

Minutes of the meeting of the **Academic Policy Committee** held on Thursday 5th May 2011, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Room 326, Wilson Hall

Present: C. Weston (chairing), J. Abaki, J. Angeles, G. Brown, C. Buddle, A. Deguise, A. Doyle, I. Henderson, R. Jakhu, P. Perez-Aleman, A. Possian (for Peter Li), C. Urbain, H.M.C. Richard (*Secretary to the Committee*)
Regrets: M.J. Damha, O. Gautheron, M. Kaartinen, M. Kreiswirth, P. Li, S. McDougall, A.C. Masi, R. Mayor-Mora, M.J. Mendelson, J. Potter, M. Szyf, W. Thomson, M. Wanderley
Guests: C. Riches (item 5), P. Smith (item 7), L. Dubé (item 8), C. Adler, R. Del Degan, J. Nicell (item 9)

Document circulated at the meeting: none.

13.01 Proposed agenda

The proposed agenda was adopted.

13.02 Minutes of previous meeting held on 21st April 2011

The minutes were approved as circulated.

13.03 Business arising

The issue relating to the reduction in language courses taught, which was raised under “Other Business” at the meeting on 21st April, will be addressed when the question is submitted in writing.

13.04 Report on Senate meeting held on 27th April 2011

Senate approved all items from the meeting held on 24th March that were submitted by APC for approval:

- the merger of the Departments of German Studies, Hispanic Studies, Italian Studies and Russian, and Slavic Studies and creation of a Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures (the proposal still has to be presented to the Board of Governors for final approval);
- the Oral Surgery Internship Certificate program;
- the Certificate program in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery.

13.05 APC Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP)

a) SCTP Report #11 – meeting on 14th April 2011 (*11-APC-05-59*)

- B.Ed. in Kindergarten and Elementary *Pédagogie de l’immersion française* (120 cr.) (*Appendix A*)

Professor Caroline Riches, Department of Integrated Studies in Education presented the proposed program. She explained that a *Programme intensif de français* (PIF) existed prior to 2002 as an option for future B.Ed. Kindergarten/Elementary teachers to gain expertise in Teaching French as a Second Language (TFSL), specifically in French Immersion contexts. In 2002, the joint Université de Montréal /McGill program in TFSL was approved and it was decided to suspend admissions to the PIF program in order to prevent a duplication of offerings. In the fall of 2010, a scarcity of resources caused McGill to cease admission into the joint TFSL program as of September 2011. A considerable demand for teachers in French Immersion in Elementary schools remains however, causing the Faculty of Education to revise the PIF option as a major in *Pédagogie de l’immersion française* for students in the B.Ed. K/Elem program seeking TFSL qualification. The PIF program is nested within the B.Ed. Kindergarten/Elementary program and upon successful completion of a French language diagnostic examination students may apply to transfer into it, soon after commencing the B.Ed. K/Elem. The program is expected to be very popular. The French name of the program is intended to show that this is a bilingual program.

APC approved the proposed B.Ed. in Kindergarten and Elementary *Pédagogie de l’immersion française*. The program will be reported to Senate as having been approved (in APC’s 429th Report, D10-65, which will be considered by Senate on 18th May 2011).

- b) Special Report on meeting held on 14th April 2011 (*one item for approval*)
 - B.Eng.; Major in Bioengineering (135-150 cr.) (11-APC-05-63)

APC was informed that the program proposal had not yet been formally approved by SCTP but APC was encouraged to consider it for submission to Senate before the end of the academic session. APC therefore was provided with all the documentation (consultation reports and responses) normally viewed only by SCTP.

Professor Jim Clark, Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Engineering, presented the proposed B.Eng. Major in Bioengineering program. The program will focus on topics of interest to the Faculty of Engineering and complement the B.Eng. in Bioresource Engineering, which focuses on agricultural and ecological engineering, and the program in Biomedical Engineering, offered by the Faculty of Medicine. Very few undergraduate programs of this type exist in Canada. The proposed program was modeled on programs offered in the U.S. It will require approval by the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport (MELS).

