

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE
ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on March 25, 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, Clerk (in place of G. Moore), Hundemer, Levine, MacKenzie, Panangaden, Paquette (in place of D. Baker), Ronis, Straub (in place of R. Stewart), Wechsler; K. Howe, A. King, K. Maloney; J. D'Amico.

REGRETS: Professors Bennett, Chmura, Ricciardi; L. Houle; L. Shbat, M. Desgroseilliers, C.M.C. Tong, N. Winata; Associate Dean Hendershot.

DOCUMENTS: AC-07-98 to AC-07-103

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

(1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Prof. Levine **moved**, seconded by Associate Dean Leighton, that the Agenda be adopted.

The motion carried.

(2) MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2008 AC-07-98

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

The motion carried.

(3) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- Minutes 608.1 to 608.4, Role of the Honours Program

703.1 Associate Dean Hendren said that the previous meeting's discussion of the role of the Honours program had highlighted three points:

703.2 The first point was the need to ensure that excellent students, particularly women, know that they can enter an Honours program. This seemed particularly important for the units of Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics & Statistics, and Physics. (Likewise, students should be informed about the B.Sc./M.Sc. when it is instituted.) All units should look into publicizing their various programs.

703.3 Members of various units emphasized that their programs were gender-blind, although there was room for more direct contact with excellent students to encourage them to consider entering Honours programs.

703.4 Associate Dean Hendren said that the second point was the issue of whether Honours students were obtaining lower grades than they would have achieved in a Major program. If Honours students actually were obtaining lower grades, taking an Honours program would disadvantage the students in some situations, since selection of students for, for example, NSERC scholarships, is based at least partly on GPA.

703.5 The third point was whether there should be a requirement for research in Honours programs. Associate Dean Hendren said that currently only the Department of Mathematics & Statistics did not have a research component in its Honours programs. However, the representative from Mathematics & Statistics said that this was a question of how research was defined.

703.6 Dean Grant said that it should be a hallmark of the Faculty of Science that students in Honours programs acquired a research experience.

(4) REPORT ON MINOR COURSE CHANGES AC-07-99
(for information)

Associate Dean Hendren briefly described the Report on Minor Course Changes.

(5) EARTH & PLANETARY SCIENCES

Graduate Program Changes:

- M.Sc. in Earth & Planetary Sciences

AC-07-100

- Ph.D. in Earth & Planetary Sciences

AC-07-101

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

The motion carried.

(6) CHEMISTRY

New Course:

CHEM 319

Chem of Energy Storage & Util
3 credits

AC-07-102

706.1 After a brief discussion, Prof. Ronis **moved**, seconded by Prof. MacKenzie, that the course be adopted, pending consultation with the Department of Physics.

The motion carried.

Secretary's Note: The consultation has been obtained from the Department of Physics.

(7) COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AC-07-103
(for information)

707.1 Associate Dean Hendren described Document AC-07-103, and said that the Faculty should keep pressing for well-written course descriptions that would allow units to express their perspectives on their own courses.

(8) HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM REFORM

708.1 Associate Dean Hendren said that Québec had been engaged in school reform for about eight years, and was now working on reforming senior high school mathematics and science courses. The Faculty of Education (but not the Faculty of Science) had been asked for a consultation.

708.2 Dean Grant said that the reform was in response to a high drop-out rate in Québec high schools. Additionally, Québec was suffering from a severe shortage of mathematics and

science teachers. Dean Grant said he was concerned that if high school mathematics and science courses were "dumbed-down," Québec students would be at a disadvantage in U1 compared to Ontario and U.S. students. CEGEPs and universities should express their thoughts on any reform of high school courses.

- 708.3** Associate Dean Hendren said that she would e-mail to committee members documents relating to the Québec Secondary curriculum reform. She asked for members' comments, and said that even though the Faculty of Science had not been asked for a consultation on the reform, it should still be possible to provide one.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS

- 709.1** Associate Dean (Student Affairs) Leighton said that the Committee on Student Affairs had discussed the possibility of emphasizing on course outlines the right of students to do course work in French. The Committee felt that the right to submit work in French was not sufficiently visible. He asked for members' feedback.

- 709.2** The consensus was that publicizing the right to submit work in French should not be done by way of course outlines.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.