



## 422nd REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE TO SENATE

on APC meetings held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September and 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010

### I. TO BE APPROVED BY SENATE

(A) **NEW TEACHING PROGRAMS REQUIRING SENATE APPROVAL** (approvals of new minors and options added to existing programs and major revisions to programs are reported in Section IV.A.1.a. for information) - *None*

### (B) **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ISSUES / POLICIES / GOVERNANCE/AWARDS**

#### Dean's Honours List for Research Master's Students

At a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010, APC reviewed a motion, passed unanimously by the Council of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2010, to eliminate the Dean's Honours List for Research Master's students. As stated in the memorandum submitted by Dean and Associate Provost Martin Kreiswith to APC, GPS reviewed the DHL designation for Master's students as part of a process to regularize regulations and procedures and have McGill's activities and rules reflect best practices at the most esteemed research institutions in the world. On 29<sup>th</sup> March 2005, Senate had approved the elimination of the Dean's Honours List for doctoral programs following the June 2006 Convocation (APC's 379<sup>th</sup> Report, D05-53). Among the reasons stated for removing the DHL at the Master's level also was that the designation was used too often (with more than the stipulated 10% of graduates receiving it); that it was used heavily in some programs and not at all in many others (and thus did not represent a university standard of evaluation), and that it was unusual for research universities to designate Master's students in this manner. At that time, it was decided that the data on how the designation was distributed at McGill should be monitored and brought back to CGPS for a vote. Data show that over the past five years, less than half of McGill's programs use the Master's DHL designation; those that do routinely have 60% or 70% of their graduates receiving it (82% in one program). The DHL appears to be poorly understood and inconsistently distributed and therefore not to be achieving its goals, i.e., the students receiving the DHL designation are not necessarily those who deserve it. A polling of peers at Canadian and US research institutions confirms that the only other institutions that have DHL designations for Master's students are Université de Montréal and Université Laval; none of the 12 American respondents has this designation. CGPS therefore proposed to discontinue the use of the DHL for Master's students. GPS supports the idea that McGill's very best research Master's students should receive recognition of their achievements and has proposed an annual Dean's Master's Research Award (in the form of a certificate) to be given to the best research Master's student's thesis or research project for each Faculty, as determined by the Faculty. This certification would not only reward (and provide recognition for) the very best research Master's achievement, but also provide a vetting process and pool of applicants when nominations for provincial, national, and international Master's thesis awards are submitted.

APC therefore recommends that Senate approve the following resolution:

Be it resolved that Senate approve the proposal to eliminate the Dean's Honours List for Research Master's students following the June 2011 Convocation.

## **(C) CREATION OF NEW UNITS / NAME CHANGES / REPORTING CHANGES**

### Centre for Continuing Education

#### Proposal for the creation of a McGill Writing Centre (Appendix A)

At a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010, APC reviewed a proposal to create a McGill Writing Centre, in the Centre for Continuing Education, that would serve the entire McGill community by offering to McGill students in graduate, undergraduate and continuing education programs the opportunity to enhance their competence in written communication. Since the beginning of the 2009-2010 academic year and at the request of the Provost's Office, the Centre for Continuing Education has been assuming administrative and academic responsibility for the writing courses previously coordinated by the Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing in the Faculty of Education. The proposal to establish a McGill Writing Centre integrating English-language writing courses previously offered by the English and French Language Centre (EFLC), as well as those courses previously transferred to the Centre for Continuing Education from the former Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing in the Faculty of Education, is the result of the work of a broad-based Steering Committee that conducted extensive consultations. The proposal reflects a widely-held concern within the McGill community that McGill needs to assume a leadership position with regard to developing and supporting writing competencies for McGill students and other constituencies, reflecting the fundamental importance of writing in the academic as well as broader workplace environments.

APC therefore recommends that Senate approve the following resolution:

Be it resolved that Senate approve the proposal for the creation of a McGill Writing Centre within the Centre for Continuing Education and so recommend to the Board of Governors.

