

Minutes of the meeting of the **Academic Policy Committee** held on Thursday 3rd October 2013, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Room 302, James (Administration) Building

Present: A.C. Masi (Chair), W. Adams, O. Dyens, W. Hendershot, I. Henderson, L. Hendren, S. Huebner, M. Kreiswirth, C. Mandato, A. Misra, J. Potter, E. Sarigöllu, J. Shea, P. Smith, F. Subhani, C. Urbain, L. Winer, B. Xu, H.M.C. Richard (*Secretary to APC*)

Regrets: K. Dalkir, J. Galbraith, S. MacDougall, L. Stone, S. Stroud, S. Sumasundaram, L. White

Guest: D. Berk (item 6.b)

Document circulated at the meeting:

- proposed new template for APC Assessments of Academic Unit Reviews
- proposed revised New program/Major or Minor/ Concentration Proposal Form

02.01 Proposed agenda

The proposed agenda was adopted.

02.02 Minutes of previous APC meeting held on 19th September 2013

The minutes were approved with one correction. The first sentence in the third paragraph under item 01.03 should read as follows: “Documents for APC: It was agreed that documents should be made available to APC members two weeks ten days before the date of the meeting at which they will be considered, in the case of a two-week interval in-between meetings, or two weeks before, in the case of a three-week or four-week interval.”

02.03 Business arising (*please see items 4 a & b, and item 6 a*)

02.04 APC Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP)

a) Proposed amendments to composition and proposed membership (***Revised 13-APC-09-04***)

Deputy Provost Ollivier Dyens presented the document. The suggestions made by APC at the previous meeting have been taken into consideration. The document proposes both amendments to the composition of SCTP and a revised membership for 2013-2014 that reflects the proposed composition and outlines the rationale in support of the changes presented.

It was agreed that “large faculties” should be identified, i.e. by addition of “as defined by the University Statutes”, meaning Arts, Science, and Medicine. APC approved the amendments to the composition of SCTP with that addition. An academic member to fill the TBA slot will be identified and proposed for approval by APC at a future meeting. It was suggested that the Dean of the Faculty of Science should first be approached for the nomination of academic member to fill the vacant slot.

Secretary’s note (reminder to APC):

Excerpt from minutes of APC meeting held on 23rd November 2006:

06.04 Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP)

a) SCTP membership (Arts replacement) (06-APPC-11-29)

*APPC considered the recommendation to replace Professor Patrick Neilson of the Faculty of Arts with the Associate-Dean (Academic) of that Faculty to the APPC Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs for a term extending from 1st January 2007 to 31st August 2009. The SCTP has in the past included an Associate Dean (Academic) from the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. **It was cautioned that upper-level governance committees should not turn into administrative committees.....***

b) Admissions requirements and new program proposals

Deputy Provost Ollivier Dyens reported that SCTP agreed that admissions requirements constitute an academic matter and should therefore be added to the dossier for new program proposals. The Secretary of SCTP has proposed that “Admission Requirements for New Proposal” be added under box 4.0 (Rationale) of the New Program/ Major or Minor/ Concentration Proposal Form, given that adding a new box to the Form was not technically feasible.

In the discussion, it was noted that providing information on admissions requirements was appropriate for graduate programs, but less so for undergraduate programs. It was suggested that while CGPS and SCTP should consider the admissions requirements of graduate programs, admission matters pertaining to undergraduate programs might best be handled by a committee replicating the former University Admissions Committee (UAC) that included representation from all faculties.

- c) Approval path for new programs and major revisions to programs, approved by Senate, 17th January 2013 (12-APC-12-32)

APC agreed that the Streamlined Approval Paths document should be revised to indicate the change in procedure for graduate program proposals suggested by the Secretary of SCTP, i.e. instead of the current Faculty-SCTP-CGPS-SCTP-APC approval path, graduate program proposals will be reviewed by CGPS before being presented to SCTP. The new path, Faculty-CGPS-SCTP-APC, is expected to be faster and more efficient. Deputy Provost Ollivier Dyens suggested that specific mandates should be defined for each of the committees responsible for reviewing program proposals, in order to achieve a streamlined approval process.

02.05 APC Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning (STL)

- a) STL membership (13-APC-10-12)

The proposed membership was approved.

