

Minutes of the meeting of the **Academic Policy Committee** held on Thursday 16th April 2009, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Room 310, James Administration Building

Present: A.C. Masi (Chair), W. Caplin, J. Côté, A. DeGuise, B. Dourley, V. Errunza, D. Farrow, W. Hendershot, P. Holland, M. Kaartinen, D. Klinck, S. MacDougall, J. Potter, C. Urbain (for J. Schmidt), N. Wilkinson, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)

Regrets: J. Angeles, G. Brown, C. Jastrezebski, M. Kreiswirth, G. Lane-Mercier, A. Ling, M.J. Mendelson, R. Rozen, J. Schmidt, M. Szyf, C. Weston

Guest: P. Smith

Documents circulated at the meeting:

09-APC-04-81 APC Workgroup on Nomenclature of Academic Units – proposed mandate

12.01 Proposed agenda

The agenda was approved as proposed.

12.02 Minutes of meeting held on 26th March 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2009 were approved as circulated. Clarification was sought regarding item *11.02 Minutes of meeting held on 12th March 2009*: the “selection” refers to those categories of academic units for which the formulation of a definition would be neither necessary nor attempted.

12.03 Business arising

In response to a question raised by APC on 26th March as to the ranking of the SNU College of Business Administration, information was provided to APC. SNU is perceived to be number one in Korea. “A somewhat dated, but still cited, ranking of Asia MBA Business Schools by Asiaweek (2000) placed SNU’s College of Business Administration as number 6.” In addition, “SNU is ranked as the ... 8th university in Asia according to *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 2008.” It was suggested that ranking information should be provided to APC in future exchange agreement proposal.

12.04 APC Subcommittee on Courses and Programs (SCTP)

- SCTP Report on meeting held on 5th March 2009 (09-APC-04-76)

The report did not include any proposals requiring APC approval.

12.05 Proposed Memorandum of Understanding

- Canada - EU Programme for Cooperation in Higher Education, Training and Youth - Civil Society Educational Network (09-APC-04-77)

APC reviewed a proposed Memorandum of Understanding between Carleton University, University of Winnipeg, Freie Universität Berlin (Germany), Università degli Studi di Trento (Italy), Sheffield Hallam University (UK) and McGill University, for a “Civil Society Educational Network” This program (September 2008 to September 2011) is sponsored by Human Resources Social Development Canada and the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

APC approved the proposed Memorandum of Understanding. This will be reported to Senate in APC’s 411th Report (D08-59) for consideration by Senate on 29th April 2009.

12.06 Academic Program Reviews

Confidential

12.07 Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning

Draft McGill University Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Learning (*Revised 09-APC-01-58*)

APC members reviewed a revised draft of the text that was considered at the meeting on 15th January 2009. The Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Learning is intended to be distinct from all other teaching awards and show leadership in pedagogy.

In section 4, the points listed as possible examples of “Evidence of Leadership in Learning” were said to be confusing. Points d), e) and f) were thought to push towards rewarding individuals who teach others how to teach or how to learn and this could develop into mutual rewarding. It was felt that, since this was not the intention of the Award, the language in section 4 should be clarified. It was noted that examples of leadership initiatives in classroom teaching might include the use of technology to facilitate students learning during and beyond lectures or innovative curriculum design. It was suggested that d), e) and f) should be folded together as examples of one single category, and the heading of section 4 should perhaps be changed to “...might include a combination of some of the following”. In the section entitled “Attributes and Criteria”, the broad criteria with respect to rank and category, and length of service at McGill, were noted.

It was suggested that the attributes should highlight the notion of bringing the instructor’s personal research interests to the classroom, so that students can observe the advancement of knowledge being practiced in the classroom. This would be one additional element that could help differentiate the Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Learning from other awards.

It was noted that leadership in learning is an important concept and that the focus is on thinking about students and how they learn. APC was supportive of the proposed Award but agreed that the text should be further edited.

12.08 APC Workgroup on Nomenclature of Academic Units

Proposed mandate for the Workgroup (09-APC-04-81)

The mandate developed by the members of the APC Workgroup on Nomenclature of Academic Units was presented. The Workgroup has held two meetings and is in the process of examining a consolidated list of academic units and identifying anomalies. The Workgroup will seek to clarify the definitions of terms used to designate units at McGill. While proposing that current names be changed might prove difficult, it was suggested that the reasons for selecting such names should be acknowledged, and a clear set of definitions and guidelines should be developed for future reference and usage.

12.09 Other business

Concerns were raised about an apparent worsening of the quality of students’ writing skills and about a culture of dishonesty that has been observed among some students. It was noted that the latter would best be addressed by the Dean of Students, the Committee on Student Affairs and the Subcommittee on Academic Integrity. The question as to whether there exist techniques for dealing with the deficient writing skills of students should be referred to the APC Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning. While the level of student preparedness for university studies (students’ ability to think clearly and to write correctly) is not checked by any standardized testing at McGill, the APC Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning has been working on developing a set of “graduate attributes”, a set of qualities, competencies and skills that should be expected in students graduating from McGill. Universities usually deal with the deficiencies of the schooling system by identifying needs and referring students to services providing remedial help.

Note from the Dean of Continuing Education: the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) is providing the leadership (with the guidance of a multi-sectoral McGill steering group) for a research study looking at the resources currently available at McGill regarding the development of writing and rhetoric. It is considering best practices at four other research-intensive universities in the U.S. & Canada and will be submitting a report, with recommendations, in May/June 2009.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.