



438th REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE TO SENATE
on APC meetings held on 1st September 2011 and 19th April 2012

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)

FACULTY OF ARTS (Appendix A)

B.A.; Liberal Arts

At a meeting held on 1st September 2011, APC reviewed proposals for a B.A.; Liberal Arts; Major Concentration (36 cr.), B.A.; Liberal Arts; Honours (60 cr.) and B.A.; Liberal Arts Component; Joint Honours (36 cr.). The programs are intended to replace the B.A. Major and Minor in Humanistic Studies (*whose retirement was approved by SCTP on 7th May 2009 and effective as of 1st January 2010*) and the Freshman Program- Legacy Option (*whose retirement was approved by SCTP on 27th May 2011*). The proposed programs make use of existing courses, with the exception of one integrative course, *Seminar in Liberal Arts, LIBA402* which has been added. In the proposed programs, the Faculty of Arts has addressed problems and deficiencies encountered in the Humanistic Studies programs and the Arts Legacy program, and also the need for a language requirement, other than English and French. The new Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures will own and manage the proposed Liberal Arts programs. On 1st September 2011, APC approved the proposals with certain conditions which have now been met in the attached proposals. MELS has confirmed that University approval would be sufficient, given that the proposed programs were created following closure of the programs in Humanistic Studies, that they have similar objectives, make use of mostly existing courses, and result from a natural evolution of program offerings.

APC therefore recommends that Senate approve the following resolution:

Be it resolved that Senate approve the creation of the B.A.; Liberal Arts.

(B) ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ISSUES / POLICIES / GOVERNANCE/AWARDS - none

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

Faculty of Engineering (Appendix B)

Department of Bioengineering

At meetings on 5th and 19th April 2012, APC reviewed a proposal for the creation of a Department of Bioengineering in the Faculty of Engineering. The discipline has been gaining in importance within the Faculty of Engineering. The proposed department would seek to have a complementary and collaborative relationship with the Department of Biomedical Engineering in the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Bioresource Engineering in the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. It will provide focus and visibility to the growing field of Bioengineering within the Faculty of Engineering, and it will house the accredited undergraduate program which the Faculty is planning to offer.

APC therefore recommends that Senate approve the following resolution:

Be it resolved that Senate approve the creation of the Department of Bioengineering /département de bioingénierie in the Faculty of Engineering, and so recommend to the Board of Governors.

(D) CHANGES IN DEGREE DESIGNATION - none

II. TO BE ENDORSED BY SENATE / PRESENTED TO SENATE FOR DISCUSSION - none.

III. APPROVED BY APC IN THE NAME OF SENATE

(A) DEFINITIONS – none

(B) STUDENT EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIPS / CONTRACTS / INTERUNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS - none

IV. FOR THE INFORMATION OF SENATE

(A) ACADEMIC UNIT REVIEWS

At meetings on 19th January, 2nd February, and 15th March 2012, and in accordance with the Policy on Academic Unit Reviews (*approved by Senate on 19th January 2011*), APC assessed the documents pertaining to three academic units. The “APC Review Assessments” appended to this Report were approved by APC, as follows:

- School of Architecture, on 2nd February 2012 (Appendix C)
- School of Urban Planning, on 5th April 2012 (Appendix D)
- School of the Environment, on 5th April 2012 (Appendix E)

B) APPROVAL OF COURSES AND TEACHING PROGRAMS

1. Programs

- a) APC approvals (new options/concentrations and major revisions to existing 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: <http://www.mcgill.ca/sctp/documents/>)
 - i. Moderate and minor program revisions - *none*
 - ii. Program retirements - *none*

2. Courses

- a) New Courses: *none*
- b) Course Revisions: *none*
- c) Course retirements: *none*

(C) OTHER – none

Academic Policy Committee

Assessment of the Review of the School of Architecture

An Academic Unit Review of the School of Architecture was conducted in 2011. At meetings held on 8th December 2011 and 19th January 2012, the Academic Policy Committee considered a Summary of the review, which was prepared by APC's Subcommittee on Academic Unit Reviews. The Summary is based on the following documents: the School's Self-Study and Assessment, the report from the two external reviewers, the report from the internal members of the Review Committee, the School's response, and the Dean's response.

