

Minutes of the meeting of the **Academic Policy Committee** held on Thursday 25th November 2010, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Room 310, James Building

Present: A.C. Masi (Chair), J. Abaki, J. Angeles, G. Brown, C. Buddle, A. Deguise, A. Doyle, I. Henderson, R. Jakhu, M. Kreiswirth, P. Li, B. Low, M.J. Mendelson, P. Perez-Aleman, J. Potter, M. Szyf, C. Urbain, M. Wanderley, L. Winer (for C. Weston), H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)

Regrets: M. Kaartinen, S. McDougall, R. Mayor-Mora, R. Rozen, W. Thomson, C. Weston

Guests: P. Smith, L. White (item 4), B. Robaire (item 5)

Document circulated at the meeting: none.

06.01 Proposed agenda

The proposed agenda was adopted.

06.02 Minutes of previous meeting held on 11th November 2010

The minutes were approved as circulated.

06.03 Business arising

None.

**06.04 Proposed Cyclical Academic Unit Reviews Policy (10-APC-11-27)
and proposed seven-year schedule (addendum) (10-APC-11-27 a)**

Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures and Equity) Lydia White presented the draft policy on cyclical academic unit reviews, which are intended to replace the academic program reviews (2004-2009). In order to lighten the task, use would be made of documents already available, such as annual reports, and templates would be provided for self-study reports and external reviewers' reports. Data would be made available well in advance of the start of each review.

In the discussion, the following changes were suggested (listed here in the order in which they appear in the document, not in the order in which they were raised at the meeting):

Page 1, under "Rationale":

- first paragraph, first line: "as mandated by CREPUQ and MELS" should be replaced with "in keeping with the Policy adopted by Quebec universities within the CREPUQ framework (1991, 1999)";
- second paragraph last line: "as well as meeting McGill's reporting requirements to CREPUQ and MELS" should be replaced with "as well as meeting the requirements of the CREPUQ Policy";
- "accountability" is a notion which, along with "quality", pervades the CREPUQ Policy and which should be mentioned as one of the concerns driving the proposed cyclical academic unit reviews.

Page 1, under "Review Criteria":

1. Objectives, Priorities and Activities

- AAU should be identified, as should PGSS and SSMU on page 2;
- "The extent and nature of the unit's interaction with student groups" should be added as a bullet;
- "Strategies for ensuring alignment with Faculty and University priorities and plans" in the last bullet should be a separate bullet.

2. Academic Programs, Teaching and Learning

- The text in the first bullet presupposes that the academic unit has defined "learning goals and outcomes" for its undergraduate and graduate programs, which may or may not be the case. "Learning goals and objectives of the unit's undergraduate and graduate programs" should appear as the first bullet;
- "professional training (where relevant)" should be added at the end of the (formerly)2nd, now 3rd, bullet.

Page 2, under "4) Diversity and Community Involvement"

- this section could be elaborated on but will be adjusted when the Report from the Principal's Task Force on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement is made public.

Page 2, under "5) Structure, Management and Administration"

- "Financial resources" should be included as an additional bullet.

Page 3, under "Timing and committee structure"

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- 3rd paragraph: the site visit should be described at greater length
- Pages 4 and 5, Appendix 2 - Template for the self-study
- under “Academic Programs, Teaching and Learning”, suggested additions included: relevance and coherence of program courses; teaching development activities and initiatives; innovative teaching practices, such as use of technology in the classroom; courses in cognate disciplines taken by students from the unit under review; participation of students in international student exchanges, study abroad, etc;
 - under “Research, Scholarship and Creative Works”, three additions were suggested: research achievements, such as publications and creative works of the unit’s academic members and students which are not in the unit’s annual reports or on CVs; undergraduate and graduate students’ involvement in research conducted within the unit.
 - Under “Administration and Support: additional bullets were suggested: advising and mentoring for students and junior faculty members, and the provision of library resources and mention of computer software.

