

Minutes from a meeting of the **Academic Policy Committee (APC)** held Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. in MS-74, McLennan Library Building.

Present: F. Altamura, C. Buddle (**Vice-Chair**), A. Corbier, B. Croitoru, M. Fronda, R. Khazaka, L. Khoury (delegate), E. Krock, M. Lai, B. Low, M. Manikis, J. Nalbantoglu, C. Neidhöfer, E. Poirier, C. Smith (**Secretary**), M. Tang, R. Vadivel, C. Weil

Regrets: G. Beaudry, A. Campbell, A. Hundemer, C. Manfredi (**Chair**), O. Pflipsen

Guests: S. Adamchuk, Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences; J. Degans, Office of Teaching and Academic Programs

The meeting was chaired by Professor Chris Buddle, Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Planning), APC Vice-Chair.

The Vice-Chair welcomed the newest APC member: Étienne Poirier, PGSS student representative.

1. Agenda - Members in attendance approved the agenda.
2. Minutes from the meeting held November 13, 2025 were approved as circulated.

3. **Business Arising**

a) Subcommittee on Academic Freedom (SAF) 2025-2026 Membership: Senate approved. The APC Vice-Chair noted that Senate, at its meeting of November 12, 2025, approved the SAF 2025-2026 membership; he noted that the members have received appropriate training.

4. **Spanned Courses: Challenges** - 25-APC-12-25

FOR DISCUSSION: The topic of spanned courses was discussed, including the history of practice with these courses, and how in some cases, courses currently spanned may be better suited as two separate courses.

Associate Dean Mike Fronda, whose Faculty is familiar with spanned courses, created the outline of issues [circulated to APC members] that his Faculty has experienced over the years with spanned courses. One of the main issues being for students who complete only half of a spanned course, who take a leave from the University while registered in a spanned course, and upon their return must register for the entire course again; no credit is given for the completion of only a portion of a spanned course – the student may not simply register for the other portion again because they may only register for the entire spanned course [all versions].

The Vice-Chair explained additional context related to Banner SIS (Student Information System). Over the next 2 or 3 years, Banner 9 upgrade will take place; Banner SIS stores course information, and the course information contained within the Course Catalogue is populated from the data stored in Banner SIS. With the upcoming upgrade, there is potential compliance issue at the systems level that will make it difficult to continue offering spanned courses. This compliance issue, along with the concerns for curricular and pedagogical

4. Spanned Courses Challenges - 25-APC-12-25 [continued]

reasons, and impacts on students, lead to the question about whether there is now an opportunity to reassess the University's approach to spanned courses.

There was discussion on certain spanned courses that are currently taught by various Faculties that have valid reasons to continue teaching these courses as spanned – specific types of courses were noted: project, integrated format. Having separate courses does not always solve the issue, as in the case of students who complete only one portion of the two halves. The Vice-Chair noted that there are pedagogical reasons for a number of courses to be maintained as spanned courses – specific instances where content needs to continue over multiple semesters, and where splitting the spanned course into separate courses is not a viable solution. It was queried whether all spanned courses are being used correctly. Occasionally, the offering unit must find work arounds for students who are unable to complete a spanned course.

Also discussed were various issues that ES staff have noticed that students experience with spanned courses related to: effect on experiential learning courses, differential fees for international students, and unresolved grades becoming an issue with the government. It was noted that IT Services and ES staff do intensive testing following each Banner upgrade, and IT Services must respond to any technical impediment and resolve issues.

The Vice-Chair noted that it will need to be determined which courses currently taught as spanned do not really need to be spanned – replacing those spanned courses with a single or multiple course(s). Suggestions will be needed for alternatives, and decisions will be needed on how to constructively move forward – making the process as seamless as possible for academic units.

As each Faculty/School is represented on APC, the Vice-Chair asks that academic members discuss with their Faculty/School the issues they or their students have experienced with spanned courses. Any issues not already noted in Associate Dean Fronda's document should be communicated to the APC Secretary [cindy.smith@mcgill.ca] **by Monday, February 2, 2026**, to compile the information for discussion at the February APC meeting.

5. Report to APC from the APC Vice-Chair: New Programs/Major Program Revisions - 25-APC-12-23

New Programs

Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Professor Adamchuk joined the meeting to present three new Minor program proposals and to respond to questions. This initiative is to enhance interaction with engineering students, providing them with an introduction to areas of study in the bioresource engineering field.

It was noted that there were no new courses proposed for these programs. There was a query as to why three new minors were being proposed concurrently. Also queried was whether the proposing unit had received any communication from students demonstrating interest in these

5. Report to APC from the APC Vice-Chair: New Programs/Major Program Revisions
- 25-APC-12-23

New Programs

Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences [continued]

programs or if any students had been surveyed, which noted demand or interest. Many of the courses within the programs contain prerequisite/corequisite courses not included within the proposed program requirements, which means students will require extra time to complete their program and this may discourage students from considering these programs. Multiple higher-level courses are included in the programs, and it was queried whether any lower-level courses existed that could be included in the programs.

B.Eng.(Bioresource); Minor in Food Process Engineering (18 cr.) – *APC Appendix A*

This new program will focus on topics that will help solve complex engineering problems for contemporary and future industries linked to processing of food. Due to new digital technologies, the modern agri-food systems need to adapt, which requires substantial engineering design contributions for the sustainability of food supply and relevant ecological systems.