#### **(D) CHANGES IN DEGREE DESIGNATION - None**

### **II. PRESENTED TO SENATE FOR DISCUSSION - None.**

### **III. APPROVED BY APPC IN THE NAME OF SENATE**

#### **(A) DEFINITIONS - None**

#### **(B) STUDENT EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS / CONTRACTS / INTERUNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS**

##### 1. Università degli studi di Salerno, Italy

At a meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2010, APC reviewed and approved a proposal for a student exchange agreement with the Università degli studi di Salerno in Italy, one of the oldest universities in Europe and, currently, one of the largest universities in southern Italy. The Salerno School of Medicine was founded in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and was the principal institution in Europe for the study of medicine at the time, reaching its utmost splendour during the Middle Ages. The University remained active until 1811 when it was closed by royal decree under the Napoleonic government of Joachim Murat. In 1944 the University was re-opened by King Vittorio Emanuele II. In 1988, the University, which now has over 43 000 students, moved to a modern university campus in the village of Fisciano in the Irno valley, a few miles from Salerno. Instruction will be in Italian.

## 2. Student exchange agreement with University of Warsaw

At a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010, APC reviewed and approved a proposal for a student exchange agreement with the University of Warsaw. Established in 1816, the University of Warsaw is the largest and one of the most prestigious universities of Poland. The University has played a major role in the intellectual, political and cultural life of Poland and has been recognized throughout the world as a leading academic centre. It offers 44 major fields and over 100 specializations in the Humanities and the Earth, Social and Natural Sciences. It has 19 faculties and 25 independent research and education units, employs 3 170 academic and research staff, including 837 professors, and educates 65 954 students (55 387 in bachelor and master's studies, 2 559 in doctoral studies, 8008 in post-diploma studies). The University of Warsaw has 185 bilateral agreements with universities from 49 countries, 920 Erasmus agreements with 370 partner institutions.

## IV. **FOR THE INFORMATION OF SENATE**

### (A) APPROVAL OF COURSES AND TEACHING PROGRAMS

#### 1. Programs

##### a) **APC approvals** (new options/concentrations added to existing programs and major revisions to programs)

- i. New concentrations/options within existing programs - *None*
- ii. Major revisions of existing programs - *None*

##### b) **APC Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP) approvals**

Summary reports from SCTP to APC are posted on the non-restricted section of the APC website <http://www.mcgill.ca/apc/sctpreports/>.

SCTP approved the following on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2010

##### i. **Moderate and Minor Program Revisions**

Centre for Continuing Education

- Certificate of Proficiency – English for Professional Communication (30 cr.)

Faculty of Education

- M.Sc.; Kinesiology and Physical Education; Thesis (45 cr.)
- M.Sc.; Kinesiology and Physical Education; Non-Thesis (45 cr.)

##### ii. **Program Retirements:** *none*

#### 2. Courses

##### a) New Courses:

Centre for Continuing Education: 9

##### b) Course Revisions:

Faculty of Arts: 2

##### c) Course Retirements: *none*.

## Proposal for the Creation of the McGill Writing Centre

### Background

Until its closing at the end of the 2008-2009 academic year, the Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing in the Faculty of Education included, as one of its many activities, the coordination of writing courses offered in the Faculty of Education as well as service courses offered in selected other Faculties such as Engineering and Management and the Centre for Continuing Education.<sup>1</sup> Starting in the 2009-2010 academic year, the Centre for Continuing Education assumed administrative and academic responsibility for the service course offerings at the request of the Provost's Office. These, however, represented only a portion of the writing courses offered at McGill since other areas also provide this type of educational opportunity for McGill students:

- English and French Language Centre (Faculty of Arts)
- English Language Programs (Centre for Continuing Education)
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Medicine
- Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
- Faculty of Science
- Redpath Museum.

Given the fundamental importance of writing in the academic as well as broader workplace environments, and based on a widely-held concern within the McGill community that we may not be assuming a leadership position with regard to developing and supporting writing competencies for McGill students and other constituencies, the Deputy Provost (Student Life & Learning) approved and funded a research project to be led by the Dean of Continuing Education with a view to making recommendations for improving writing support services at McGill. A broad-based Steering Committee was struck to advise the Dean.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> EDEC 202 Effective Communication, EDEC 203 Communication in Education, EDEC 204 Communication in Social Work, EDEC 205 Communication in Management 1, EDEC 206 Communication in Engineering, EDEC 207 Communication in Public Relations, EDEC 208 Expressive Writing, EDEC 215 English Language Requirement, EDEC 635 Advanced Written Communication, EDEC 645 Science Writing and Publishing, EDEC 690 Monograph Preparation and Presentation

<sup>2</sup> Judith Potter, Chair, Dean, Centre for Continuing Education; James Archibald, Director, Translation Studies, Centre for Continuing Education; Hervé de Fontenay, Director, English and French Language Programs, Centre for Continuing Education; Miranda Hickman, Associate Professor, Department of English; Martin Kreiswirth, Associate Provost (Graduate Education) and Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; Geneviève Leidelinger,