APC was satisfied that the review has fulfilled its objectives and addressed all major themes. The School's response was appropriate and has shown commendable openness to considering the (sometimes contradictory) advice presented by the external reviewers and the internal members of the Review Committee.

The Review highlights the School's excellent performance and the challenges it may be facing in maintaining that leading position in the years ahead.

I. Academic Programs, Teaching and Learning.

- APC supports the School's wish to delay any program changes until after the Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB) has presented its accreditation team report.
- APC notes that the external reviewers and the School disagree with the concerns of the internal members of the Review Committee regarding the two 45-credit and 60-credit M.Arch. options. APC endorses the School's recommendation that any decisions regarding those two options be delayed until (1) a proper cost/income ratio per student and fiscal assessment of the School is complete and (2) given time, a proper analysis of the effects, quality, and outcomes of the streams is performed.
- Like the internal and external reviewers, APC supports the School's wish to introduce a DDA as a separate degree from the Ph.D.
- Comparisons with other schools on the subject of the number of studio hours may have allowed useful points of reference, in order for APC to offer any useful comment on the matter.
- Retention rates seem not to have been included in the Review. Given Architecture's class sizes, APC wishes to know how many students drop out of the School's programs.

II. Research, Scholarship and Creative Work

- An error of fact was detected in the external reviewers' report, with respect to research funding. Total amounts have been increasing, not declining, so that the external reviewers' remark about a decline in total dollars of funded research over the past few years is unclear and somewhat misleading. The School's research activity and output raise no concern.
- APC acknowledges the need for exercising sensitivity when assessing the impact of research on professional programs.

III. Diversity and Community Involvement

- APC supports the School's continuing efforts to redress the gender imbalance among its faculty. It notes that gender imbalance is non-existent in the School's student population.
- Community involvement was not sufficiently emphasized in the School's Self Study and Assessment. APC therefore suggests that the School explore all facets of its community involvement.

IV. Structure, Management and Administration

- The School was found to be very well managed.
- Internal and External Reports are divided on the subject of Structure and Administration. However, despite difficulties with the administrative relationship between the School and the Faculty of Engineering, of which the School is a part, both the former Director and former Dean of the Faculty of Engineering expressed willingness to improve the current administrative relationship.

Academic Policy Committee
Assessment of the Review of the School of Urban Planning

An Academic Unit Review of the School of Urban Planning was conducted in 2011. At a meeting held on 2nd February 2012, the Academic Policy Committee considered a Summary of the review, which was prepared by APC's Subcommittee on Academic Unit Reviews. The Summary is based on the following documents: the School's Self-Study and Assessment, the report from the two external reviewers, the report from the internal members of the Review Committee, the School's response, and the Dean's response.

APC was satisfied that the review has fulfilled its objectives and addressed all major themes. The School's response was appropriate: the School wasted no time in addressing the recommendations of the External Reviewers and the Internal Review Committee and responding to them.

The Review highlights the School's excellent performance in teaching, research and scholarship, and service to the community, in a context of extensive collaboration with other units at McGill, institutions in Montreal and elsewhere and at the international level.

I. Academic Programs, Teaching and Learning.

- APC commends the School for its ability to offer programs of high-quality and selectivity under severe constraints, the School's faculty and staff being "stretched to the limit". APC is concerned that the current size of the School's faculty may pose a challenge to the School's ability to sustain the quality of its programs. If resources could be identified, the prospect of two additional faculty positions and increased administrative assistance, as well as opportunities for associate memberships and joint thesis supervision to which the interdisciplinary nature of the discipline lends itself, would put the School in a less precarious position for increasing its student intake, for continuing to meet accreditation requirements, and for seeking to regularize its ad hoc Ph.D. program.
- APC supports the School's wisdom in studying the requirements for regularizing its doctoral program. Formalizing the ad hoc Ph.D. program by seeking approval by the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport, will necessitate that the program be supported by a sufficient number of professors. Faculty involved in the program, full time members of the School and Associate Members able to supervise Urban Planning Ph.D. students, will be a key factor in the program proposal's successful evaluation.
- APC supports the School's objective to increase the size of its student body, but agrees that this will require careful planning in terms of faculty and staff complement and studio space.

