

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE
ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, September 18, 2007, at 3:00 p.m. in Arts Council Room, Arts 160.

PRESENT: Dean Grant (Chair), Associate Dean Hendren (Vice-Chair), Associate Dean Leighton; Professors Baines, Baker, Bennett, Chmura, Hundemer, Jensen, Levine, MacKenzie, Moore, Ronis, Stewart, Wechsler; L. Houle; K. Howe, L. Shbat, M. Desgroseilliers, K. Maloney, C.M.C. Tong, N. Winata; J. D'Amico.

REGRETS: Professors Panangaden and Ricciardi; Associate Dean Hendershot; A. King

DOCUMENTS: AC-06-123, AC-07-1 to AC-07-10

Dean Grant called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Academic Committee members introduced themselves.

Also introducing themselves were:

Victor Chisholm, Undergraduate Research Officer, who said that he promoted research to undergraduates, coordinated Soup & Science in September and January, exposing students to research across the Faculty, organized the Undergraduate Research Conference in October, coordinated the "396" undergraduate research courses, and coordinated the NSERC undergraduate awards.

Martine Dolmière, Internship & Field Studies Officer, who said that she promoted internships, developed relationships with companies, and coordinated student internships. In addition, she was the Field Studies Officer for the African Field Study Program and the Panama Field Study Semester.

Lisa Stanischewski, Administrative Coordinator to Associate Dean Hendren and Josie D'Amico, who said that after graduating in Psychology from McGill in the Spring, she worked in the Student Affairs Office during the Summer, before taking her current position as Administrative Coordinator.

(1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

- Two additional items, Ad hoc Honours Program in Cancer & Cell Biology (AC-7-9), and the draft Academic Advising Mission Statement (AC-7-10) to be considered under Item #13, Other Business.

Prof. Bennett **moved**, seconded by Associate Dean Hendren, that the amended Agenda be adopted.

The motion carried.

(2) MINUTES OF APRIL 24, 2007

AC-06-123

Prof. Bennett **moved**, seconded by Prof. Wechsler, that the Minutes be approved.

The motion carried.

(3) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- Minutes 811.1, 811.2: Combining Appropriate Programs and Courses for the B.A. & Sc. and the B.Sc. Liberal

- 103.1** Associate Dean Hendren said that at the last Academic Committee meeting held on April 24, 2007, she had asked members to recommend interesting combinations of programs and courses for the B.A. & Sc. and for the B.Sc. Liberal. She said that such combinations would be useful for advising purposes. So far, she had received combinations from only the Department of Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences. Associate Dean Hendren asked that members submit within two weeks combinations and justifications to Lisa Stanischewski, who would coordinate them. A report would be presented to the next Academic Committee meeting.

(4) INTERNSHIP & FIELD STUDIES OFFICER – MARTINE DOLMIÈRE

New Course:

FSCI 200	Industrial Practicum 1 0 credits	AC-07-1
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New Course:

FSCI 300	Industrial Practicum 2 0 credits	AC-07-2
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- 104.1** Associate Dean Hendren said that Internship Options for Science and Engineering had previously been administered by the Faculty of Engineering. Engineering had also offered an industrial practicum which was available to Science students. Science would henceforth be administering its own internships, and the new courses FSCI 200 and FSCI 300 would be Science's industrial practica. If a student did both FSCI 200 and FSCI 300, this would be considered as an Internship Option. While FSCI 200, FSCI 300 and the Internship Option were worth zero credits, all would appear on students' transcripts. Science internships would be administered by Martine Dolmière in Science's new Office of Internships and Field Studies.

- 104.2** In response to a question, Associate Dean Hendren said that there should be a distinction between students' academic work, which was for credit, and practicum work, which was not for credit. If research was done within the McGill environment, such as at hospitals, a 396 course would be appropriate, not a practicum. A practicum would normally be done off campus.

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Mr. Houle, that the above courses be adopted.

The motion carried.

