

Minutes of the meeting of the **Academic Policy and Planning Committee** held on Thursday 30th March 2006 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Room 310, James Building

Present: A.C. Masi (Chair), G. Brown, L. Butler-Kisber, W. Caplin, V. Errunza, D. Fraser, W. Hendershot, P. Holland, D. Jutras, S. McDougall, M.J. Mendelson, J. Nemes, M. Reed, J. Schmidt, S. Stroud, M. Szyf, H.F. Upham, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)

Regrets: J. Feine, J.C. Hurtubise, M. Nahon, I. O'Reilly, T. Rivard, D. Thérien

Guests: C. Rentschler (item 5)

Documents circulated at the meeting:

None.

07.01 Proposed agenda

The agenda was adopted as circulated.

07.02 Minutes of meeting held on 16th February 2006

The minutes were approved as circulated.

07.03 Business arising

- APPC Terms of Reference

The workgroup that is reviewing the Terms of Reference of APPC has met. A number of revisions will be proposed to APPC for consideration at its next meeting. Revisions approved by APPC would then be recommended by APPC to the Nominating Committee of Senate.

07.04 Report on Senate approvals

a) 378th Report, Senate, 8th March 2006 - *D05-48* (CREOR)

The proposal to establish a Centre for Research on Religion was approved by Senate on 8th March for further recommendation to the Board of Governors. The proposal will be considered for approval by the Board of Governors on 10th April 2006.

b) 379th Report, Senate, 29th March 2006 - *D05-53* (DHL)

At its meeting on 29th March, Senate approved the elimination of the Deans' Honour's List for doctoral programs after the June 2006 Convocation.

07.05 Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP) Report on meeting held on 9th February 2006 (05-APPC-03-42)

- *B.A.; Minor Concentration in Communication Studies*

Professor Carrie Rentschler presented the proposal. The Department is seeking to complement its graduate programs with undergraduate program offerings. The Minor proposal is a first step in this direction. The Department hopes to propose a Major program proposal within the next two years.

APPC approved the proposed B.A.; Minor Concentration in Communication Studies for submission to Senate (included in APPC's 380th Report, *D05-60*, for consideration by Senate on 19th April 2006).

- *M.Sc. in Parasitology; Bioinformatics*

The multidisciplinary Bioinformatics Option already exists in a number of M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs. Given that Bioinformatics is said to be "at the intersection of biological/medical sciences and mathematics/

computer science / engineering”, it was one APPC member’s opinion that input from mathematics should be required. It was suggested that some mathematical competence or content may be built into the prerequisites. Although it was noted that Academic Program Reviews could target questions of this type, it was proposed and agreed that APPC should take a closer look at the contents of the Bioinformatics Options already implemented. The Options should be brought back to APPC as a group, and the question should be forwarded to the Director of the Bioinformatics Option who should be asked to provide his view to APPC.

The proposed M.Sc. in Parasitology; Bioinformatics was approved for submission to Senate (it will be included in APPC’s 380th Report to Senate, D05-60, for consideration by Senate on 19th April 2006). **The Director of the Bioinformatics Option will be asked to address the question about mathematical competence or content.**

- *Major Revision to Ph.D. in Anatomy and Cell Biology*

The proposal is for the creation of a “Human Systems Biology Stream”. APPC noted that a “stream” is not a formal designation that appears in a transcript. It does not require formal approval as such. It is an advising tool, not a formal structure, and it is intended to provide more flexibility than an option.

The definition approved by APPC on 3rd February 2005 reads as follows:

A stream is a specified list of courses that provides students with a suggested set of courses in an area of specialization within a program. It does not appear on transcripts or diplomas. Since such a specified list of courses does not affect degree requirements, it may be added by units as comments to the Calendar. A stream does not require formal approval.

It was agreed that the proposal should be referred back to SCTP so that the issue can be clarified.

07.06 Report on New Programs requiring MELSQ approval, 2006-03-23 (05-APPC-03-43)

The summary update (05-APPC-03-43) was presented by the Secretary of the Committee. Deans and Associate Deans responsible for Academic Affairs will be asked to send advance notice of any new degree programs that may be contemplated, so that all planning considerations can be explored and taken into account when program proposals are developed and before they are submitted to internal approval bodies.

