

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE  
ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 at 3:00 p.m. by Zoom Videoconferencing.

**DOCUMENTS: AC-22-234, AC-23-1 to AC-23-13**

Vice-Dean David Stephens called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. and welcomed members to the first Academic Committee meeting of the 2023-2024 academic year.

**1. Adoption of Agenda**

It was noted that the statement at the bottom of the agenda should have read as follows:  
 "\*\*The effective date of implementation for these courses is Winter **2024**."

Prof. Denis **moved**, seconded by Prof. Dent, that the amended Agenda be approved.

**The motion carried.**

**2. Minutes of 11 April 2023**

**AC-22-234**

Prof. Dufour **moved**, seconded by Prof. Marczynski, that the Minutes be approved.

**The motion carried.**

**3. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

**4. Physics**

\*PHYS 657

Classical Condensed Matter  
 Change in Course Description  
 3 credits

**AC-23-1**

\* Effective date of implementation is Winter 2024

Dr. Metera clarified that the changes in the description aimed to eliminate older content and introduce additional project-based work.

There was some discussion concerning the class participation percentage for the course and the new Policy on Assessment of Student Learning, set to take effect in September 2024.

Dr. Matera **moved**, seconded by Prof. Dufour, that the changes be approved.

**The motion carried.**

**5. Psychiatry**

PSYT 301

Issues in Drug Dependence  
 Changes: prerequisites, supplementary Calendar Information  
 3 credits

**AC-23-2**

Associate Dean Hundemer explained that the prerequisite courses were inaccurate, and the course is scheduled to be offered in the Fall semester, rather than the Winter.

Associate Dean Hundemer **moved**, seconded by Prof. Dent, that the changes be approved.

**The motion carried.**

**6. Mathematics & Statistics**

**New Course:**

MATH 245	Honours Algebra 1 3 credits	<b>AC-23-3</b>
MATH 235	Algebra 1 Change in Course Description, Restriction 3 credits	<b>AC-23-4</b>

Professor Kelome explained that the new course, MATH 245, was proposed in response to the rising enrollment in MATH 235. The key distinction between MATH 235 and MATH 245 lies in the depth at which the topic is covered.

There was a short discussion about both courses having the same description. Following the meeting, the descriptions were updated to accurately reflect the differences between the courses. Additionally, a restriction was added on MATH 235 and MATH 245, stipulating that both courses may not be taken for credit.

Prof. Kelome **moved**, seconded by Prof. Dufour, to adopt MATH 245 and approve the changes for MATH 235.

**The motion carried.**

Following a member's comment on the alternate final examination percentage in courses within the Faculty of Science, Vice-Dean Stephens said the Faculty will need to conduct thorough discussions at both the Faculty Council and Academic Committee levels, as well as within individual departments, to assess the impacts of these new policy aspects. There will be a discussion at the Academic Committee, ideally this term, although the schedule of business will determine the exact timing.

MATH 357	Honours Statistics Change in Course Description 3 credits	<b>AC-23-5</b>
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Prof. Kelome explained that the intention behind the description changes is to bring the content in line with what is being taught in MATH 357, in contrast to what is currently specified in the eCalendar.

Prof. Kelome **moved**, seconded by Prof. Guo, that the changes be approved.

**The motion carried.**

MATH 556	Mathematical Statistics 1 Change in Prerequisites 4 credits	<b>AC-23-6</b>
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Prof. Kelome explained that MATH 556 serves as a prerequisite for MATH 557. It does not require prior knowledge of statistical inference. The proposed change recommends that the prerequisite for MATH 556 should be a probability course, given that most

students who take MATH 556 have prior experience in probability-related courses. This change is important, especially for Honours and Applied Mathematics students who need to take MATH 556 but have no background in statistics.

Prof. Kelome **moved**, seconded by Prof. Denis, that the change be approved.

**The motion carried.**

MATH 557	Mathematical Statistics 2 Changes: Course Description, Prerequisites 4 credits	<b>AC-23-7</b>
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Prof. Kelome said that the proposed changes to the prerequisites now explicitly stipulate the necessity of an undergraduate statistical inference course. Furthermore, the calendar description is being updated to accurately mirror the historical and current practice of teaching MATH 557.

Prof. Kelome **moved**, seconded by Prof. Denis, that the course be approved.

**The motion carried.**

**7. Psychology  
New Course:**

*PSYC 309	Positive Psychology: Science of Well Being 3 credits * Effective date of implementation is Winter 2024	<b>AC-23-8</b>
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Prof. Bartz explained that PSYC 309 involves modifying a course, Positive Psychology, which was originally taught about 15 years ago. The aim is to make the course more accessible to students earlier in their undergraduate studies at McGill. It was initially a 400-level course, but the plan is to move it to a 300-level course. Additionally, the intention is to open the course to non-psychology students. The idea was initiated by students from the Faculty of Science Student Association, who saw the value in introducing concepts from positive psychology and the science of well-being to help students better manage the stresses of life at McGill. She said the course received significant support from the Dean and Professor Koestner, who is actively involved with the Wellness Hub has agreed to teach it. The goal is to have the course available for the Winter term in 2024, given the enthusiasm and available resources.

Prof. Bartz **moved**, seconded by Prof. Dent, that the course be adopted.