(5) RENAMING OF INTERNSHIP OPTION (IYES TO IYS) **AC-07-3**

- 105.1** Associate Dean Hendren explained that IYES stood for Internship Year in Engineering and Science. With Engineering removed, the original proposal had been to rename the option to Science Internship Program (SIP). This had now been withdrawn, and the proposal was to rename IYES to IYS (Internship Year in Science).

- 105.2** In clarification, Associate Dean Hendren said that the term "Science Internship (Sci)" would refer to both the Industrial Practicum and the Internship Year in Science.

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Moore, that the change in name from IYES to IYS be approved.

The motion carried.

(6) CHEMISTRY

CHEM 355	Molecular Props. & Structure 2 Changes in prerequisite and title 3 credits	AC-07-4
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Prof. Ronis **moved**, seconded by Associate Dean Leighton, that the changes be approved.

The motion carried.

(7) EARTH & PLANETARY SCIENCES

New Course Tabled to Next Academic Committee Meeting:

EPSC 199	FYS: Earth & Planetary Explor. 3 credits	AC-07-5
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107.1 The course EPSC 199 was tabled to the next Academic Committee meeting scheduled for October 16, 2007, because the course outline was not included.

EPSC 547	Modeling Geochemical Processes Changes in title, description and prerequisites 3 credits	AC-07-6
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107.2 After some discussion about the replacement of the Chemistry prerequisites with a geochemistry and a mathematics prerequisite, Prof. Jensen **moved**, seconded by Prof. Chmura, that the changes be approved.

The motion carried.

(8) McGILL SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT

New Course Tabled to Next Academic Committee Meeting:

ENVR 393 (New)		AC-07-7
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108.1 The above course was tabled to the next Academic Committee Meeting because the MSE representative was unable to attend the current meeting.

(9) ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

109.1 Associate Dean Hendren said that at the end of the previous academic year, the Academic Program Review of all the Faculty's undergraduate programs, had been examined by an external reviewer. The review and the external reviewer's report were soon to be considered by APC. She said that feedback would be obtained from APC, and that she would be bringing the review to the Academic Committee.

(10) RETIREMENT OF B.Sc. FACULTY PROGRAMS **AC-07-8**

110.1 With the introduction of the B.Sc. Liberal Program, Associate Dean Hendren said that there was no longer a need for the Faculty programs.

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Ronis, that the Faculty Programs listed in Document AC-07-8 be retired.

The motion carried.

(11) GRADING ISSUES

(i) Grade Inflation

(ii) Institution of an A⁺ Grade

- 111.1 Associate Dean Leighton said that in administering scholarships, he had noticed that grades had increased over the years. He said that the number of students with a 4.00 SGPA in 2001-2002, was about 35, whereas in 2006-2007 there were approximately 100 with a SGPA of 4.00. Also the cutoff for the Dean's Honour List (the top 10% of students) had risen from 3.83 in 2001-2002 to 3.90 in 2006-2007.
- 111.2 Associate Dean Leighton said that since the entrance requirements had increased, it was possible that the Faculty was obtaining stronger students. Another possibility was grade inflation. He said that the issue should be examined.
- 111.3 With so many students having perfect records, it was difficult to discriminate amongst them for the purpose of awarding scholarships.
- 111.4 All the above raised the possibility of instituting a grade of A⁺. In the past, this had been a contentious issue. Nonetheless, Associate Dean Leighton felt that the issue should be revisited, and he recommended that a sub-committee be struck to examine all the issues he had mentioned.
- 111.5 Dean Grant said that the sub-committee would consist of Associate Dean Leighton as Chair, with two professors and two students.