## Report and Recommendations

The research report, prepared by Steven Sacks and guided by the Steering Committee, built on previous work and covered a number of key issues including but not limited to: approaches to writing instruction and support in other universities in North America, centralization vs. fragmentation, clienteles, the position of student associations at McGill with respect to writing courses and support; the current state of writing instruction and support at McGill; the needs of graduate students; the visibility of writing courses and support at McGill; trends in writing across the curriculum; writing centres in North American universities. The report was submitted to the Committee in June 2009.<sup>3</sup>

The report contained a number of recommendations<sup>4</sup> which were discussed by the Committee before being forwarded to the Deputy Provost (Student Life & Learning). This report and its recommendations provided the basis for the rationale leading to the proposal to establish a McGill Writing Centre.

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Director, English and French Language Centre, Faculty of Arts; Robert Myles, Faculty Lecturer, English and French Language Centre, Faculty of Arts; Anthony Paré, Director, Centre for the Study & Teaching of Writing, Department of Integrated Studies in Education, Faculty of Education; Laura Winer, Associate Director, Teaching and Learning Services.

<sup>3</sup> SACKS, Steven. (2009). *Teaching and Learning Academic, Business and Professional Communication at McGill*. MONTREAL, McGill University. The full text is available upon request.

<sup>4</sup> **Recommendation 1:** A long-term awareness campaign, designed to increase the visibility of existing writing instruction and support resources, be undertaken and maintained. This campaign should encompass posters, printed material, printed advertisements, and a dedicated mini-website on the McGill website. **Recommendation 2:** The feasibility of establishing campus-wide writing competitions, encouraging academic units to institute their own competitions, and promoting the participation of students in national and international competitions should be explored. **Recommendation 3:** Non-program writing courses should be centralized in one unit, and course offerings consolidated. **Recommendation 4:** A greater number and variety of postgraduate workshops on writing-related topics should be offered. **Recommendation 5:** Writing skills should be added to the list of skills assessed annually by thesis directors. **Recommendation 6:** Support for the assessment of postgraduate students' writing skills, including a concise written guide, should be made available to all faculty, in conjunction with Teaching and Learning Services. **Recommendation 7:** A writing centre devoted to the development and administration of writing support, should be established. **Recommendation 8:** McGill's writing centre should be attached to a supra-faculty body, to ensure wide acceptance and avoid perceptions of disciplinary. **Recommendation 9:** Realistic estimates of the short-, medium- and long-term staffing needs of the writing centre should be developed, and attempts to adequately staff the centre should be aggressively pursued. **Recommendation 10:** The director of the writing centre should hold a full-time academic appointment. **Recommendation 11:** The writing centre's tutorial service should be cross-disciplinary, rather than course-specific. **Recommendation 12:** Writing centre tutors should receive formal training. **Recommendation 13:** The feasibility of implementing Writing across the Curriculum should be explored. **Recommendation 14:** The feasibility of establishing a composition and rhetoric program should be explored. Preference should be given to a multidisciplinary program.

**Rationale**

As stated in the Sacks Report, “writing is the common activity of academic work”. It was deemed that the creation of a consolidated academic unit at McGill would underscore the University’s commitment to the “core value” of writing in that “writing is indissociable from thinking and knowledge production.” Moreover, writing in the broader McGill community is an integral “part of [our] collective effort to create new disciplinary knowledge” and represents a “key activity for the advancement of knowledge in all fields” both within and outside the boundaries of the academy. The Committee achieved unanimous consensus on this rationale which should lead to the establishment of a university-wide centre devoted to the teaching and support of writing to advance the University’s mission.

Following discussions with the Provost in December 2009, it was agreed that a writing centre serving the needs of the whole McGill community should be established and that it should be administered as a new unit in the Centre for Continuing Education, given CCE’s existing base of writing courses, expertise, infrastructure and ability to work across Faculties. This unit would report to the Dean of Continuing Education and would initially be comprised of staff members from the Centre for Continuing Education and the English component of the English and French Language Centre (Faculty of Arts). A Director would be hired for the McGill Writing Centre who, in collaboration with colleagues in the Centre for Continuing Education and a broad-based Advisory Board, would develop and implement a strategic plan for the new Centre.

