

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE
ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, March 6, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. in Arts Council Room, Arts 160.

PRESENT: Dean Martin Grant (Chair), Associate Dean Laurie Hendren (Vice-Chair), Director Nicole Allard, Professors Geraldine Akman (in place of Jon Unruh), Paul Clarke, Frédéric Guichard, Galen Halverson, Axel Hundemer, Bettina Kemme, Craig Mandato (in place of Fiona Bedford), Greg Marczynski, Kenneth Ragan, Linda Reven, Kathy Roulet; L. Houle; Alan Blayney, Jan-Marc Lieskovsky, Timothy Tsang; Malek Yalaoui and Josie D'Amico.

REGRETS: Professors Gillian O'Driscoll, Julie St-Pierre, Bruno Tremblay, Ann Wechsler; Hardik Vala, Neil Verma, Debbie Wang, Billi Wun.

DOCUMENTS: AC-11-44 to AC-11-49

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

(1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Prof. Halverson **moved**, seconded by Prof. Marczynski, that the Agenda be adopted.

The motion carried.

(2) MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 7, 2012

AC-11-44

Mr. Houle **moved**, seconded by Prof. Clarke, that the Minutes be approved.

The motion carried.

(3) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 606.2, BIOL 320

703.1 Associate Dean Hendren said that at the February 7th Academic Committee meeting, the new course BIOL 320 had been approved, pending consultation with the Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology. She said that the Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology did indeed fully support BIOL 320.

(4) COMPUTER SCIENCE

COMP 522

Modelling and Simulation
4 credits
Change in prerequisite

AC-11-45

704.1 Prof. Kemme said that the removal of the prerequisite COMP 350 was because COMP 350 was no longer required for Computer Science students, and that some of the material needed from COMP 350 would now be included in COMP 522.

Prof. Kemme **moved**, seconded by Mr. Blayney, that the changes be approved.

The motion carried.

(5) GEOGRAPHY

GEOG 321	Climatic Environments 3 credits Change in description	AC-11-46
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705.1 Dr. Akman said that the change was to bring the course description in line with current teaching, as well as to remove some overlap with other course offerings at McGill.

Dr. Akman **moved**, seconded by Prof. Guichard, that the changes be approved.

The motion carried.

(6) EARTH & PLANETARY SCIENCES

New Course:

EPSC 567	Advanced Volcanology 3 credits	AC-11-47
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706.1 Prof. Halverson introduced the above new course in advanced volcanology. EPSC 567 will be a more in-depth version of EPSC 530, which will become a prerequisite course for EPSC 567. EPSC 567 will be taught as a seminar course to both undergraduate students and graduate students.

706.2 Although not on the course proposal form submitted to the meeting, EPSC 567 will be added as a Complementary Course to the following programs:

- Major in Earth System Science
- Liberal Program – Core Science Component in Earth & Planetary Sciences
- Major in Earth & Planetary Sciences
- Honours in Earth Sciences
- Honours in Planetary Sciences

706.3 Prof. Halverson **moved**, seconded by Mr. Blayney, that the new course be adopted, and that the above programs be included on future versions of the course proposal form for EPSC 567.

The motion carried.

706.4 Associate Dean Hendren reminded members that in cases of simple additions of new courses to Complementary Course lists in various programs, that the programs could be listed in the course proposal form Box "Program Change Form Submitted?" This would eliminate submitting separate program change forms.

(7) BIOLOGY

New Course:

BIOL 546	Genetics of Model Systems 3 credits	AC-11-48
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707.1 Prof. Guichard introduced BIOL 546, and said the new course will be alternating with BIOL 544 every second year. He said the method of evaluation for the course would

consist of 20% participation, 30% exam, and 50% presentation. Prof. Guichard elaborated on the importance and the relevance of a 20% grade for participation for this type of course.

707.2 After some discussion regarding the high value for participation, the difficulty of measuring participation, the fact that students would not have an opportunity to be re-evaluated, and the high value of 50% for the grading of a single presentation, Prof. Guichard agreed to reduce the grading for participation to 10% and correspondingly increase the value of the exam to 40%.

707.3 Although not on the course proposal form submitted to the meeting, BIOL 546 will be included in the Molecular Genetics and Development Concentration in Biology, as well as added as a Complementary Course to the following programs:

- Major and Honours in Anatomy & Cell Biology
- Major in Physiology

707.4 Prof. Guichard **moved**, seconded by Prof. Mandato, that the new course be adopted with the above changes, and along with its addition to the above programs.

The motion carried.

