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Minutes of the meeting of the **Academic Policy Committee** held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2010, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Room 310, James Building

Present: A.C. Masi (Chair), J. Abaki, J. Angeles, C. Buddle, A. Deguise, A. Doyle, I. Henderson, M. Kaartinen, P. Li, B. Low, P. Perez-Aleman, J. Potter, C. Urbain, M. Wanderley, C. Weston, S. Williams, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)

Regrets: G. Brown, E. Gayagoy, M. Kreiswirth, S. McDougall, M.J. Mendelson, R. Rozen, M. Szyf, W. Thomson

Guests: K. Kruczowyj (item 6), P. Smith (item 7.a)

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**Document circulated at the meeting:** none.

#### **01.01 Welcome to new and returning members**

The Chair welcomed Professor Ian Henderson, Professor Bronwen Low, Professor Paola Perez-Aleman, and Professor Marcelo Wanderley, undergraduate student representatives Joshua Abaki, Andrew Doyle, Peter Li, and Stephanie Williams to the Committee, as well as Professor Christopher Buddle and returning graduate student representative Alexander Deguise whose memberships on APC were recommended by the Senate Nominating Committee to Senate for approval on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

#### **01.02 Proposed agenda**

The agenda was accepted as proposed.

#### **01.03 Minutes of previous meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

The minutes of the APC meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010 were approved as circulated.

#### **01.04 Business arising**

“Interdisciplinary programs” was identified as one item of business arising from the minutes which will be dealt with as an agenda item for this meeting.

#### **01.05 APC Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP)**

- Report on meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Programs (*10-APC-09-01a*)

Courses (*10-APC-09-01b*)

The Report from SCTP did not include any item requiring APC approval.

It was noted that in past years, final approval authority has been moved to other levels of the reporting structure:

- moderate program revisions and program retirements: faculties and/or SCTP (and CGPS where applicable) only,
- minor program revisions: faculties and/or SCTP
- new courses, course revisions and course retirements: faculties and/or SCTP.

APC approval is required for major revisions to programs, for minors and options added to existing programs, and for new degree programs. Senate approval is required for new degree programs and some major revisions to degree programs.

The document detailing these approval paths was approved by Senate on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008 and is posted on the APC website: <http://www.mcgill.ca/files/apc/08APC0153REV.pdf> Those “Approval Paths” are **subject to review in 2011.**

#### **01.06 International Education**

- Proposed student exchange agreement: Freie Universität Berlin (*10-APC-09-06*)

Kalyna Kruczowyj, International Education Administrator, presented the proposed student exchange agreement with the Freie Universität Berlin, for which McGill’s standard agreement is used. McGill has five exchanges with German institutions, three of which are faculty specific.

In the discussion it was noted that graduate students do not rely on student exchange agreements for study-related stays at universities abroad. Furthermore, many students go abroad outside the framework of McGill exchange agreements. McGill is more a destination than a provider of exchange students but strives to work towards a balance between numbers of in-coming and out-going students.

**APC approved the proposed student exchange agreement with the Freie Universität Berlin.** This approval will be reported to Senate for information (421<sup>st</sup> APC Report to Senate for consideration on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2010).

### 01.07 Quality Assurance

#### a) CREPUQ *Commission de vérification de l'évaluation des programmes* (CVEP)

- Academic Program Reviews – CVEP's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> requests – English summary (10-APC-03-51)
- McGill's proposed response to 3rd request (15<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2010 submission deadline) (10-APC-09-02)

Dr. Philip Smith, Academic Planning Officer, presented the material which McGill was proposing to send to CREPUQ's *Commission de vérification de l'évaluation des programmes* (CVEP), in response to Request 3 (as per English summary by APC Secretary, 10-APC-03-51). The response format was provided by CVEP and the responses were gathered from the action plans presented by the faculties to Senate over the past year.

The background for CVEP's requests was explained. In 1990, Quebec universities, through their representative organization, the Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities (CREPUQ), adopted a common policy for the review of their respective academic programs. CVEP's mandate is to audit the universities' program review processes. McGill University, which in 1981 adopted and implemented a process for cyclical reviews of its academic units on a seven-year process and conducted two rounds of such cyclical reviews, switched to reviews focusing on academic programs from 2004 to 2009, in order to comply with the CREPUQ policy more closely. In its latest audit report of all Quebec universities' program review processes, CVEP identified a number of concerns: 1) its own inability to verify that universities have reviewed all their programs, 2) its inability to receive dossiers pertaining to different types of degree programs such as joint/interuniversity, international/inter-provincial and distance programs, and 3) its inability to see how the universities implemented their review recommendations and therefore to ascertain whether program quality and relevance had indeed been maintained or improved. For its third audit, CVEP chose to ask the universities to submit information that would address those three concerns. McGill's responses to CVEP's first two requests were approved by APC and submitted to CVEP over the past year. Request 3 required universities to focus on eight program review dossiers, to report on actions planned and on progress in implementing and factors that may have made it difficult or impossible to implement some of the recommendations.