- b) STL 2013 Annual Report to APC (13-APC-10-13)

APC received the annual report from the Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning and engaged in a long discussion regarding the Undergraduate Outcomes Working Group, its work plan and the funding required for it to continue its work. It was noted that funds serve to hire undergraduate students who do research and benchmarking, and to staff a consultation process that will be developed. The study is expected to lead to a common articulation of attributes that a McGill education provides, i.e., a description of what McGill does rather than aspirational statements of outcomes. Adopting an internal process for developing the list of outcomes may prevent the imposition of a list by external authorities, as has been the case elsewhere. A definition of what makes a McGill education special is expected to serve as an institutional statement and to help improve what the University does. It was suggested that a distinction should be made between common attributes and those that are specific to disciplines; for example, accreditation bodies and professional orders define attributes and competencies required of professional program graduates. It was observed that it would be unreasonable to require justifications in relation to agreed-upon outcomes for every course or program proposal and it was suggested that, since STL and its Working Group now have a comprehensive sense of what other universities have done, the Working Group should now focus on seeking the faculties' input: Deans could bring the Working Group's questions to their faculty's academic committees (which include students) and department Chairs. The advice offered by APC members will be relayed to the Chair of the STL Undergraduate Outcomes Working Group, Dean Ellen Aitken.

02.06 APC Subcommittee on Academic Unit Reviews (for presentation and discussion)

- a) Proposed revised template for APC assessments and accountability requirements (*circulated at meeting*)

Following the discussion held at the previous meeting of APC, the Chair of the APC Subcommittee on Academic Unit Reviews, Professor Ian Henderson, proposed that APC should, henceforth and after each review presentation, produce a concise statement certifying that a review has taken place, to which could be added particular issues that APC would wish to bring to Senate's attention. This would require that, after each review presentation, either the Chair of the Subcommittee or the Chair of APC should ask APC members whether they could identify any issues that should, in their view, be commented upon. **APC agreed to this proposal. The review of the Department of Philosophy should therefore be revisited**, while the "APC Assessments" relating to previous reviews will be included in the next (449th) APC Report to Senate as they each have already been forwarded to the relevant Chair/Director and Dean.

- b) Department of Anthropology (Faculty of Arts)
 - i. Review documents (**13-APC-10-10**)
 - a. Self Study (*Appendix a*)
 - b. Internal Reviewers Report (*Appendices b*)
 - c. External Reviewer's Report – Paul Brodwin (*Appendix c*)
 - d. External Reviewer's Report – Peter Gose (*Appendix d*)
 - e. Department Acting Chair's Comments (*Appendix e*)
 - f. Dean's Response (*Appendix f*)
 - ii. Summary of Review (**13-APC-10-11**)

Ms. Haley Hatch-Dinel (UG student) presented the Summary of the review of the Department of Anthropology which she and Professor Dimitrios Berk (Department of Chemical Engineering) had prepared. APC was satisfied with the review. No comments on any specific issues will be added to the attestation that will be sent to the Chair and the Dean by the Secretary of APC, on behalf of APC.

Secretary's Note: the list of recommendations was missing from the Summary. It was later compiled and has been added to the document posted on the APC website.

- c) Department of Translation & Written Communication (School of Continuing Studies)
 - i. Review documents (**13-APC-10-08**)
 - a. Self Study (*Appendix a*)
 - b. Internal Reviewers Report and External Reviewers' Report (*Appendix b*)
 - c. Director's Comments (*Appendix c*)
 - d. Dean's Response (*Appendix d*)
 - ii. Summary of Review (**13-APC-10-09**)

Ms Carole Urbain (Libraries) and Ms Joey Shea (SSMU) presented their Summary of the review documents. The review documents raised a number of concerns. The views expressed in the reviewers' reports were not aligned regarding all issues. Observations made in the discussion included the following:

- enrolment data, mission, priorities and goals statements were missing from the Self-Study document.
- a review of the McGill Writing Centre was scheduled to take place five years following its creation, i.e. in three years. Issues were raised concerning the McGill Writing Centre.

General comments applying to all reviews were made:

- A unit should not be left to decide to exclude data provided by the Office of Planning and Institutional Analysis (PIA) in its Self-Study document; such data should always be made available to the reviewers.
- The reports should be checked by the central office for completeness before they are forwarded to the reviewers.
- Descriptions of teaching programs should be provided to reviewers, so that they should not have to look for them on the University's website.
- "Diversity" should be defined: does it refer to language, gender or other, to the composition of the student body or that of the faculty? How can progress be benchmarked if reviews focus on different understandings of the term "diversity"? How relevant is the question if it is interpreted in different ways? Moreover, what use is made of the information collected?

It was suggested that a review of the process should be carried out with a view to improving the reviews' effectiveness.

APC members agreed to continue their discussion of the review of the Translation & Written Communication department at the next meeting in order to decide on the issues that they should bring to Senate's attention.

Secretary's Note: the list of recommendations was missing from the Summary. It was later compiled and has been added to the document posted on the APC website.

02.07 Other business

None.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.