As compared to the fragmented approach that has characterized McGill’s treatment of writing in the past, this new initiative will provide a centralized service and teaching unit which will support writing across the University and provide outreach programs for constituencies outside the University which are best served through Continuing Education. Writing within the discipline courses that are currently offered by Faculties such as Law, Medicine, EAS, Science will remain with those units, although these Faculties will also benefit from coordinated resources with regard to the teaching of writing.

**Consultations**

The research project included broad consultation within McGill and with other institutions offering similar services to their students. The results of these consultations were brought to the Steering Committee prior to the formulation of its final recommendations. Groups consulted included student

associations at McGill<sup>5</sup> and a selection of informants with a clear stake in the teaching and support of writing within the University.<sup>6</sup> Consultations were also conducted with institutions outside McGill either in the context of site visits<sup>7</sup> or, in some cases, by e-mail. These universities were selected based on their recognized expertise and the on-going institutional support given to writing.

### **Mission and Organization of the Centre**

The McGill Writing Centre will have a broad mandate. Its mission will be to serve the entire McGill community by offering to McGill students in graduate, undergraduate and continuing education programs the opportunity to enhance their competence in written communication. Its range of offerings will include, among others, credit courses, non-credit courses, workshops and tutoring services. Integral to this new academic service will be English-language writing courses previously offered by the English & French Language Centre (EFLC) as well as those courses previously transferred to the Centre for Continuing Education from the former Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing in the Faculty of Education.

The Centre will benefit from the expertise of an Advisory Board to be established in 2010-2011 and will be led by a Director to be appointed in 2010-2011. The Director's responsibilities may be summarized as follows: oversee, staff and manage academic, business and professional writing courses offered across the curriculum; conceive in cooperation with the Advisory Program Committee a strategic plan for the development of the Centre and supervise the implementation of the plan once adopted; work with other faculty members to design writing programs and initiatives in support of the University's mandate; assume a teaching load and advisory responsibilities at the undergraduate and graduate levels in communication, more specifically in writing in academic, business and professional contexts; advise individual students by providing guidance, in cooperation

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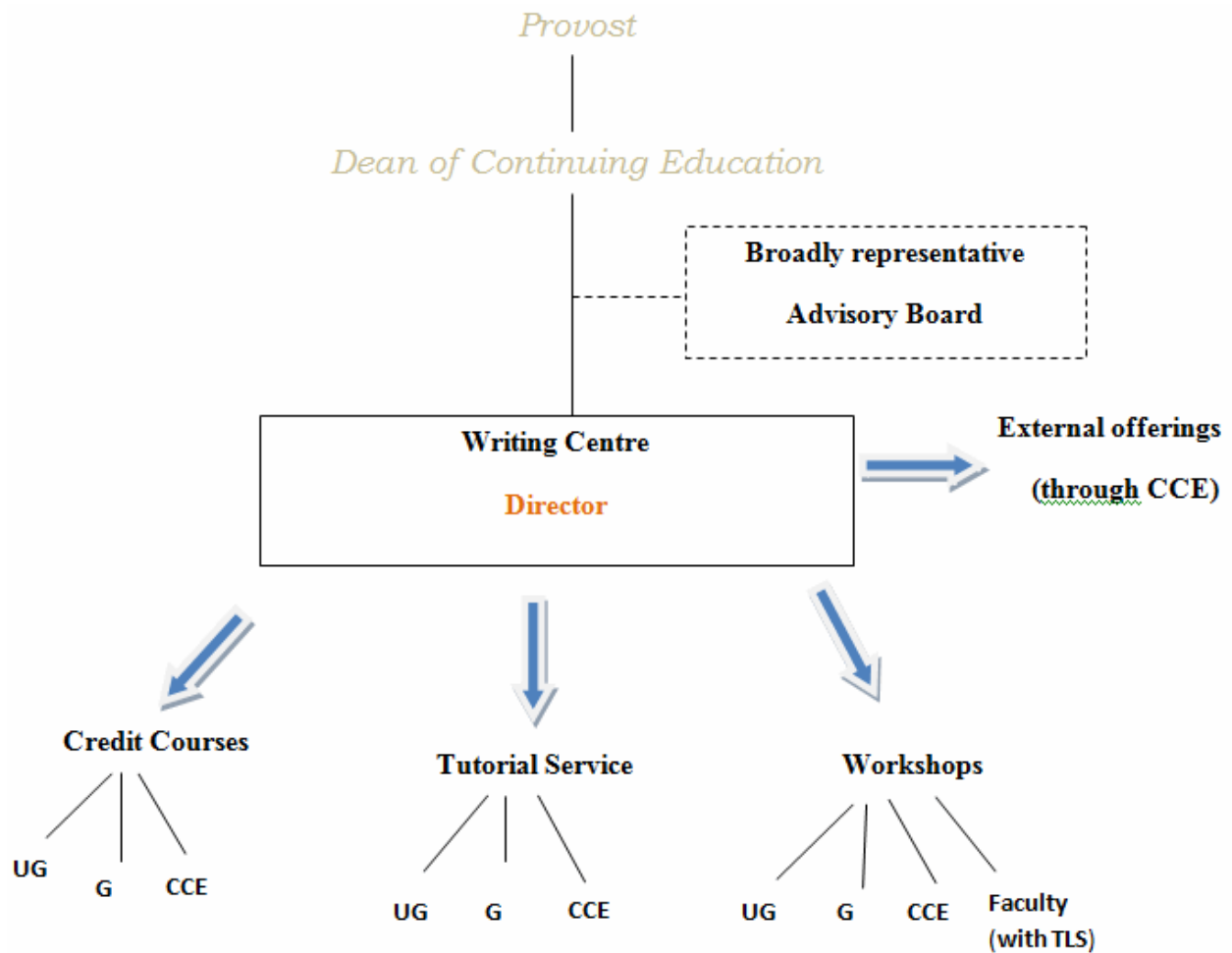
<sup>5</sup> Department of English Student Association (DESA), Postgraduate Student Society (PGSS), McGill Association of Continuing Education Students (MACES)