(8) PSYCHIATRY

New Course:

PSYT 400

Res. Project in Psychiatry
6 credits

AC-11-49

708.1 Associate Dean Hendren said that at the last Academic Committee meeting, PSYT 400 had been discussed, not for approval but for feedback only. She said the instructor had addressed the concerns and comments of Mr. Victor Chisholm, the Academic Committee, the Department of Psychology, as well as Prof. Gerald Pollack, the Neuroscience Projects Coordinator.

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

The motion carried.

(9) DESIGNING CHALLENGING NEW FRESHMAN COURSES

709.1 Associate Dean Hendren said that at the Academic Committee meeting of February 7, 2012, MATH 134, Enriched Linear Algebra and Geometry, had been approved. She said that there are existing advanced calculus and physics courses, and that it might be a good idea for other units to think about putting on a series of enriched courses.

709.2 Associate Dean Hendren said an existing advanced chemistry course, CHEM 115, a combined version of CHEM 110 and CHEM 120, had not worked out, although something else along these lines could be tried in Chemistry. Enriched versions of biology and psychology courses, and perhaps a computer science course could work. She said the advantage would be to offer these to very strong freshman students, who come in with a very high admission cut-off and diverse backgrounds. Creating enriched courses would not only benefit the strongest students, but would also free up space in the existing freshman courses.

- 709.3** Associate Dean Hendren also said that another feature would be that if a student takes more than a certain number of enriched courses, there could be some recognition for this, setting the enriched freshman year apart from the regular freshman year. She said she would like to discuss the idea at a future Academic Committee meeting.
- 709.4** Dean Grant mentioned that enrolment was not expected to decrease in the future.
- 709.5** In reply to a member, Associate Dean Hendren said that the issue of students entering with advanced credits would have to be examined.
- 709.6** Prof. Reven said she would have to discuss further with the Department of Chemistry the issue of enriched courses in Chemistry.
- 709.7** Dean Grant said that one downside would be that the Faculty would have to do more teaching. However, enriched courses would be appealing teaching assignments.
- 709.8** Dean Grant said he had the impression that members were in agreement with the principle of enriched courses.

(10) HOW TO EVALUATE PERFORMANCE ACROSS DIFFERENT PROGRAMS?

- 710.1** Associate Dean Hendren said that the awarding of scholarships was often based on only GPA. This does not take into account that some programs are more difficult than others. She was wondering whether there was some way of differentiating between students with the same GPA. One possibility was to exclude all general interest courses from GPA calculations.
- 710.2** In the ensuing discussion, some of the points raised were:
- that GPAs could be calculated on a student's program only
 - however, it was pointed out that some students take electives mostly within their unit while others take electives mostly outside
 - some departments give Honours students preference for evaluating NSERC applications
 - however, some Majors students take Honours courses
 - the class average could be utilized, although class averages are not available for all courses
 - units do not offer awards based strictly on GPAs
 - use of GPAs only was most prominent with Faculty-wide scholarships
 - that general interest courses could be made P/F, thereby removing them from GPA calculations

(11) OTHER BUSINESS

- 711.1** Dean Grant said, concerning potential student protests at McGill against tuition increases in Québec, that some people were concerned that classes would not be held, possibly affecting student graduation. He reassured members that classes would indeed be held, and that relevant material would be covered. Any students not attending classes would have to catch up. In response to a member, Dean Grant said students could not be forced to attend classes.
- 711.2** In reply to a question regarding the status of SURA awards, Dean Grant said that he was unsure how many awards would be available. He said that the Faculty had had a \$1M

budget cut the previous year, affecting many different areas. At the request of the Office for Undergraduate Research, the Faculty had put in some money received from fundraising to minimize the impact on the number of SURAs.

711.3 Mr. Blayney, an SUS member, said that in response to the tuition increase issue, the SUS had held a General Assembly. He said only about 125 students, out of 4,500, showed up. There had been two motions proposed prior to the GA. One of the motions concerned principles regarding post-secondary education. The second motion was to form an SUS Strike Committee, essentially to promote going on strike. Following discussion on the first motion, the second motion was withdrawn because the Assembly was not amenable to any such action. The first motion objected to the Québec government not spending enough money on education, and following discussion the motion "Be it resolved that the SUS adopt a policy in favour of accessible education and against the current tuition hikes, but not at the expense of programs" was adopted.

711.4 Dean Grant said that during the three-month MUNACA strike the previous term, he had noted the extent to which the Faculty was able to continue to teach and do research. He thought this was because the Faculty's administrative and academic staff were committed to the Faculty's role at McGill, which fundamentally involved teaching to enable students to obtain degrees and move ahead in their lives.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.