

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE  
ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on January 29, 2008, 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, A. Baker, D. Baker, Bennett, Chmura, Hundemer, Levine, MacKenzie, Panangaden, Ragan (replacing G. Moore), Ronis, Stewart, Wechsler; L. Houle; K. Howe, M. Desgroseilliers, A. King, C.M.C. Tong, N. Winata; J. D'Amico.

**REGRETS:** Professor Ricciardi; Associate Dean Hendershot; L. Shbat, K. Maloney.

**GUEST:** Professor David N. Harpp, Department of Chemistry

**DOCUMENTS:** AC-07-72 to AC-07-90

Dean Grant called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

**(1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

- Under Other Business, item # 13, the following items to be considered:
  - (i) Psychology Programs
  - (ii) Removal of Restriction on World of Chemistry Courses

Prof. Levine **moved**, seconded by Prof. Baker, that the amended Agenda be adopted.

**The motion carried.**

**(2) MINUTES OF DECEMBER 11, 2007 AC-07-72**

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

**The motion carried.**

**(3) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**Minute 405.1**, Course Outlines

- 503.1** Associate Dean Leighton said that the course outline for GEOG 310 had been reworked. He said he had looked into the issue of creating a standardized course outline, but concluded that this was not feasible since courses varied so much. Guidelines for religious accommodation were specified in the Green Book, and these could be adapted appropriately to fit other circumstances. If necessary, the Associate Dean (Student Affairs) could adjudicate.

**(4) REPORT ON MINOR COURSE CHANGES AC-07-73  
(for information)**

- 504.1** Associate Dean Hendren briefly explained the Report on Minor Course Changes.

**(5) ADMINISTERING MID-TERM EXAMINATIONS****AC-07-74A/B**

- 505.1** Prof. David N. Harpp described the situation concerning Senate's rules on exam security, and answered members' questions.
- 505.2** He said that McGill appeared to be the only university in Canada with rules requiring multiple versions of multiple-choice exams and requiring scrambled seating. The Faculty of Science had adopted four as its default number of multiple versions. Prof. Harpp emphasized that Senate had mandated scrambled seating for all exams, not just multiple choice exams. He said that over the last decade or so, more than half of the faculty in Science had been replaced by new professors. However, there did not seem to have been a concerted effort to integrate the new professors into McGill's exam culture.
- 505.3** Prof. Harpp said that a significant number of multiple choice exams at McGill were being given in only one version, and that seating records were often not being kept. Consequently, when the computer program to detect cheating achieved a match, it was often not possible to determine whether the students involved had actually sat near each other.
- 505.4** Prof. Harpp said that it was time for a reinforcement of the Senate policy on exam security. He said that information on Senate's rules should be provided to all faculty. Seating arrangements were simple to devise and actually made administering exams easier. Science could take the lead in implementing seating arrangements and in applying Senate's rules.
- 505.5** Among the points raised and questions asked and answered were:
- A member said that she produced multiple versions of exams and arranged the students' seating. Students' seat numbers were written on the exam, providing a record of the seating arrangement. The member said that with a little advance organization, the process went smoothly and well.
  - That a Web page could be set up to provide suggestions on how to administer exams. This would particularly help new professors.
  - It was questioned whether there was any evidence that midterm exams were mis-administered.
  - It was suggested that creating bureaucratic rules did not promote compliance, and that rather professors should be educated in the process of properly administering exams.
  - That apparent cheating was detected in a very small number of cases in Science, but that often a seating plan was not available.
  - That while most exams seemed well run, there were occasional complaints from students to the Associate Dean (Student Affairs) about poorly administered exams.
  - That arranged seating made administering exams easier.
  - That more resources should be provided to assist in the proper administering of mid-term exams.
  - That the university should provide assistance for scrambling exams for very large courses.
  - That the Faculty of Science ran its exams better than did other faculties.
  - That not all professors teaching Science courses belonged to the Faculty of Science.
  - That if students saw that professors took exam integrity seriously, the students would too.
  - That a signature sheet provided a seating plan and also sent the message that exam security was being taken seriously.
  - That there was now extra exam space for mid-term exams in the new student residences.
  - The potential use of clickers in exams was brought up.

505.6 Dean Grant thanked Prof. Harpp for his participation, and said that the Faculty of Science would move forward on his suggestions.

(6) **AD HOC MAJOR PROGRAM IN PHARMACOLOGY** **AC-07-75**

506.1 Associated Dean Leighton introduced the above ad hoc program. He said that the proposed program was consistent with the recently approved Major in Pharmacology.

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

**The motion carried.**

(7) **COGNITIVE SCIENCE**

**B.A. & Sc. Interfaculty Program in Cognitive Science** **AC-07-76**

507.1 Associate Dean Hendren introduced the changes to the above program. She said that the new director of the program was Prof. Ian Gold.

507.2 There were some minor changes to the proposed program revisions:

List A, under Computer Science, COMP 527 should be replaced with COMP 426  
List B, under Computer Science, COMP 330 should be added

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Baker, that the program changes be approved.

**The motion carried.**

(8) **COMPUTER SCIENCE & BIOLOGY**

508.1 Regarding the following courses, where BIOL 495 was listed as a corequisite for COMP 401 and for COMP 499, it was suggested that BIOL 495 be listed as a prerequisite for the two Computer Science courses, since BIOL 495 would function to prepare students for the courses.

