
Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee held on 18th March 2004, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in Room 609, James (Administration) Building

Present: L. Vinet (Chair), J. Beheshti, C. Bushnell, A. Bryan, V. Choy, M. Crago, Ph. Depalle, M. Dowsley, J. Galbraith, M. Graham, F. Groen, W. Hendershot, A.C. Masi, L. Proulx, J. Zucchi, H.M.C. Richard (Secretary to the Committee)
Regrets: E. Cooper, G. Demopoulos, H. Knox, M. Kuan, H.G. Leighton, S. McDougall, R. Roy
Guests: N. de Takacsy, R. Donovan, H. Van Eyk (item 06.a)

Document circulated at the meeting:

Revised 03-APPC-03-38 Proposed McGill Academic Program Review and Development Plan

09.01 Proposed agenda

Adopted as circulated.

09.02 Minutes of meeting held on January 29, 2004

Approved.

09.03 Business arising

- a) Report on Senate decisions on 356th and 357th APPC Reports (Senate, February 11 and March 17, 2004)

The only item submitted to Senate for approval in APPC's 356th Report was the B.A. & Sc.; Major Concentration in Biomedical Sciences which was approved.

- b) Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning
Proposed terms of reference, March 9, 2004, as submitted to and considered by Nominating Committee on March 16, 2004 (*Revised 03-APPC-03-33*)

The Nominating Committee of Senate considered the proposed revisions to the SCTL's terms of reference at its meeting on Tuesday, March 16, 2004. It will recommend the proposed revisions to Senate with one change: instead of "The Provost or designate who will be ex-officio member of APPC (Chair)" the Nominating Committee thought it more appropriate to recommend "A designate of the Provost who will be ex-officio member of APPC (Chair)", given that the Provost could not be both Chair of the proposed Sub-committee on Teaching and Learning and Chair of its parent committee. (Note: if Senate approves the proposed revisions to the terms of reference of SCTL, revisions to the terms of reference of APPC will subsequently have to be proposed to the Nominating Committee so that the Chair of SCTL is included in the Composition of APPC as an ex-officio member).

09.04 Program Reviews

- Presentation and one-hour Discussion of Committee of the Whole (*03-APPC-03-38*)

Associate Provost (Academic Programs) Martha Crago presented the "Proposed McGill Academic Program Review and Development Plan" (*Revised 03-APPC-03-38*) as an issue of chief concern to APPC on which APPC was being consulted. She stated that McGill had not for some time examined its academic programs systematically and that it was important to make sure that this be done. Ten years after McGill initiated a cyclical review process that focused on units, CREPUQ adopted a policy requiring all Quebec universities to put in place a program review process (*Politique des établissements universitaires du Québec relative à l'évaluation périodique des programmes existants*). It is now proposed that the cyclical reviews of the past be revived in a much different form with academic programs now being the clear focus of the reviews. This will require moving from preconceptions that may be attached to the earlier review process and the realization that not all recommendations for refreshing and updating programs necessarily require the input of additional financial resources. The proposed reviews will be a collegial examination of academic curriculum and teaching. A significant outcome will be the design of plans for moving ahead. On the curricular side as well as the delivery side the University community will be looking at teaching in

a global way. Dr. Crago stressed the importance of viewing the process as useful to units rather than as an imposition from central administration: “if it is not thought to be useful, we are failing.” The process and the outcome will be integrated in the planning process. The academic program review is present in the development of compacts. Deans have had significant input, and on March 17, Deans and Chairs were given a special presentation; each of ten tables of ten was given the opportunity to discuss a different question related to the program review process. In winter 2005, the University will be visited by the *Commission de vérification de l'évaluation des programmes* whose mandate is to verify the appropriateness of institutional policies and practices with respect to the goal, stages, criteria and procedures established under the terms of CREPUQ's Policy. The CVEP's reports on University visits are made public.

The handouts presented by Dr Crago emphasize the lightness and flexibility of the proposed process, the brief timeframe of the review (two to three years) and the iterative interaction between a central steering committee and the faculties and departments. Flexibility would include crossing faculty boundary lines. External evaluators or stimulators could also be used in a very flexible manner. Program reviews would typically result in plans for course and program revisions, the creation of new courses and programs, as well as teaching improvements and innovations. Those outcomes would be made public in *The Reporter*; there would likely not be an individual report on each program. The Faculty review group could be the academic committee or curriculum committee of the Faculty or another suitable body.

