

Minutes of the meeting of the **Academic Policy Committee** held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Council Room (M48), Strathcona Anatomy and Dentistry Building

Present: M. Kreiswirth (chairing), J. Angeles, W. Caplin, J. Côté, A. DeGuise, V. Errunza, D. Farrow, M. Kaartinen, D. Klinck, S. MacDougall, J. Potter, R. Rozen, C. Urbain (for J. Schmidt), W. Thomson, C. Weston, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)

Regrets: G. Brown, R. Dooley, A. Gauthier, E. Gayagoy, W. Hendershot, P. Holland, A.C. Masi, M.J. Mendelson, M. Mehta, J. Schmidt, M. Szyf, S. Woolf

Guests: L. Hendren (item 6.a), P. Smith

---

**Documents circulated at the meeting:** none

#### **05.01 Proposed agenda**

The agenda was adopted with one change: it was agreed that item 6 c) Academic Program Review Progress Report from the Faculty of Engineering would be postponed to the following meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December. It was also noted that Ms Sylvia Franke was unavailable to present the Revised Draft Policy on Responsible Use of McGill IT Resources (item 7).

#### **05.02 Minutes of previous meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

The minutes were approved as circulated.

#### **05.03 Business arising**

None.

#### **05.04 APC revised terms of reference**

- Excerpt from Report of the Senate Nominating Committee to Senate, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009 D08-68 (item IIB4.2, Senate 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2009) (09-APC-11-26)

APC was informed that Senate on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009 approved the recommendation of the Senate Nomenclature Committee (based on the Report on Committee Terms of Reference of the Senate Review Working Group) that the Research Policy Committee, which used to report to APC on all proposals pertaining to research policies and research entities, should be replaced by the following:

a) a Research Advisory Council (RAC) to the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations), which will likely have a composition similar to that of the former Research Policy Committee and continue dealing with the many issues that did not require reporting to Senate through APC;

b) a Subcommittee of APC on Research Policy, which would deal with those research matters that are of an academic nature and require Senate approval.

As a result, Senate approved the revisions of the terms of reference of the APC that reflect those structural changes and were proposed by the Senate Nominating Committee.

#### **05.05 Research Policy Committee**

a) 2009 Report to APC on 2008-2009 (09-APC-11-23)

Associate Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations) Rima Rozen presented the report on the 2008-09 activities of the now defunct Research Policy Committee, noting that RPC covered a large range of topics, such as research funding, research policies, research centres, research agencies and new funding programs. Professor Rozen noted that those items that require submission to APC and Senate, such as research policy proposals and all proposals relating to research entities (creation, name change, revision of by-laws, centre reviews...) took up very little of RPC's time. Terms of reference will be proposed for both the RAC and the new APC Subcommittee (SRC).

**b) Terms of reference of the new Subcommittee on Research Policy (SRP)**

In the discussion, the following points were made:

- Regarding the relationship between the new APC Subcommittee and the RAC, the new SRC cannot formally report to the RAC, since the RAC is not a Senate Committee, but SRC could consult the RAC on those research matters that are under the purview of APC and report informally back to RAC.
- The RAC's composition is expected to be similar to that of the RPC, but its mandate will not include academic matters relating to the conduct of research that will now be dealt with by the APC's SRC.
- APC will determine the terms of reference of its Subcommittee in consultation with the VP (RIR). Those terms of reference will be harmonized with those of the RAC.
- The composition of the SRC should be much smaller than that of RAC or CGPS (which include associate deans of all faculties). The SRC's composition should include two academic research administrators, two academic members from each APC and RAC, and graduate student representation. Broad discipline representation should also be emphasized.
- The Subcommittee should be chaired by a senior academic research administrator from the VP (RIR)'s Office.

**APC's recommendations regarding the composition of the APC Subcommittee on Research Policy will be submitted to the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations).**

**05.06 Academic Program Reviews: Progress Reports on Action Plans****a) Faculty of Science (09-APC-11-27)**

Faculty of Science Associate Dean (Academic) Laurie Hendren presented the Progress Report. Professor Hendren stressed that grouping all Science programs and considering them together across disciplines had been a good idea as it had caused significant change in program offerings. Overall the Academic Program Review process has been a positive experience for the Faculty of Science.

Undergraduate programs: B.Sc. program (Honours, Majors and Faculty Programs). Faculty programs were retired. B.Sc. Liberal programs were introduced. Clearer distinctions between programs were drawn. While honours programs had been developed by each department individually, a research component will now be included in all. Greater efforts will be made to contact and invite students to take the honours programs in order to secure a larger cohort for graduate programs. Research opportunities for undergraduate students will continue to be developed, and efforts will be made to increase field studies and internships opportunities.