07.07 Academic Program Reviews – Update

- The Academic Program Review Process Progress Report, memo to APPC, Dr. Philip Smith, Academic Planning Officer, 21st March 2006 (05-APPC-03-44)
- Academic Program Review Progress Report to APPC, 21st March 2006 (05-APPC-03-44 a)
- Academic Program Review Schedule for 2005,
http://www.mcgill.ca/provost/academic/program_list/2005 (05-APPC-03-44 b)
- Academic Program Review Schedule 2006
http://www.mcgill.ca/provost/academic/program_list/2006 (05-APPC-03-44 c)
- Program Study Groups (PSGs) (05-APPC-03-44 d)
- APR Estimated Number of Reports for APPC (05-APPC-03-44 e)
- Detailed Procedural Guidelines and appendices 1 & 3 (05-APPC-03-47)

Associate-Provost (Academic Programs and Services) Morton J. Mendelson reported on the Academic Program Review process currently underway. Given that APPC was involved in the crafting of the process and recommended it to Senate for approval (APPC’s 362nd Report, D-04-13; Senate approval 6th October 2004), APPC should be kept informed of the progress of its implementation and also decide on how it will deal with the program review reports that it will soon be receiving. Program study groups are provided data by central administration. Minors and certificate programs are not subject to review although some faculties are reviewing them. The process was set up in such a way that faculties could use the process to meet their own needs. The *Politique des établissements universitaires du Québec relative à l’évaluation périodique des programmes existants* of the *Commission de vérification de l’évaluation des programmes* of CREPUQ

(adopted in 1991, amended in 1994 and 2004 www.crepuq.qc.ca) requires that each program or set of programs being reviewed should be subjected to an external reviewer. Program Review Reports will be submitted concurrently to the relevant Dean, APPC, and the external reviewer. APPC is expected to read

those reports, provide feedback to faculties on questions and issues raised and on information provided that may be problematic, seek clarifications, and make suggestions. APPC is also expected to receive the Final Review Document (including external reviewer's report and Summary Sheet) for each program and submit the Summary Sheet to Senate. That Summary Sheet will be made public.

Before discussing how to proceed with this exercise, APPC members clarified what the Committee's role would be in light of the purpose of the Academic Program Reviews which is to improve what needs improvement and maintain quality. It was stated that the responsibility of APPC will be to provide University oversight on all reviews by acting as internal external reviewer. Program Review Reports are much like self-study reports and dwell lightly on weaknesses. APPC, the only group through which all the reviews pass, will be the forum where cross-faculty examination and comparison will occur. Whereas APPC does not have a mandate to allocate funds, it will provide a critical reading and a University-wide viewpoint, and have a direct input into the recommendations of the reports (the "action plan" referred to in item 21 of the *Detailed Procedural Guidelines*) and into the follow-up to the reports in the form of program revisions and new program proposals that will later ensue. The role of APPC is in introducing a measure of accountability in the process and in seeing that the deficiencies that are identified are corrected.

Focusing on procedure, APPC members reflected on how the Committee might deal with the 64 reports that it will be receiving over the coming twelve months, given that it would be unreasonable to ask APPC members to read all the reports. APPC considered two possible methods of dealing with the reports. One would be to provide an executive summary of each review to APPC and have APPC identify particular issues it would wish to explore in depth; the relevant material for it to do so would then be provided. The other suggested possibility would be to divide the work among members of APPC: each group being comprised of the relevant Faculty representative and two or three other members. All APPC members would get the executive summary, in the same manner as grant applications are reviewed. That executive summary should be provided by Dr. Philip Smith who will be reading all the reports. It was also suggested that the external reviewer's report should be made available to the APPC members as it could be very revealing and helpful. It was reported that the Council on Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has mandated a subcommittee, comprised of representatives of the three broad discipline sectors and students, to advise the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Each graduate program review report will be read by someone outside the relevant faculty in its entirety.