Discussion ensued. To a question regarding whether McGill's proposed review process concurred with CREPUQ's policy and would meet its criteria, the Provost stated that he was confident that McGill could convince the CVEP that the chosen process was appropriate. Themes found in the Deans' compacts would be supplemented by specific reviews. Compression of the review process into two to three years was a key element (the previous cyclical reviews were carried over seven years followed by a two-year gap); for that to happen, the process had to be light. Dr. Crago added that a set of guidelines would be produced in the summer, outlining some of the issues that could be addressed. It was suggested and agreed that **a set of questions to react to might result in a more focused exercise.**

To a suggestion that it might have made more sense to begin with program reviews then tackle the planning process it was replied that university planning encompasses more than teaching; research, services, and space are also included, and planning and development cannot wait for other things to happen; program reviews have to occur in real time. Focusing on programs that could be cut also would not be appropriate as that would deprive cutting-edge programs of the benefits of concrete recommendations that would build on their strengths. A systematic review will help ensure a useful unified product.

The integrative aspect of the program review process being conducted simultaneously with the planning process was emphasized and the iterative aspect of the two processes was also made clear. The integration of a Faculty's stated objectives in the program reviews, the relationship between proposed hires and academic program directions, the match between teaching and research are questions that will be considered and which will be an ongoing preoccupation leading to constant readjustments thanks to the tools the University is giving itself. The University will be engaged in an ever-developing integration of the academic program review process and the planning process.

It was noted that the strong Library component present in the 1981 Cyclical Review guidelines developed under Vice-Principal S.O. Freedman was absent from the proposed guidelines. It was agreed that **“appropriateness of library and technological resources” should be added to the evaluation criteria.**

The relationship between the proposed academic program review and the Faculty compacts was thought to be critical, but concern was raised about the concentration on teaching in the academic program reviews, since teaching and research are believed to go hand in hand at McGill. If teaching and research are not connected in this snapshot of academic programs, then the community would be sent the wrong message. It was explained that teaching and research are integrated in the planning effort. Central administration is currently working with Faculties in order to develop a synthesis of Faculty plans over the summer that will include strong indications of research directions. Faculty compacts are incremental to some extent and the Faculty plan constitutes the first piece which will develop into one integrated plan. The program reviews should be seen as integrated into the ongoing planning process, and rather than a snapshot of academic programs the process should be viewed as a boost stimulus that allows the University to create exciting synergies and engage in cross-Faculty fertilization in order to move forward in innovative ways. The exercise could be summarized in the following three questions: how well are we doing? how could we improve? how shall we prioritize steps towards improving? It was suggested that the process guidelines

should then make it clear that the program reviews are intended to be a point of departure from which one projects into the future.

Developing inter-disciplinarity across disciplinary boundaries was another concern; McGill might be lagging behind on that score. It was stated that the proposed review process is no longer unit-based but faculty based and that the whole planning process, including program reviews, has been designed in this way. It was however noted that more might have to be done to encourage collaboration and alleviate fears of losing students to other units and integrate inter-disciplinary fields such as neuroscience at both the faculty level and across faculties. The role of research centres with respect to teaching was through the affiliation of members to departments in which they teach; while teaching programs will remain within departments, members of centres, involved in inter-disciplinary research and graduate supervision, may be involved in inter-disciplinary teaching; research collaboration may thus transpire into joint teaching efforts and partnerships. It was noted that there exist institutional barriers to this, as reflected in difficulties regarding course numbers, degree designations, credit attribution; the current funding formula may have to be reviewed. The Provost reminded the Committee that McGill is moving away from enrolment-based funding and that this will help with removing such barriers.

