

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE
ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on April 24, 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 Baker, Bennett, Chmura, Drury, Kemme, Levine, Clerk (in place of Prof. Moore), Ronis, Silviu, Wechsler, Yau; D. Canning (in place of Mr. Houle); N. Budd, C. Haakonsen; J. D'Amico.

REGRETS: Professors Baines Martin, Ricciardi; Associate Dean Niven; A. Coutinho, L. Crawford, S. Ng, M. Osborn, M. Retrouvey.

DOCUMENTS: AC-06-17, AC-06-88(Rev.), AC-06-94(Rev.) AC-06-110 to AC-06-122

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

(1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Prof. Levine **moved**, seconded by Prof. Yau, that the Agenda be approved.

The motion carried.

(2) MINUTES OF MARCH 27, 2007

AC-06-110

Prof. Chmura **moved**, seconded by Prof. Yau, that the Minutes be approved.

The motion carried.

(3) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

(4) BIOLOGY

B.Sc. Program Changes:

- Minor in Biology

AC-06-111

- Major in Biology

AC-06-112

- Honours in Biology

AC-06-113

Prof. Levine **moved**, seconded by Prof. Chmura, that the above program changes be approved.

The motion carried.

B.A. & Sc. Program Changes:

- Major Concentration in Biology; Organismal Option

AC-06-114

Prof. Levine **moved**, seconded by Mr. Haakonsen, that the program changes be approved.

The motion carried.

B.A. Program Changes (*For Information*):

- Minor Concentration in Science for Arts Students; Organismal Stream
- Minor Concentration in Science for Arts Students; Cell & Molecular Stream

(5) PHYSICS**New Course:**

PHYS 657	Classical Condensed Matter 3 credits	AC-06-94(Rev.)
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Prof. Clerk **moved**, seconded by Prof. Ronis, that the course be adopted.

The motion carried.

(6) (i) GEOGRAPHY**New Course:**

GEOG 451	Res in Society & Dev in Africa 3 credits	AC-06-115
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806.1 Prof. Chmura explained that GEOG 451 was part of the African Field Studies Semester. GEOG 451 would be given in alternate years with ANTH 451. Students would not be able to take both these courses.

Prof. Chmura **moved**, seconded by Prof. Levine, that the course be adopted.

The motion carried.

(ii) REDPATH MUSEUM**New Course Proposed as REDM 451 but Renumbered to REDM 452:**

REDM 452	Res Ecol and Devel in Africa 3 credits	AC-06-116
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806.2 Associate Dean Hendren introduced REDM 451. She said that REDM 451 and the planned course NRSC 451 would be given in alternate years and would serve as corequisites for the GEOG 451 and ANTH 451 sequence.

806.3 Associate Dean Hendren proposed that REDM 451 and NRSC 451 be renumbered to **452** in order to avoid confusion.

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Chmura, that the course be adopted.

The motion carried.

(7) GEOGRAPHY - New B.A. Honours in Urban Systems (*For Information*)**(8) MOTION: ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE **AC-06-88(Rev.)****

808.1 Mr. Budd said that a motion on due dates for assignments had previously been presented to the Academic Committee. Mr. Budd had met with Associate Dean Hendren and as a result of the meeting had revised the motion.

808.2 The revised motion (Document AC-06-88 [Rev.]) read:
 "Any graded assignment, in a Faculty of Science course, must be distributed two weeks before the first day of exams."

808.3 During discussion of the motion, it was amended to read:
 "Any graded assignment, in a Faculty of Science course, must be distributed **not later than** two weeks before the first day of exams."
 Mr. Budd **moved**, seconded by Associate Dean Hendren, that the amended motion be adopted.

The motion carried.

808.4 Associate Dean Hendren said guidelines incorporating the motion would be posted on the Web, and would also be listed in the front section of the Science Calendar.

808.5 Associate Dean Hendren said the Faculty of Arts would be informed of this motion.

(9) COMPUTER SCIENCE

B.Sc. Program Changes:

- Minor in Computer Science

AC-06-117

809.1 Prof. Kemme introduced the changes. She said that the School of Computer Science was in the process of revising and redesigning all its programs. The changes in Computer Science Programs to be considered at the current meeting were a reflection of this.

Prof. Kemme **moved**, seconded by Prof. Drury, that the changes to the Minor in Computer Science be approved.

The motion carried.

- Major in Computer Science

AC-06-118

809.2 Under Complementary Courses, "3-9 credits selected from:" should be replaced by:

"3-9 credits selected from the following courses, and which must include at least one of MATH 323 and MATH 340:"

Prof. Kemme **moved**, seconded by Prof. Drury, that the program changes be approved.

The motion carried.