Discussion turned to the provision of data to Program Review Groups: some questions originally posed will not be answered because of the non-availability of the information at McGill. Basic bench-marking is proving difficult to do; tracking retention data, for example, is problematic because of the mapping of the old system onto the new student information system (which now does make retention data more easily available). Input from graduates may be more present in graduate program reviews than in undergraduate program reviews; McGill has not been tracking that information, so that the information that is available is mostly anecdotal, not bench-marked. The Office of Planning and Institutional Analysis (PIA) is now able to help faculties develop questionnaires for student surveys.

07.08 Schedule of 2006-07 meeting dates

The proposed meeting dates for APPC in the next academic year read as follows:
August 31; Sept 14, 28; Oct 12, 26; Nov 9, 23; Dec 14, 2006 and
Jan 18; Feb 1, 15; March 1, 15, 29; April 12, 26; May 10, 24, 2007.

07.09 Naming Policy

- Memo from Secretary-General Johanne Pelletier, March 23, 2006
- & Appendix "A": Briefing notes, March 24, 2006 (05-APPC-03-45)
- Background on Naming Policy issue (05-APPC-03-46)
- Proposed Naming Policy, 9th March 2006 (05-APPC-03-48)

On 13th February 2002, Senate considered a recommendation by APPC (further to a donor's wish to have her name assigned to a program) 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". The recommendation was referred back to APPC because it failed to describe how a policy on the naming of academic programs and units would be implemented. The Group that had proposed the policy statement (the Vice-Principal

[Research], the Vice-Principal [Development and Alumni Relations], the Director of Libraries, and two students) then prepared and submitted to APPC a document proposing a number of recommendations regarding process (01-APPC-04-31). APPC at its meeting on 4th April 2002 voiced a number of concerns and suggestions, and it was agreed that “more consultation on the matter was required, in particular with such groups as the Principal/Vice-Principals (PVP) Group and Deans.” A new Naming Policy proposal has been prepared by the Office of Development and Alumni Relations and submitted to the Senate Committee on Physical Development (which has a Toponymy Subcommittee reviewing and making recommendations to SCPD on the naming of physical structures and spaces) and to the Academic Policy and Planning Committee which has responsibility for making recommendations to Senate on the names of academic programs and units and which in 2001 had been asked to review the matter of naming academic programs and units after donors and make a recommendation to Senate on the matter. While a policy on naming academic programs and units after donors is being developed, McGill University has followed the practice at other North American universities as two faculties were renamed in 2005 in recognition of major financial gifts: the Faculty of Music is now known as the Schulich School of Music (*Ecole de musique Schulich*) and the Faculty of Management was renamed the Desautels Faculty of Management (*Faculté de gestion Desautels*).

APPC members were invited to comment on the proposed Naming Policy. It was stated that Section II (Naming Opportunities – Scope of Policy) does not include libraries among the “Tangible Assets”, although reading rooms are included. Confusion arises from the existence at McGill of named libraries which are part of named buildings, the Schulich Library of Science and Engineering within the Macdonald Stewart Library Building, for example. Name usage is often incorrect: the Humanities and Social Sciences Library in the McLennan and Redpath Library Buildings is wrongly referred to as “McLennan Library”. A major challenge, not reflected in the proposed Policy, seems to be the difficulty of getting rid of names: names are attributed “in perpetuity” and McGill has scores of named “Collections of books”. No thought seems to have been given to this in the preparation of the proposed Naming Policy. While the document proposes that “Naming of University tangible assets in recognition of a corporation, foundation or other similar entity shall be for a defined and limited period of time; no building shall so be named”, McGill University seems already to have such buildings named after corporations. It was also noted that the actual use of donors’ names should also be considered, in order to avoid very long complicated names.

It was suggested that more discussion would be necessary before the proposed Naming Policy statement could be recommended to Senate for further submission to the Board of Governors. APPC members were invited to send their comments and suggestions to the Committee Secretary.

07.10 Other business

The APPC meeting scheduled to take place on 13th April 2006 was cancelled. The next meeting will be held on 27th April.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Helen M.C. Richard 2006-04-21