it up. A significant shift has been operated, from a formula-driven, enrolment-based approach, to compact-driven allocations. Faculty compacts are expected to be signed off at the beginning of September. Planning is underway for a fund-raising campaign, involving the deans and the Vice-Principal (Development and Alumni Relations). The prospectus, based on faculty submissions, will be circulated to deans for comments. The University is organizing itself for implementation and benchmarking. Planning itself is however a bigger operation than the compacts. The University is now in the process of synthesizing the vision that has emerged from this planning phase; in addition to intensive academic renewal, the University is moving into a three-campus model with the addition of Glen-Yards, and new research centres and institutes will be part of the outcome of the process which has to be worked out.

In the discussion it was noted that the earlier the University community can see the outcome of the strategic planning exercise the better, so that it can celebrate the University's interesting plans for the future. However the University moves forward, deans still need a budget that starts at the beginning of the year; mid-year budget allocations have not been helpful as not having the budget year lined up with the financial year makes planning difficult. The Provost responded that planning was an ongoing process and it takes two years to change the budget process.

#### **01.08 Other business**

None.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.