<sup>6</sup> Malcolm Baines, President, McGill Association of University Teachers (MAUT); Ted Baker, Director, Counseling Service; Gregg Blatchford, Director, Career and Placement Services; Ashley Burgoyne, President, Post-Graduate Students' Society; Linda Cooper, Redpath Museum; Lorraine Bush, Administrative Coordinator (Interim), Tutorial Service; Jane Everett, Dean of Students; Lyes Hamdi, President, McGill Association of Continuing Education Students (MACES); Jana Luker, Executive Director, Student Services; Kathleen Massey, University Registrar & Exec. Director Enrolment Services; Lauren Welsh, President, Department of English Student Association (DESA); Joan Wolforth, Director, Students with Disabilities.

<sup>7</sup> Purdue University, University of British Columbia and University of Alberta

with a team of writing tutors, in their academic and professional development as writers; provide student support services and staff training as required in cooperation with other academic units within the University; develop project proposals for non-credit activities including: workshops, seminars, professional development courses, testing and symposia; work effectively with faculty, staff and students from a variety of diverse backgrounds in the promotion of writing as an integral part of intellectual development in academic and professional settings. The Director will report to the Dean of Continuing Education through the Department of Translation Studies.<sup>8</sup>

The following chart illustrates the proposed organizational structure and offerings:



The resources required to launch the McGill Writing Centre are summarized below. Every effort will be made to maximize existing resources.

<sup>8</sup> Proposal for a name change will be forthcoming



**Human resources**

Core staff of the MWC include the Director (new position) plus Faculty Lecturers and one support staff member transferred from the Faculty of Arts. Courses will be staffed by Faculty Lecturers who are currently members of the University's teaching staff, as well as fixed-term contract employees. This will allow for the maintenance of current courses. New sections of credit courses may be added as demand requires and resources permit. In addition to these courses, the Centre will initiate tutorial services to be staffed by graduate students. Moreover, writing workshops planned as part of the array of offerings will be lead by faculty and graduate students.

To make the best use of existing resources and maximize impact for students, the MWC intends to work extensively through partnerships with groups such as the Libraries, Teaching & Learning Services, Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, Student Services and student organizations.

**Space**

At present, there is no ongoing designated space for the Writing Centre. Discussions have been taking place for some time to identify suitable space on campus and it appears that there is a temporary solution (for 18-24 months) in the McLennan library for a centralized resource area accessible to all McGill clientele. To serve the MacDonald campus student body, a physical location there is highly desirable; this possibility will be pursued with the Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

**Technology and equipment**

The Centre will need to be well-equipped and present a welcoming face to its varied clients. Hence, the purchase of computers, writing and editing software, desks, tables and chairs will be required.

*30-09-2010*

*Revised and approved by APC, 07-10-2010*