It was further noted that;

- academic units subject to the cyclical academic unit review Policy would be those that offer programs of study.
- Deans’ review reports (conducted towards the end of a Dean’s term) and professional program accreditation review reports would be expected to feed into the cyclical academic unit review exercise; such reviews follow different cycles.
- instructions specifying how review committees for generating units’ self-study reports should be structured will not be attempted, as academic units vary significantly in size and some offer graduate programs only.
- templates should take into account the lessons learned from the academic program reviews.

It was agreed that the proposed Policy on cyclical academic unit reviews should be revised in light of the suggestions made by APC and submitted to Senate for discussion at the meeting of Senate on 8th December 2010 and for approval by Senate on 19th January 2011. It will be submitted as a separate document from the regular APC report but referred to in APC’s 424th APC Report. Senators will be invited to submit concerns and questions before the January meeting.

06.05 Conseil supérieur de l’éducation

Toward an updated vision of graduate and postdoctoral studies – Brief to the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports – October 2010 - **Summary** (10-APC-11-28)

- *Pour une vision actualisée des formations universitaires aux cycles supérieurs* –Avis à la ministre de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, octobre 2010

<http://www.cse.gouv.qc.ca/fichiers/documents/publications/Avis/50-0474.pdf> (140-pages)

- **CSE recommendations (translation)** (10-APC-11-29)

- **Comments on the CSE brief on graduate and postdoctoral studies as it relates to McGill**, Associate Provost and Dean Martin Kreiswirth and Associate Deans (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) Heather Durham and Meyer Nahon, 14th October 2010 (10-APC-11-30)

Background 2008 Avis:

- *Des acquis à préserver et des défis à relever pour les universités québécoises*, Avis à la ministre de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, CSE, mai 2008

<http://www.cse.gouv.qc.ca/fichiers/documents/publications/Avis/50-0462.pdf> (104-pages)

Professor Bernard Robaire, Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Chair of the Commission de l’enseignement et de la recherche universitaire of the *Conseil supérieur de l’Éducation (CSE)*, presented the CSE’s most recent « Avis » on graduate and postdoctoral studies and its possible implications for McGill. The CSE was created in 1964 by Quebec’s *Assemblée nationale*, in the wake of The Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the Province of Quebec (Parent Report). The CSE is intended to be an advisory body to the Minister of Education on matters relating to the Quebec education system. The 2010 “Avis” focuses on graduate and postdoctoral studies. In summary, Quebec was thought to have performed well as the number of individuals pursuing graduate studies has increased. The report highlights a number of concerns however: completion rates should be improved upon, especially at the Ph.D. level; professor/student ratios are decreasing, which means professors’ workloads have increased. Professor Robaire commented on the CSE’s twelve recommendations.

Discussion focused on a few major points:

- With respect to other universities’ focus on *micro-programmes*, it was stated that: McGill may not have been sufficiently active in developing short programs to meet the needs of new clienteles and, in so doing,

increase revenues. It was suggested that McGill should consider reviewing its current offerings and building on some of the creative ways by which it currently meets the needs of professional and other clientele.

- Matching enrolments with employment needs in the field was not an issue that the CSE dwelled on specifically. APC also did not think such an approach should be encouraged: not all Ph.D. degree holders may land an academic position in their discipline, but a Ph.D. degree may open the door to many other possibilities and meaningful employment outside academia. It was noted that a master's or Ph.D. education equips a person with skills and problem-solving competencies that can be applied in various work environments, irrespective of the discipline of study.

- Observations presented in the report may be discipline-specific in a number of instances: a master's may, for example, be considered the terminal degree in some disciplines (such as Engineering), while a Ph.D. is for teaching and conducting research; likewise, postdoctoral fellowships are not essential in all disciplines.

In conclusion, it was agreed that McGill should monitor its activities against the recommendations of the CSE.

06.06 Other business

None.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Helen M.C. Richard - HMCR/APPCdocs/minutes/2010-11-25