

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE
ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, January 30, 2007, at 3:00 p.m. in Arts Council Room, Arts 160.

PRESENT: Associate Dean Leighton (Acting Chair), Associate Dean Hendren (Vice-Chair); Professors Baines, Baker, Chmura, Drury, Kemme, Levine, Martin, Moore, Ricciardi, Ronis, Silvius, Wechsler, Yau; Associate Dean Niven; N. Budd, A. Coutinho, L. Crawford, C. Haakonsen, M. Retrouvey; J. D'Amico.

GUEST: Professor Barbara Hales, Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics

REGRETS: Dean Grant, Professor Bennett, L. Houle, S. Ng, M. Osborn.

DOCUMENTS: AC-06-6(Rev.2), AC-06-7(Rev. 2), AC-06-17/17B
AC-06-63 to AC-06-70

Associate Dean Leighton, on behalf of Dean Grant, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

(1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Prof. Yau **moved**, seconded by Mr. Haakonsen, that the Agenda be adopted.

The motion carried.

(2) MINUTES OF DECEMBER 12, 2006 AC-06-63

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

The motion carried.

(3) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

**(4) REPORT ON MINOR COURSE CHANGES AC-06-64
(for information)**

Associate Dean Hendren described the changes.

(5) PHARMACOLOGY & THERAPEUTICS

New Programs:

- Major in Pharmacology

AC-06-6 (Rev.

2)

- Honours in Pharmacology

AC-06-7 (Rev. 2)

505.1 Prof. Hales said that the Academic Committee had previously considered the proposed programs. The course coordinator for BIOL 301 had agreed to allow students in the proposed programs to take BIOL 301 as a Required Course, assuming that this would not lead to a large increase in enrolment. CHEM 504 had been added to the list of Complementary Courses. The choice of one out of three statistics courses had been retained.

505.2 In response to Associate Dean Hendren, Prof. Hales said that once the programs were approved, an advisor would be appointed in the Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics.

505.3 Associate Dean Hendren was concerned about how to limit enrolment, and proposed that students be enrolled in the Department of Physiology for the U1 year, and then be admitted into the program as U2 students. The Department of Physiology was chosen because the U1 requirements for the program were very similar to the U1 requirements for the Major in Physiology. After a long discussion concerning when students should be enrolled in the Pharmacology Program, Associate Dean Leighton suggested that the issue be shelved for the time being, and that the vote be held strictly on the basis of the academic content of the programs.

505.4 The above issue would be resolved by way of further discussions between the Associate Dean (Academic) and the Departments of Physiology, and Pharmacology & Therapeutics.

Prof. Levine **moved**, seconded by Prof. Baines, that the above programs be adopted.

The motion carried.

(6) MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS/COMPUTER SCIENCE

New Programs:

- Joint Major in Statistics and Computer Science **AC-06-65**
- Joint Honours in Statistics and Computer Science **AC-06-66**

Prof. Drury **moved**, seconded by Prof. Kemme, that the above programs be adopted.

The motion carried.

(7) B.A. & Sc.

New Course:

- | | | |
|----------|------------------|-----------------|
| COGS 444 | Honours Research | AC-06-67 |
| | 6 credits | |

New Program:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Honours in Cognitive Science | AC-06-68 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|

507.1 Associate Dean Hendren introduced the new course COGS 444 and the new B.A. & Sc. Honours Program in Cognitive Science, and explained how the course would work and how it would fit into the program.

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Mr. Haakonsen, that the above course and program be adopted.

The motion carried.

(8) SUBSTITUTION OF REQUIRED COURSES

508.1 Associate Dean Leighton said the Advisor's Handbook contained a regulation specifying that advisors could substitute up to six credits of required courses in programs. He said he thought the regulation might be applied differently across units, and he wanted to

obtain a feeling for how the regulation was actually being applied, as well as feedback concerning whether the wording of the regulation should be modified.

- 508.2** A number of members described their unit's application of the regulation. Associate Dean Leighton said he would look into slightly refining the regulation; in this case he would bring the modified regulation to the Academic Committee for approval.

(9) ASSIGNMENTS LATE IN TERM

- 509.1** Mr. Budd said he would like to propose to the Academic Committee that there be a regulation specifying that assignments could not be due during the few days before exams. Without such a regulation, students could find themselves at the end of lectures with several assignments due and with several exams scheduled for the first days of the exam period.

- 509.2** Among the points raised were:

- That the grading of assignments relating to material covered in the last several weeks of lectures served to provide feedback to students.
- That with research courses, which were commonly worth many credits, it was often in a student's interest to present the results of the research as late as possible.
- That handing out assignments too early would mean that the assignment contained material not yet covered in lectures.
- That students should certainly be informed early on as to when assignments would be given.
- That the timing of assignments related to mid-term exams as well as to final exams.

- 509.3** Associate Dean Leighton suggested that Mr. Budd present a formal proposal to a future Academic Committee meeting.

(10) B.SC. LIBERAL PROGRAM

NAME CHANGE TO "GENERAL SCIENCE MINOR"

- Science Breadth Minor

AC-06-69

- 510.1** Associate Dean Hendren said that to simplify the encoding of the B.Sc. Liberal programs in Banner, the General Science Breadth Option and the Field Study Option should be implemented as Minors.

- 510.2** There was some discussion as to the appropriateness of the name "Science Breadth Minor." A straw vote was held, with most members favouring "General Science Minor."

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Levine, that the program be adopted with the new name, General Science Minor.

The motion carried.

- Field Study Minor

AC-06-70

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Baines, that the program be adopted.

The motion carried.

(11) MINI-THEME: THE DELIVERY & EVALUATION MECHANISMS OF

UNDERGRADUATE SCIENCE COURSES, POINT # 1, LECTURE/LAB SIZE AC-06-17/17B

- 511.1** Associate Dean Leighton announced, on behalf of Dean Grant, that at a future meeting there would be a further in-depth discussion concerning the conduct and integrity of midterm exams, and the evaluation of courses, including the proper design of final exams.
- 511.2** Associate Dean Hendren said that it was important to have a vision concerning how lectures and laboratories were run, including their sizes.
- 511.3** Some of the issues voiced by members were:
- The numbers and sizes of classrooms, and the numbers of professors, teaching assistants and technical staff.
 - Whether there was a way to make students feel special by providing some smaller classes. FIGs was a start in this direction at the introductory level.
 - The problems involved in scheduling mid-terms for classes with very large number of students.
 - That students doing some learning on their own, as opposed to in lectures, would free up resources.
 - That parents had complained about lectures conducted by video.
 - That watching recorded lectures in the library was sometimes better than attending them 'live,' since it was easier to see and hear the professor.
 - The question of whether one should even worry about class sizes.
 - That laboratory space was more critical than lecture space.
 - The desperate need to modernize laboratories.
 - The scarcity of human and other resources to conduct laboratories.
 - That holding labs at night or on weekends would be an efficient use of space, but would require more resources.
 - That the quality of student experience at McGill suffered through an accumulation of small inconveniences caused by lack of resources.
 - That enrolment at McGill was constantly increasing, but that this was not completely under the control of the Faculty of Science.
 - That without an increase in fees, resources would always be tight.
 - The necessity of looking at resources from a viewpoint of what was actually practical.

(12) OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.