- Honours in Computer Science

AC-06-119

Prof. Kemme **moved**, seconded by Prof. Drury, that the program changes be approved.

The motion carried.

New B.Sc. Option:

- Major in Computer Science; Computer Games Option

AC-06-120

Prof. Kemme **moved**, seconded by Prof. Drury, that the new Option be adopted.

The motion carried.

New B.A. & Sc. Programs:

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|---|------------------|
| - Minor Concentration in Computer Science | AC-06-121 |
| - Major Concentration in Computer Science | AC-06-122 |

Prof. Kemme **moved**, seconded by Mr. Haakonsen, that the new B.A. & Sc. programs be adopted.

The motion carried.

New B.A. Program (*For Information*):

- Minor Concentration in Advanced Computer Science (Combinable)
- Major Concentration in Computer Science

B.A. Program Changes (*For Information*):

- Minor Concentration in Computer Science

B.A. Program Retirements (*For Information*):

- Minor Concentration in Computer Systems (Combinable)
- Minor Concentration in Foundations of Computing
- Major Concentration in Foundations of Computing

(10) MINI-THEME: THE DELIVERY & EVALUATION MECHANISMS OF UNDERGRADUATE SCIENCE COURSES, POINT #5, COURSE EVALUATIONS **AC-06-17**

- (i) Positive use of course evaluations to guide improvements**
- (ii) Feedback on the success and problems of using Mercury**

810.1 Associate Dean Hendren introduced the Mini-Theme. She asked how course evaluations should be used, and how much course evaluations actually were being used as guidelines for improvements in teaching.

810.2 During the discussion, a number of points were raised:

- That unit chairs/directors do indeed examine evaluations, and that some chairs meet with students to obtain feedback on their units' courses.
- That evaluations were only one element considered in awarding merit, tenure, etc.
- That it had been suggested that if evaluations were truly important, students would be doing them in class, not on their own time.
- That there was no searchable database of evaluations.
- That the response rate for evaluations had decreased since the introduction of Mercury, the online evaluation system. Also, responses were more negative.
- That the responses might not be representative of all students' opinions of courses.
- That some means must be found to increase the response rate.
- That Mercury had resulted in an increase in inappropriate comments.
- That if a professor set difficult questions in an exam, the professor's evaluations dramatically decreased.
- That Mercury's built in questions were flawed and too generic.
- That generic evaluations seemed to measure only the personality of the instructor and the difficulty of the course.
- That in the experience of at least one professor, paper had resulted in relevant evaluations, but Mercury produced less relevant information.
- That evaluations should be better structured.

- That some of Mercury's questions had been mandated by Senate.
- That units should set their own course-specific questions.
- That comments were more useful than "ranking" questions in improving teaching. Mercury should encourage comments by providing more text boxes, and possibly reducing "ranking" questions.
- That Mercury should be opened to students earlier in the semester.
- That it was not valid for students to fill out evaluations until they had come to see the worth of a course.
- That more questions on online evaluations made students less likely to fill out the evaluations.
- That some units had reduced the number of questions on evaluations.
- That online evaluations take more time than do paper evaluations.
- That it was logistically difficult to provide and retrieve paper evaluations in large classes.
- That multi-instructor courses necessarily needed many questions, although perhaps each student could be asked to evaluate only one specific professor.
- That Mercury's questions could be projected on a screen during a class, with students filling out scantrons for the questions, and the scantrons being delivered to Mercury for analysis.

Prof. Levine **moved**, seconded by Mr. Haakonsen, that the following resolution be adopted:

- 810.3** That the Faculty of Science deplores the use of material incentives to encourage students to complete course evaluations.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 810.4** Dean Grant said that in view of the many comments made about Mercury at the current meeting and at a recent Faculty meeting, there clearly were flaws in Mercury. Associate Deans Hendren and Leighton would meet to discuss the issue and to decide on a course of action.

(11) OTHER BUSINESS

- Combining Appropriate B.A. & Sc. Programs and Courses

- 811.1** Associate Dean Hendren said that many students taking the B.A. & Sc. were opting for the Biomedical Major Concentration. She said she thought it would be a good idea for units to devise what they thought were appropriate combinations of Arts and Science Concentrations. These combinations could be provided to students as examples of the types of B.A. & Sc. degrees that could be obtained. If each unit created several of these combinations involving the unit's Science Major or Minor Concentrations and appropriate Arts Major or Minor Concentrations, it would be possible to recommend additional courses that would complement the Arts and Science Concentrations. The combinations of disciplines would also serve to guide students enrolled in the B.Sc. Liberal.

- 811.1** Associate Dean Hendren asked members to prepare combinations for the next Academic Committee meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.