The issue of student input was raised. The proposed central Steering Committee membership does not include any student. The Provost explained that the Steering Committee would be a managerial type of committee that would make sure that program reviews are taking place; it would in fact not offer much input with respect to the substance of the reviews. However since it would seem essential to find a way for students to take part in the review of existing teaching programs **the guidelines should specify that Faculties ought to ensure student participation at the level of the Faculty review groups and self-studies should include student input.** It was nevertheless suggested that a student representative on APPC should be part of the Steering Committee and that that student would in turn be able to help the students on the Faculty review committees. It was argued that the participation of a student on the central Steering Committee would not be as effective as on Faculty review groups which will in effect function as steering committees at the Faculty level. The Steering Committee is intended to be an operational committee. The guidelines however should state that students should be involved in the reviews of teaching programs. The question as to whether Senate was likely to request that the central Steering Committee was raised. The Provost reiterated that the central Steering Committee would not be a decision-making group but rather a managerial committee and he was not sure whether students or professors could have any role on it. He suggested that the name of the committee should be changed to “managerial committee” in order better to reflect the Committee’s role. To a remark that the process would give the impression of being very administration-driven and that somewhere along the line, the non-administrative voice has to be present, the Provost responded that the Steering Committee would be the group that would keep the process on track. It was agreed however that **the proposal should state clearly that students would be present in the review groups.**

It was suggested and agreed that APPC should propose that rather than “two-three years”, the **program review proposal should state “two years” in order to avoid a drawn-out process: i.e. fall 2004 to fall 2006.** It was also decided that **the list of questions for discussion at the Deans and Chairs luncheon on March 17 should be circulated to APPC.**

09.05 GPS: Graduate Student Thesis Questionnaire (03-APPC-03-34)

The trial Graduate Thesis Student Questionnaire was approved by Senate in February 2001 for three years after which the Council of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies was to report back to Senate through APPC. The Questionnaire is sent out to students every year. The CGPS is requesting a one-year extension because it wishes to collect and review information from other universities on similar surveys, assess the impact of its own survey on graduate studies at McGill, and determine whether any improvements might be necessary at McGill. **The CGPS’s request was agreed to and will be submitted to Senate for approval.**

09.06 Student exchange proposals (Associate Provost Nicholas de Takacsy)

- a) Faculty of Management: exchanges at the undergraduate level (03-APPC-03-36 a-f)
 - Hogeschool voor Economische Studies (HES), Amsterdam School of Business, the Netherlands
 - École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC), Université de Lausanne, Switzerland
 - University of Mannheim, Germany
 - Norwegian School of Management BI, Norway

- Copenhagen School of Business, Denmark
- Università Commerciale "Luigi Bocconi", Italy

Associate Dean (B.Com Program) Richard Donovan and Ms Helen Van Eyk, Program Manager and Advisor, joined the meeting. Associate Provost de Takacsy reminded APPC that at McGill, faculties such as Management, Law, and Engineering (including Architecture), have seen internationalization of their students' education as a valuable element of their academic programs. Those faculties actively seek matching exchange partners and come forth with proposals designed specifically for their needs. Undergraduate-level exchange agreements are proposed with the six West-European schools listed; through the Faculty Program in International Management (PIM) network, the Faculty of Management already has bilateral agreements at the graduate level (MBA) with two of them, the Copenhagen School of Business and the Università Commerciale "Luigi Bocconi" in Italy (McGill's MBA program will only consider schools that belong to a consortium, an association of business school, for exchange partnerships at the MBA level).

In the discussion it was suggested and agreed that the word "undergraduate" should appear on all the agreements, before "students", for the sake of greater precision. **The proposed undergraduate student exchanges were approved and will be reported to Senate as having been approved.**

b) School of Architecture: bilateral exchange with the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen (03-APPC-03-37)

Associate Provost Nicholas de Takacsy presented the bilateral exchange with the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, proposed by McGill's School of Architecture for an initial term of three years. As pointed out in Professor Ricardo L. Castro's letter, Danish being the language of instruction, "English-speaking students are confined to studio-based work and personal crits." **The proposed bilateral exchange was approved and will be reported to Senate as having been approved.**

09.07 Proposed meeting dates for 2004-2005

The proposed schedule of meeting dates was approved.

09.08 Comité de suivi sur les programmes (CSP)

- a) Report # 10 - on Earth, Water, and Atmospheric Sciences (English translation) (03-APPC-03-35)
http://www.crepuq.qc.ca/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=187&var_recherche=Comite+de+suivi+sur+les+programmes (French text)

The Chair suggested that this item should be considered at a future meeting and that Professor Henry Leighton be invited to speak to the contents of the report.

- b) Report # 11 - [Post-doctoral training in Medicine](#) (03-APPC-03-39)
http://www.crepuq.qc.ca/article.php3?id_article=291 (French text)

The Chair suggested that consideration of this item should also be postponed and the Dr. Catherine Bushnell be invited to speak to the contents of the report.

09.09 Other business

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.