(12) (i) POSSIBLE RETIREMENT OF B.A. & SC. MAJOR CONCENTRATION IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

- 112.1 Associate Dean Hendren said that the B.A. & Sc. Major Concentration in Biomedical Sciences was lacking in depth. With the introduction of the B.Sc. Liberal Program, it was now possible to obtain a Core Science Component in each of the four biomedical units, providing greater depth than the Major Concentration in Biomedical Sciences. At an Academic Committee meeting the previous year, a straw vote had supported abolishing the Major Concentration in Biomedical Sciences.
- 112.2 There was some general discussion on the merits of the B.A. & Sc. and the B.Sc. Liberal, in particular with reference to admission to graduate school. Many students are not admitted to medical school, and it was felt that having a 'fall-back' option was useful for students.
- 112.3 The four biomedical units would discuss among themselves the future of the Major Concentration in Biomedical Sciences, and report back to the Academic Committee.

(ii) POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF A HEALTH STUDIES MINOR

- 112.4 The name Health Studies Minor replaces the originally proposed Health Sciences Minor.
- 112.5 Associate Dean Hendren said that she would like to suggest the possibility of a Health Studies Minor for students who are interested in applying to medical schools, and who

are studying a non-biomedical-unit area of science, e.g., chemistry. This would provide students with a background that would interest medical schools. She suggested that the Minor have three components: (a) 12 credits of basic science courses; (b) 3 credits of technology or statistics courses; (c) 9 credits of social sciences.

There was a short discussion.

(13) OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Undergraduate Calendar

113.1 Associate Dean Hendren announced that the 2007-2008 academic year would be the last in which McGill would print the undergraduate Calendar. Beginning in 2008-2009, the Calendar would be available online only. She asked members for their opinions.

113.2 Among the points raised were:

- A printed Calendar provides a much more convenient and easily comprehensible format than does a Web version, particularly a PDF Web version.
- Students and faculty would print out portions of the Calendar for the sake of having a printed version.
- It is extremely useful for faculty members to retain old printed Calendars for archival purposes. While it would be possible to archive old versions of the Calendar on the Web, they might not be readily accessible, if indeed they were actually routinely archived.
- Browsing is much easier with a printed Calendar than with a Web version.
- Printed Calendars can be marked and annotated for future reference.
- Interdisciplinary planning and organizing is much easier with a printed Calendar.
- If an online Calendar was updated throughout the year, it would cause confusion.
- It was mentioned that the original Calendar format (where units' program and course entries were together) was more convenient than the current separated format. Also, the original Calendar gave more information on courses, e.g., instructors' names.
- It was suggested that paper could be saved by not printing all faculties' information in one Calendar.

113.3 Dean Grant suggested that Associate Dean Hendren write to Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) Morton Mendelson, and Registrar and Executive Director, Nick de Takacsy, to convey the concerns of the Academic Committee.

(ii) Student Affairs Office - Associate Dean (Student Affairs) Leighton

113.4 Associate Dean Leighton said that the Student Affairs Office advisors had now been split into Science and Arts advisors. The Science advisors were Paul Olioff and Zelda Ghan, with Nicole Allard recently recruited as Chief Advisor. Ms. Allard was in the process of reorganizing the advising functions. Each advisor would be responsible for liaising with a limited number of Science units, and would work closely with advisors within those units, improving communication between Faculty and unit advisors. However, each advisor would be advising students from all units.

113.5 Associate Dean Leighton said that as Science advising evolved, he would expect changes to occur. He said he would keep members of the Academic Committee informed of these changes.

113.6 In response to a question, Associate Dean Leighton said that advisors would deal with students at all levels, although they would refer detailed, purely academic issues to unit advisors.

(iii) Ad Hoc Honours Program in Cancer and Cell Biology**AC-7-9**

113.7 Associate Dean Leighton described the proposed ad hoc Honours program.

Associate Dean Leighton **moved**, seconded by Prof. Bennett, that the above ad hoc Honours program be approved.

The motion carried.

(iv) Draft Academic Advising Mission Statement**AC-7-10**

113.8 Associate Dean Leighton tabled the draft Academic Advising Mission Statement. He requested that members consult with their units and provide feedback on the statement by mid-October. An electronic version would be circulated to members.

There was no other business.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.