454th REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE TO SENATE

I.   TO BE APPROVED BY SENATE

(A) NEW TEACHING PROGRAMS REQUIRING SENATE APPROVAL (approvals of new minors and options added to existing programs and major revisions to programs are reported in Section IV.A.1.a. for information) - *none*

(B) ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ISSUES / POLICIES / GOVERNANCE/AWARDS - *none*

(C) CREATION OF NEW UNITS / NAME CHANGES / REPORTING CHANGES - *none*

(D) CHANGES IN DEGREE DESIGNATION - *none*

(E) INTER-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS – *none*

II.   TO BE ENDORSED BY SENATE / PRESENTED TO SENATE FOR DISCUSSION – *none*

III.   APPROVED BY APC IN THE NAME OF SENATE

(A) DEFINITIONS – *none*

(B) STUDENT EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIPS / CONTRACTS / INTERUNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS - *none*

(C) OTHER - *none*

IV.   FOR THE INFORMATION OF SENATE

A) APPROVAL OF COURSES AND TEACHING PROGRAMS

1. Programs

a) APC approvals (new options/concentrations and major revisions to existing programs)

i.   New concentrations/options within existing programs - *none*

ii.   Major revisions of existing programs - *none*

b) APC Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP) approvals (Summary reports: http://www.mcgill.ca/sctp/documents/)

i.   Moderate and minor program revisions - *none*

ii.   Program retirements – *none*

2. Courses

a) New Courses - *none*

b) Course Revisions - *none*

c) Course retirement - *none*

(B) OTHER

1. QUESTION REGARDING LECTURE RECORDINGS – *APPENDIX A*

A question on lecture recordings was referred by Senate Steering Committee to APC and discussed at its meeting of January 9th 2014.

APC was asked to look at what the University does to encourage the use of lecture recording systems (LRSs) and what steps need to be taken to make lecture recordings mandatory. This issue has two components: one educational and the other policy-related. The discussion centered around the following questions: how do we educate lecturers that recording facilities are available in certain classrooms? How can we provide guidance on the use of this technology, and alternatives, and how it might affect teaching style/delivery? Should there be a university policy on this topic? Laura Winer reported that McGill currently has 50 rooms with a built-in system, COOL, that can record classes automatically (32 that can capture screen and audio and 18 that can capture content, audio and video). As well, all instructors have free access to Camtasia, a software program that allows instructors to record their screens and audio. For fall 2012, winter 2013 and fall 2013 approximately 150 courses per term are recorded automatically. No data are available for the number of courses being recorded on an individual basis.

There was extensive discussion. Although there may be some pedagogical value in recording lectures, this value is clearly not applicable to all types of teaching; in fact, it must be determined on a course-by-course basis. One of the assertions contained in the question, specifically that non-use of LRSs leads to "…increased levels of anxiety and depression in students" was questioned; there appears to be no empirical evidence to support this claim. The Chair remarked that the new classroom scheduling system currently permits instructors to request rooms that are equipped with LRSs. There is also software available (Camtasia) to all lecturers, paid for by the university, that enables them to record lectures directly from their laptop computers.

The current university policy regarding recording of lectures is that students are permitted to do so if they first obtain the permission of the instructor. Concern was expressed about illegal uploading of recordings to YouTube or other websites without obtaining prior permission. There was an affirmation of the usefulness of the improvisational nature of teaching, where recording would not necessarily be effective or appropriate. Another point raised was the right to privacy of student participants in classes which are recorded. While APC appreciates that the learning styles and expectations of students are changing, members pointed out that implementation of any type of policy regarding mandatory recording of lectures is not in the purview of APC, nor should it be done at the university level; rather this is an issue that should be addressed at the departmental and/or the individual instructor level, with professors able to make choices in this regard.

In conclusion, APC was strongly of the opinion that there should be no university-wide policy on lecture recording. At the same time, APC recommends that guidelines for students and faculty on effective use of lecture recordings should be expanded. Laura Winer undertook to look into this, on behalf of TLS.

2. MOTION REGARDING ANONYMOUS EVALUATIONS – *APPENDIX B*

At the request of the Senate Steering Committee, APC examined the possibility of adopting anonymous grading of written exams on a university-wide basis at its meeting of January 9th 2014.

There was extensive discussion on this issue. Consideration of this motion raises issues of principle, as well as logistics.

APC was informed by Laura Winer that several studies in the past have indicated that there exists a <u>potential</u> bias in grading if the grader knows the persons involved. APC felt that there is no evidence (either way) as to whether this is in fact a problem at McGill. The global norm is **not** to grade anonymously (with the apparent exception of Faculties of Law); the statement contained in the motion "Anonymous grading is currently the norm in several countries, including the UK…" is inaccurate.

It was felt that potential bias is likely to be less prevalent in large lecture classes, more prevalent in smaller seminar type classes. It was agreed that instructors should be made aware of grading strategies that help to avoid potential bias. Laura Winer reported that offerings within the SKILLSETS program for graduate students already cover this issue; she undertook to see whether information could be made available to professors as well.

The logistics of implementation of any practice of anonymous grading across the university was discussed. It was agreed that this would be overwhelming and very labor-intensive. Suggestions were raised concerning how to deal with this in a manner which would not be too cumbersome, including separating student nominative information from the grading table on the first page of exam booklets, or using only student ID numbers rather than names on exam booklets.

In summary, APC does not consider that the possibility of university-wide anonymous grading should be further considered.