508.2 After some discussion, and a straw vote, it was agreed that Associate Dean Hendren would check with the instructors of the courses regarding BIOL 495 being a corequisite or a prerequisite, and report back at the next Academic Committee meeting.

**New Course:**

BIOL 495	Integrative Computing in Biol. 3 credits	<b>AC-07-77</b>
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Prof. Levine **moved**, seconded by Prof. Panangaden, that the course be adopted.

**The motion carried.**

**New Course:**

COMP 401	Project in Biol. & Comp. Sci. 3 credits	<b>AC-07-78</b>
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Prof. Panangaden **moved**, seconded by Prof. Levine, that the course be adopted.

**The motion carried.**

**New Course:**

COMP 499	Ugrad Bioinformatics Seminar	<b>AC-07-79</b>
	1 credit	

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

**The motion carried.**

**Secretary's Note:** *It has been agreed that the prerequisite for COMP 401 be BIOL 495 or permission of instructor, and that BIOL 495 be a corequisite for COMP 499.*

**New Program:**

<b>Joint Major in Computer Science and Biology</b>	<b>AC-07-80</b>
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Prof. Panangaden **moved**, seconded by Prof. Levine, that the program be adopted.

**The motion carried.**

**(9) SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE**

**New Program:**

<b>- B.A. &amp; Sc. Major Concentration in Software Engineering</b>	<b>AC-07-81</b>
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**509.1** Under Complementary Courses, the last line should read:

or any Computer Science course at the 300 level or above, excluding COMP 364, COMP 396 and COMP 431

Prof. Panangaden **moved**, seconded by Prof. Ronis, that the program be adopted.

**The motion carried.**

**New Program:**

<b>- B.Sc. Liberal: Core Science Component in Software Engineering</b>	<b>AC-07-82</b>
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**509.2** Under Complementary Courses, the last line should read:

or any Computer Science course at the 300 level or above, excluding COMP 364, COMP 396 and COMP 431

Prof. Panangaden **moved**, seconded by Prof. Chmura, that the program be adopted.

**The motion carried.**

**New Program (For Information Only):**

**- B.A. Major Concentration in Software Engineering**

**(10) GEOGRAPHY**

**New Course:**

GEOG 409	Geographies of Developing Asia	<b>AC-07-83</b>
	3 credits	

**510.1** After some discussion concerning use of the terms “teaching buy-out” and “Geographies” in the course proposal form, it was suggested that the last sentence in the Rationale be deleted, and that the term “Geographies” in the title be explained.

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

**The motion carried.**

**Secretary’s Note:** *The instructor had no objection to deleting the last sentence in the Rationale, and coherently explained the term “Geographies.”*

**(11) REPORT OF THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON**  
**GRADE INFLATION**

**AC-07-84**

**511.1** Associate Dean Leighton said the members of the ad hoc Committee were Professors Robert Levine (Biology) and Guy Moore (Physics), Dr. Jose Correa (Statistician – Mathematics & Statistics), students Mr. Kyle Howe and Ms. Kathleen Maloney, and himself as Chair.

**511.2** Associate Dean Leighton introduced and explained the details of the above item.

**511.3** He said that the main conclusion was that on a Faculty-wide basis, the apparent increase in grades was due to a higher proportion of A grades being awarded in upper-level courses, rather than to a broadly-based increase in grades.

**511.4** The Committee encouraged all units to examine their upper level grades in detail and to monitor future trends.

**511.5** The Committee recommended that a similar study be made in two years time.

**511.6** The Committee did not endorse the introduction of an A<sup>+</sup> grade.

**511.7** Associate Dean Leighton thanked the Committee, in particular Dr. Jose Correa for producing some of the results.

**511.8** There was some discussion, and Associate Dean Leighton answered members’ questions.

**511.9** Dean Grant thanked Associate Dean Leighton and the Committee for their hard work.

**(12) ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW (APPENDIX X)**

**AC-07-85**

**512.1** Associate Dean Hendren highlighted the above document. She said the document would be submitted to Senate for review.

**512.2** During the discussion on the recommendation concerning tracking students after graduation, it was emphasized that it would be highly desirable to coordinate with McGill’s Development and Alumni Relations Office. Dean Grant said that he would look into this.

**512.3** A straw vote was held to endorse the recommendations in Document #AC-07-85.

The vote was unanimous.

(13) **OTHER BUSINESS**(i) **PSYCHOLOGY****B.Sc. Programs:**

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|--|----------|
| - Major in Psychology                  | AC-07-86 |
| - Honours in Psychology                | AC-07-87 |
| - Core Science Component in Psychology | AC-07-88 |

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

**The motion carried.**

**B.A. & Sc. Programs:**

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|--|----------|
| - Major Concentration in Psychology    | AC-07-89 |
| - Joint Honours – Psychology Component | AC-07-90 |

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

**The motion carried.**

**B.A. Programs (for information only):**

- Major Concentration in Psychology
- Honours in Psychology
- Joint Honours in Psychology
- Minor Concentration in Behaviourial Science

(ii) **RESTRICTION ON WORLD OF CHEMISTRY COURSES**

**513.1** Associate Dean Hendren explained that there was a regulation restricting B.Sc. and B.A. & Sc. students from taking more than two of the four World of Chemistry courses. A study showed the grade distribution in the World of Chemistry courses to be quite reasonable, and there was no evidence that the World of Chemistry courses should be restricted since all other Science general interest courses have no similar restriction.

**513.2** After a short discussion, Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Baker, that the restriction be removed.

**The motion carried.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.