**The motion carried.**

*PSYC 450D1/D2	Research Project and Seminar Changes: restrictions, supplementary Calendar information 9 credits * Effective date of implementation is Winter 2024	<b>AC-23-10</b>
*PSYC 380D1/D2	Honours Research Project Change in restrictions 9 credits * Effective date of implementation is Winter 2024	<b>AC-23-9</b>

Prof. Bartz explained that the revisions for the two courses are primarily housekeeping matters. The changes were prompted by outdated information regarding the location for submitting applications, which used to be the Stewart Biology Building. Since this

location has changed, it was essential to provide clarification about the application procedures. It emphasizes that not all applicants are admitted and provides detailed instructions on how to access the application process for both PSYC 450 and PSYC 380. She said that the purpose is to streamline and enhance transparency in the admission process for both programs, making it explicit that students must apply, and admission is competitive. In response to a member's comment, the restrictions were updated.

Prof. Bartz **moved**, seconded by Prof. Dufour, that the changes be approved.

**The motion carried.**

**8. Bieler School of Environment**

**For information:** B.A., Faculty Program in Environment,  
Environment and Development Concentration

**AC-23-11**

Ms. Roulet mentioned that the only modification requested by SCTP pertains to the program description for the above B.A. Faculty Program in Environment.

**9. Renaming of Freshman Year to Foundation Year**

Associate Dean Hundemer explained that the U0 year is for students who enter McGill from outside Quebec and is part of a 4-year program. The U0 program was previously known as the "freshman program." To make the name more gender-neutral, there were discussions in the Faculty of Arts to rename it to the "foundation year." After discussions between the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science, a consensus was reached. Associate Dean Hundemer was in support of the proposed change and anticipated that it would be presented to the Academic Committee and subsequently to the Faculty Council for voting. However, instead of a vote, the Admissions office decided to implement the change directly. Associate Dean Hundemer said that while the way it was implemented was unfortunate, he does not oppose the content of the proposed name change.

**10. Report of S.U.S. V.-P. (Academic)**

Yashar Aghazadeh Habashi, V.-P. Academic, presented the following report:

1. Introduction
2. Departmental executive training
  - (a) On Monday, September 18, the VP Academic trained departmental VP Academics on the student academic concern pipeline.
  - (b) Discussed general strategies and approaches to determine the validity of complaints and resolving difficulties
  - (c) Set up 1-on-1 meetings with VP Academics to discuss the initiatives they will be taking this year to enrich students' knowledge, preparedness, and experience.
3. Student input
  - (a) No academic issues have been reported this semester so far.
  - (b) There was a complaint over the summer regarding a Winter 2023 course. Due to the urgency of the situation, the VP Academic contacted the department director. Unfortunately, despite multiple attempts to reach out to the student and director, it is unclear whether and how the issue was resolved.
  - (c) The commitment to continue promoting communication channels to solicit feedback and comments from students was reiterated.
4. Syllabus repository
  - (a) The VP Academic noted that this initiative was initiated by SUS last year. Over the summer, the syllabus repository committee has been actively reaching out to professors to obtain the most up-to-date versions of syllabi, updating the repository as syllabi are received.

5. New course introduced at Academic Committee meeting (19 September 2023)
  - (a) The VP Academic introduced a student-initiated 300-level positive psychology course that will soon seek approval from the committee.
  - (b) The course coordinator is Prof. Richard Koestner.
  - (c) The new course is scheduled to begin in the Winter 2024 term.
6. Contact information  
Email: [academic@susmcgill.ca](mailto:academic@susmcgill.ca)

Vice-Dean Stephens thanked V.-P. (Academic) Aghazadeh Habashi for the SUS Report.

#### 11. Update: SCTP Course & Program Approval Process

**AC-23-12**

Associate Dean Hundemer highlighted that SCTP has a tight schedule for approvals this academic year, especially concerning \*\*Winter 2024 and Fall 2024 courses. To meet SCTP's deadlines, proposals need to be approved at the current Academic Committee meeting on 19 September 2023, for Winter 2024 implementation. The deadline for Fall 2024 is set at the Academic Committee meeting on 23 January 2024. The SCTP email (AC-23-12) provides instructions on how to smoothly transmit necessary information to avoid delays. It's crucial to be well-prepared and not leave proposal submissions until the last minute to prevent potential issues.

\*\*After the current meeting, the Faculty's submission deadline for SCTP has been extended to **24 October 2023**.

#### 12. Faculty of Science New Course:

\*BIOT 302

Introduction to Synthetic Biology

**AC-23-13**

3 credits

\* Effective date of implementation is Winter 2024

Prof. Hébert described the topic and said that although McGill offers some classes that touch on this topic, a complete course for undergraduates to learn the basics of synthetic biology is not offered. To prepare students to be part of the exciting advancements in this field, it's essential to teach them about the ideas and methods in synthetic biology and how they can be used in science and technology. In response to a member, a consultation report from the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences was received.

Associate Dean Hundemer **moved**, seconded by Prof. Guo, that the course be adopted.

**The motion carried.**

#### 13. Other Business

Vice-Dean Stephens suggested that members email him with their preferences regarding in-person or virtual Academic Committee meetings. If there are no responses, he will assume that the current arrangement will continue.

There being no further business, Prof. Denis **moved**, seconded by Prof. Dufour, the meeting be adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

**The motion carried.**