APC requested:

- rewrite the program description so that it refers only to the subject and topics of the program; the program description does not refer to the offering unit, who the program is open to, or the courses within the program;
- consultations obtained are quite old – obtain more recent consultations and ensure they are signed;
- many of the courses contain prerequisite or corequisite courses, which may need to be built into the program when possible; provide a listing of each course's prerequisite/corequisite courses and how they are listed within the program;
- revise effective term to 202609.

For review at the next APC meeting in January.

B.Eng.(Bioresource); Minor in Ecological Engineering (18 cr.) – *APC Appendix B*

This new program will focus on topics that will help solve complex engineering problems for contemporary and future ecological systems.

APC requested:

- rewrite the program description so that it refers only to the subject and topics of the program; the program description does not refer to the offering unit, who the program is open to, or the courses within the program;
- consultations obtained are quite old – obtain more recent consultations and ensure they are signed;
- many of the courses contain prerequisite or corequisite courses, which may need to be built into the program when possible; provide a listing of each course's prerequisite/corequisite courses and how they are listed within the program;
- add the note to the complementary section related to ENVR courses as requested by the Biehler School of Environment within their consultation;
- revise effective term to 202609.

For review at the next APC meeting in January.

5. Report to APC from the APC Vice-Chair: New Programs/Major Program Revisions
- 25-APC-12-23

New Programs

Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences [continued]

B.Eng.(Bioresource); Minor in Agricultural Engineering (18 cr.) – APC Appendix C

This new program will focus on topics that will help solve complex engineering problems for contemporary and future agricultural systems.

APC requested:

- rewrite the program description so that it refers only to the subject and topics of the program; the program description does not refer to the offering unit, who the program is open to, or the courses within the program;
- consultations obtained are quite old – obtain more recent consultations and ensure they are signed;
- many of the courses contain prerequisite or corequisite courses, which may need to be built into the program when possible; provide a listing of each course's prerequisite/corequisite courses and how they are listed within the program;
- due to the 4-credit course included within the last group of complementary courses, that group should be indicated as “3-4 credits from the following:”, the complementary credits should be revised to read “(9-10 credits)”, and the program credit weight should be revised to read “18-19 credits”;
- revise effective term to 202609.

For review at the next APC meeting in January.

6. Report 3 to APC from APTAP [2025-2026] – APC Meeting Date: November 13, 2025
Summary of Approvals – 25-APC-12-24

The summary of approvals was received for information; these approvals have been conducted by the APTAP on behalf of APC. There were no queries.

7. Concentration/Option Guidelines – 25-APC-12-26

FOR DISCUSSION: Mme Julie Degans, Associate Director – Academic Programs and Planning, joined the meeting to participate in the discussion concerning suggested revisions to the concentration/option guidelines. Ms. Degans recently received updated guidelines from the MES that outline revisions concerning what they consider major program revisions; she reports program proposals on behalf of the University to the MES for approval. The MES considers new concentrations of existing programs as revisions to that “parent” program, and as such, they now require that the University [via Mme Degans] report all new concentrations/options to them for consideration and approval. They will ensure that guidelines are followed so that concentration/option proposals are not truly new degree programs that would require a dossier submission and an in-depth review, which would take longer to approve. The guidelines provided by the MES will be incorporated into new University guidelines being created for programs, along with an updated new program proposal form.

7. Concentration/Option Guidelines – 25-APC-12-26 [continued]

One suggested revision is to clarify the language to ensure common courses [6 credits is proposed] between the “parent”/existing program and the proposed concentration/option; recent draft proposals of new concentrations/options reviewed by Mme Degans and GPS omit this commonality, which could mean the proposed would be considered as a new degree program by the MES instead of a related concentration/option of an existing program.

Another suggested revision would be to reduce the number of distinct courses within a concentration/option from current 12 to 9 credits for graduate thesis and non-thesis programs, as the thesis or project/paper is expected to focus on the subject of the concentration/option.

One faculty member noted that some of their students feel the lack of coherence in a program that is not a concentration/option because they have no interaction with other students in the program working in the same subfield; a concentration/option in this subfield would bring students together in the common courses where they would have more interaction and collaboration with their peers.

In response to a query about distinct courses within a concentration/option, it was clarified that this does not mean that these courses are exclusive to the concentration/option, but they should not also be found in the same list [required or complementary] as within the “parent” program.

It was noted that Master’s programs allow areas of specialization depending on the focus of the thesis/paper/project. It is important to keep the requirement of distinct courses for concentrations/options, as this is an important aspect of the guidelines; these distinct courses are subject related to the formal training in addition to the thesis/research/project work.

It was questioned whether 12 credits of distinct courses in the current guidelines were too high, and whether this number should be reduced.

A final comment was made that concentrations/options are important to attract students, and it is valuable to have the concentration/option designated on student transcripts.

Following discussion at CGPS, the proposed changes to the concentration/option guidelines will be reported to APC for approval.

The Vice-Chair wished members a very restful and happy holiday season; we look forward to seeing you in the new year.

The meeting ended at 4:17 p.m.