In the discussion, it was noted that space and financial issues are a common reason for non-implementation. **It was agreed that a summary list of programs that are in compliance or are in deficit will be obtained.** Internal mechanisms, such as ongoing conversations with Deans, are in place to ensure that the recommendations contained in the seventy-two program review reports are implemented. McGill University will be moving back to review focusing on academic units, rather than on programs. **The proposed responses to CVEP's third request will be submitted to CVEP as presented to APC.**

#### b) Council of Ontario Universities: new council to oversee program quality assurance (10-APC-09-07)

It was thought useful that APC should be informed of the Quality Assurance context in which the University operates. In March 2010, the Committee was made aware of the report from a CREPUQ Workgroup on Quality Assurance (English Summary by APC Secretary, 10-APC-03-52) which recommended the establishment of a *Bureau d'assurance qualité des universités québécoises*. The CREPUQ workgroup was established to follow-up on CVEP's suggestion that new avenues should be explored in order to bring substantial change to the way program reviews are approached. The CREPUQ *Comité des affaires académiques* (known as VRAA) expressed reservations regarding the cost of setting up such a new body. The proposal will now be considered by a sub-group of VRAA in light of the recent step taken by the Council of Ontario Universities to create a council to oversee program quality assurance. The Ontario model is different from the model proposed by the Quebec workgroup; the proposed Quebec *Bureau*, for example was not intended to take over the evaluation and approval of new degree programs and audit the universities.

### 01.08 Foreseeable items of business for APC consideration in 2010-2011 (10-APC-09-04)

The list, prepared by the APC Secretary, outlines foreseeable items of business for the academic year 2010-2011.

On the subject of program/unit reviews, it was noted that a major lesson learned from academic program reviews was that program reviews should not have been detached from the review of other academic activities and of relevant resources.

Nomenclature of academic units is a topic that was brought to APC in the past year as a result of significant discrepancies between the official definitions (*Nomenclature of academic entities*, approved in 1977 and revised in 1999), and the appellations that have been used in past years to designate academic units being created. The official definitions do not always concur with the understanding of what the unit is allowed to do or not do; this impacts on the hiring of academic staff, for example (according to the definitions, academic staff are appointed to institutes, not to centres, but appointment of academic staff could not be allowed in recently created “institutes”). An APC Workgroup on Nomenclature was created in March 2009 to examine current usage of various appellations and the characteristics of existing entities, and to draw up a set of new definitions, as well as guidelines for proposals to create academic units, other than research centres for which detailed instructions were approved by APC, Senate and Board in May 2005. Much work remains to be done in order for the survey to be completed.

In the discussion, other issues were suggested:

- Guidelines for TA training: it was noted that this is a Human Resources issue, given that TAs are unionized; APC could discuss the issue but should not expect to interfere with negotiations. Training workshops are offered on both campuses to TAs once they are hired; although such training is not required, demand is high.
- Academic support for students and the possibility of establishing a learning centre bringing academic services together: it was noted that the implementation of proposals for major reorganizations (such as the unified portfolio for student life and learning and the new “Service Point”) usually require several years of careful planning to be realized successfully. A proposal for a Writing Centre will be forthcoming. Ongoing efforts are being made for providing academic support to students efficiently. **The Deputy-Provost (Student Life and Learning) will be invited to report to APC on the matter.**
- Inter-university *co-tutelle* arrangements: it was noted that in January 2007 McGill approved a joint Executive MBA with HEC-Montreal (a joint degree is issued upon completion of the program) and in May 2008, McGill approved an MOU between the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow, India (IIML) and the Desautels Faculty of Management regarding the delivery of McGill’s Masters of Management in Finance (MMF) at IIML
- Availability of French classes for graduating students: it was noted that concerns and issues of an administrative nature should be dealt with at an appropriate level; one should first find out what is available before bringing the matter to the attention of a governance committee for it to become a policy issue. A governance committee’s role is to make sure that the University is pointed in the right direction, that the appropriate policies are in place for it to meet its mission, and to hold the administration accountable for delivery. APC is expected to deal with issues of substance that drive University strategies

### 01.09 Broad issues for APC consideration: Interdisciplinary Programs

- List of Interdisciplinary Programs at McGill, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 2010 (10-APC-09-05)
- Suggested questions to be addressed (*Addendum to 10-APC-09-05*)

Among the list of broad issues for discussion proposed by individual members, “interdisciplinary programs” was the issue on which APC chose to focus first. APC members were invited to review the short list of questions that were suggested by the Office of the Deputy-Provost and to add to the list.

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The following questions were added to the list:

- How is advising carried out in interdisciplinary programs?
- What would be a good matrix for understanding what constitutes a program? Is it worth having a program for few students, remembering that programs may shrink (for example, Labour Relations) or grow (as Classical Studies did)?
- How are core competencies embedded? Does a student in an interdisciplinary program come out with qualities proper to one particular discipline? What are the guidelines for developing an interdisciplinary program, in terms of program structure and in order to avoid a dilution of discipline?
- What constitutes an interdisciplinary program? Programs may be interdisciplinary in different fashions. The 99 programs on the list appear to constitute a heterogeneous set and may not be thoroughly up to date (Humanistic Studies has now been closed). Is taking a major in one faculty and a minor in another interdisciplinary?

**It was agreed that the list would be reviewed and a more complete report would be prepared.**

**01.10 Documents for information**

- APC 2010-2011 membership and schedule of meeting dates
- APC terms of reference, as amended on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009 (*10-APC-09-03*)

**01.11 Other business**

None.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

*Helen M.C. Richard - HMCR/APPCdocs/minutes/2010-09-09*