In the discussion, it was explained that ten courses, specific to the program, had to be created. Given that the structure of the program is shaped by accreditation requirements, this excludes the possibility of making use of courses offered by other faculties.

Questions were raised regarding the name of the program and the resources that the program would require. It was suggested that it would be preferable if such issues could be resolved before a program proposal is presented to APC, in compliance with the normal approval path. In response it was stated that at a recent consultation involving the Provost and the four Deans concerned, it had been agreed that no name other than “Bioengineering” would be appropriate. It is the name adopted by similar programs in the US. Regarding resources, it was stated that the new students drawn to McGill by this new program would generate additional resources. The program aims to have 200 students at any time (18 entries from CEGEP and 14 from out-of-province annually). Plans are in place for providing laboratory space. Furthermore, McGill will have to show CREPUQ’s *Commission d’évaluation des projets de programmes* and MELS that adequate resources are or will be in place.

APC members agreed that SCTP’s approval should be required, in order to conform to the University’s approval procedure, and that this should be obtained electronically by the 9th May. It was noted that SCTP’s approval was all the more necessary as the Subcommittee had expressed reservations.

Secretary’s note: SCTP approved the proposed B.Eng; Major in Bioengineering on Monday 9th May 2011. **The proposal was therefore recommended to Senate for approval** (it was included in APC’s 429th Report, D10-65, for consideration at the meeting of Senate on 18th May 2011).

APC wished to voice its concern about new proposals being rushed through for approval and agreed that this was a general issue for consideration.

13.06 International Education - Proposed partnerships

- a) University of Connecticut (11-APC-05-57)
 b) University of Otago (11-APC-05-58)

Consideration of those two proposed partnerships was postponed to the next meeting.

13.07 APC Workgroup on Interdisciplinary Programs

- Progress Report to APC, April 2011 (11-APC-05-60)

Presentation of this progress report was postponed to the next meeting.

13.08 Research Advisory Committee

- **Proposal for the creation of The Center of 21st Century Science for Health, Well-being and Sustainable Prosperity for All**, submitted by the Desautels Faculty of Management (11-APC-05-61)
 - addendum: McGill World Platform for Health & Economics Convergence presentation (*Addendum*)

APC was informed that the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) had been unable to consider the proposal at its meeting on Wednesday 4th May 2011, given an already full agenda. Any proposal for the creation of a research centre requires a recommendation for approval from RAC in order to be considered by APC for approval. The proposal was therefore given only preliminary consideration by APC.

Professor Laurette Dubé, from the Desautels Faculty of Management, presented the proposal for the creation of “The Center of 21st Century Science for Health, Well-being and Sustainable Prosperity for All”, the first research centre to be led by the Desautels Faculty of management.

In the discussion, concerns were voiced regarding what seems to be a somewhat reductionist and mechanistic approach for resolving a problem. If the Centre were the solution, it was not clear what the problem was, what questions the Centre was proposing to resolve, and what was being promoted for all of humanity. Questions were raised about the chosen name for the Centre and the message it conveys, the Centre’s membership, the focus of research and the single perspective that it seems to offer, the scholarly nature of the proposal, and the document’s lack of conciseness. The proposal was also missing a number of letters of support.

It was agreed that APC’s concerns would be relayed to the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations). The proposal will be reviewed by the Research Advisory Committee on 25th May 2011.