In the discussion, trends showing scientists crossing disciplinary boundaries, for example chemists and physicists applying for jobs in Engineering, were mentioned. It was noted that Chemical Engineering and Electrical Engineering minors are restricted to Chemistry and Physics students, but many minors are available to Science students in other faculties and opening more minors to them would be welcome. Efforts to encourage female students to pursue graduate studies were mentioned. The issue of student mobility was also raised.

Graduate programs. The Academic Program Review provided an opportunity for departments to observe practices in other department, which proved to be a very fruitful experience. It resulted, in particular, in setting up working groups to foster best practices, setting aside a fund to improve laboratory working space, and defining a B.Sc.-M.Sc. (thesis) track

In the discussion, it was noted that a minimum cut-off of 3.0 is required for students to take the B.Sc.-M.Sc. (thesis) track. This approach, initiated by the Faculty of Science, is now inspiring other faculties into adopting it. It is hoped that this track will make it possible to retain students who might otherwise not remain at McGill. This track has not required any revisions to the B.Sc. and M.Sc., but allows departments to identify students and assure them that, if they maintain the required average, they will be accepted into the M.Sc.(thesis) program.

## b) Faculty of Arts (09-APC-11-28)

Professor Wendy Thomson presented the Report, which briefly highlights the actions taken.

In the discussion, APC reiterated its concern about the process and the absent or insufficient linkage between the recommendations in the Review Reports, the concerns expressed by APC and the Progress Report on actions taken. It was stated that Appendix X and a summary of the relevant points in APC's comments would have been useful. While the Faculty of Arts chose to structure its Progress Report theme by theme, and while not all programs may be reflected under those themes, APC recalled that some programs, such as those in Jewish Studies, had not been included in the Academic Program Review and that the review report on Humanistic Studies highlighted serious concerns. Yet the Progress Report makes no mention of them. It was suggested that APC should have the authority and responsibility to flag areas of concern and request that the Faculty respond to the recommendations formulated by the Committee. It was argued that the guidelines were too loose and did not state sufficiently clearly how the faculties should respond.

**It was agreed that Appendices X would be made available on the APC website as soon as possible and that APC would be notified of their availability.**

## c) Faculty of Engineering (09-APC-11-29)

The presentation of the Progress Report for the Faculty of Engineering will take place at the next meeting of APC on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

**05.07 Responsible Use of McGill IT Resources – draft policy (09-APC-11-25 REVISED)**

- Revised Draft Policy on Responsible Use of McGill IT Resources

Chief Information Officer Sylvia Franke was unable to join the meeting to present the revised draft. In APC's discussion of the document the following points were expressed:

- The document still puts much emphasis on regulations and on the responsibilities of users, and not sufficiently on the responsibilities of the University, despite the addition of the phrase referring to "the responsibilities of the University" in the last sentence of the Preamble.
- The overall goal should be to facilitate the mission of a world-class university by acknowledging that innovation requires freedom of access to information. The policy document should be more forward-looking and positive, and seek to facilitate information sharing.
- There should be a policy document of which this policy would be part; a mandate statement would be helpful.
- The document still does not specify who gives authorization and what such authorization consists of.
- The document includes too many "don'ts".
- IT use goes beyond what any particular group can control.

It was suggested that further discussion in the presence of the CIO would be desirable. The document will be considered by Senate at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. It will be revised and submitted to APC for further discussion and approval before submission to Senate for approval.

**05.08 APC Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP)**

Special Report (09-APC-11-30)

- New option: PhD in Music; Gender & Women's Studies

**APC approved the proposed option.** This approval will be reported to Senate (416<sup>th</sup> APC Report, Senate 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009).

---

**05.09 Other business – broad issues for APC consideration**

With respect to the larger issues that APC is to focus on in this academic year, it was suggested that Committee members could consider **Appendix X** of Academic Program Review Reports collectively, in order to identify **issues that may affect the University as a whole**. This exercise would help to make sure that the good effort that went into the exercise bears the best possible fruit. APC may be able to formulate a few further useful recommendations and help ascertain that the memory of recommendations made is not lost. It was noted that guidelines for the next set of reviews, known as Unit Reviews, are now with the Office of Planning and Institutional Analysis for consideration of data to be made available. The guidelines will be submitted to APC in 2010. APC should consider whether anything further should be asked from the unit within the framework of the next reviews, such as outstanding items from the previous Academic Program Reviews.

On the subject of larger issues to be tackled by APC, **gender imbalance** (as identified in the Faculty of Science program review) and how the University proposes to address this issue was suggested as another academic policy question worthy of consideration. It was not sure what role APC was expected to play with respect to the Principal's Task Force on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement. It was hoped that in addition to non-academic and practical considerations, academic implications such as breadth of knowledge and opportunities offered students, would be considered. It was noted that the University may have a greater proportion of female students, but no corresponding gender representation among staff.

It was suggested that another broad issue for APC to consider might be how **new program proposals are assessed with respect to demand, resources, and strategic planning**.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

*Helen M.C. Richard - HMCR/APPCdocs/minutes/2009-1126*