13.09 Resource implications associated with new teaching programs, major program revisions, significant enrolment changes, and new academic units

Professor Jim A. Nicell, Associate Vice-Principal (University Services), Chuck Adler, Director, Campus and Space Planning, and Real Del Degan, Director, Academic Management, joined the meeting. Professor Nicell spoke of the difficulties encountered whenever academic decisions are taken without his services having been alerted at an early stage that additional resources would be required, such as additional space, teaching equipment, and other supporting infrastructure. Reacting after the fact may result in, for example, having to convert non-ideal space to meet needs expeditiously and expensively. A major enrolment growth is testing the space available to the School in Physical and Occupational Therapy and raising concerns at accreditation time. Given the University’s limited resources, space in particular, it would be preferable if all resource requirements could be identified early on, rather than at the end of the approval process or after the fact. McGill appears no longer to have a formal mechanism for asking questions about the need for resources at an early stage. Given the limited amount of space available on McGill’s downtown campus and the limited capital and equipment funds available, any add-on represents an important challenge. Professor Nicell recommended that the process for approving new academic activities should be reviewed so that planning occurs in an integrated fashion and so that the information flow prevents any late surprises.

In the discussion, it was mentioned that when APC members were invited to endorse the Strategic Enrolment Management Plan, the question of space scarcity was raised, but APC was told that space and other resources were an administrative issue, not an APC concern, and would be addressed elsewhere. APC has been reminded of the distinction between governance and administration. In response, it was noted that resource allocation is indeed an administrative responsibility, but the administrative process has to be guided and that process has to be in place.

It was further commented that a course or program should not be approved without assurance that it will have appropriate resources to support it. It was suggested that the course and program proposal forms could be expanded to include a question that would trigger attention to resources and may, in the case of programs, require a letter from the Dean regarding the adequacy or provision of physical resources. In response to this suggestion, it was noted that a time element has to be taken into consideration. Physical space issues may take a long time to be resolved. The information flow within and from the faculties can be deficient, preventing useful information from being communicated to central administration in a timely fashion.

The deletion of planning from the mandate of APC (formerly APPC) was said to have deprived the Committee of any responsibility for making sure that a new program being considered for approval had all the necessary resources for the program to be of quality. It was stated that the B.Eng. Major in Bioengineering program proposal was about to be approved without any assurance that the necessary resources were or would be in place. The bioengineering activities of this program, as currently presented, may cost three times more to the University than the amount of revenue they will generate, which would mean that other activities would have to subsidize them. Once a new degree program is approved by Senate, it is submitted to the scrutiny of the *Commission d’évaluation des projets de programmes* of CREPUQ, which, as part of its study of the quality of the proposed program, reviews all the stated resources that will support it and assesses whether they are sufficient to ensure the level of quality expected of the program. The issue of resource adequacy is indeed an academic issue that has to be addressed, if not by APC, then by another university committee or administrative body.

It was suggested that developing a new field such as Bioengineering meant working with a moving target that may necessitate a switch in thinking from resource constraints to resource creation and coordination with Development professionals with a list of needs. In response, it was noted that constraints and investments should be acknowledged and that there exist different strategies and models. Resource implications nevertheless need to be vetted, so that APC can focus only on the academic merit of a proposal. While any new program requires an investment, it is the long-term viability of the program that matters. This is not a technical question but a quality question. While the financial viability of new degree programs is routinely assessed, rarely are new programs given conditional approval and a review date. Questions such as: “can the program be launched without a new building?” have an implication on the quality of the program. On the subject of space, it was suggested that a study of space usage/ownership may help alleviate the problem of space scarcity.

In conclusion, APC agreed that a mechanism was needed for making sure that resource implications of any new academic proposal are assessed with authority, knowledge, and expertise, because resources (be they staffing resources, library resources, or physical resources such as laboratory/classroom/office space and equipment) have an impact on the quality of programs and on the academic experience of students. Faculties do not always have sufficient information and knowledge of what program requirements may be. The academic approval process and the resource assessment process have to be fully integrated.

13.10 Very-low-enrolment courses and programs

- Memorandum from the Deputy Provost to APC, 2nd May 2011 (11-APC-05-62)

Consideration of this issue was postponed to the next meeting.

13.11 Other business

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Helen M.C. Richard - HMCR/APPCdocs/minutes/2011-05-05