II. Research, Scholarship and Creative Work

The School seems to be performing at an optimal level.

III. Diversity and Community Involvement

- The Urban Planning discipline demands that staff and students be interested in and participate actively in urban planning issues, locally and elsewhere. The School is actively involved.
- APC was concerned about the discrepancy between the School's faculty and its student body in terms of female representation. Special attention may have to be given to increasing the proportion of female faculty, when hiring opportunities arise, and to encouraging female students to pursue careers in academia.
- Attention to the need for a greater proportion of professional urban planners in the faculty, for accreditation purposes, should not be overlooked.

IV. Structure, Management and Administration

- APC notes the sound and collegial management and administrative structure of the School.
- APC suggests that the School consider how it intends to track its alumni and obtain information as to their professional occupations.
- APC notes the agreement of the Self-Study and the Internal and External Review reports that the continued health of the School may depend on additional faculty, and the apparent openness of the then Dean to proposals in this direction. APC supports the efforts of the Faculty and the School towards creating the necessary conditions for the School's continued viability and on-going development within McGill.

Academic Policy Committee
Assessment of the Review of the School of the Environment

An Academic Unit Review of the School of the Environment (MSE) was conducted in 2010-11. At a meeting held on 15th March 2012, the Academic Policy Committee (APC) considered a Summary of the review, prepared by APC's Subcommittee on Academic Unit Reviews. That Summary and APC's Assessment are based on the following documents: the School's Self-Study (2010), the report from the two external reviewers (16 March 2011), the report from the internal members of the Review Committee (1-2 March 2011), the School's response and the responses from the four Deans who have joint oversight responsibility for the MSE (June 2011).

APC was satisfied that the review has met its objectives in addressing all major themes, in addition to the thirteen questions that the Provost and the Presiding Dean asked the External Reviewers to address. Review documents have highlighted a number of issues, few of which gathered consensus. The School's response is indicative of the complexity of the issues facing the MSE at this critical stage of its development and of the School's openness and willingness to discuss and arrive at a satisfactory understanding.

The Review underlines the School's remarkable achievements ("so much with so little" since its creation in 1998), the faculty's enthusiasm and students' high level of satisfaction. For all its exemplary multidisciplinary approach to teaching and research, the School faces questions regarding future directions, governance, and resources.

I. Academic Programs, Teaching and Learning.

- APC commends the School for the high quality of its undergraduate teaching programs which combine team teaching, group research projects, connection with the community and the broader world. There is no doubt about the quality and dedication of the teaching staff. APC notes the External Reviewers' recommendation that the School review the current sets of domains and consider "developing domains that map into the focal research areas identified by the School" (page 5).
- APC notes the clear support, expressed by the External and Internal Reviewers and at least one of the four Deans, for the MSE's move to proposing graduate programs that would revolve around a small number of carefully selected priority research areas. This was viewed as essential for the MSE to strengthen its sense of community, to gain status of world leader in a few selected issue areas, to develop School-based interdisciplinary research and to attract the best scholars to its faculty. The small number of students drawn to the Graduate Option in Environment offered to master's and Ph.D. students registered in 16 disciplines, may not be indicative of the attraction of stand-alone programs. Although the MSE plans to work with partner departments to increase recruitment in the Option, the Internal Review Committee acknowledges that "while the Option might meet the demands of a small cohort of students in participating departments, it cannot offer an effective substitute for a stand-alone MSE graduate program at either the Master's or doctoral level." APC cautions that all necessary conditions for the approval of graduate programs will have to be assembled **before** proposals can be submitted to the external evaluation committees.

II. Research, Scholarship and Creative Work

While the jointly appointed staff's high level of research and impressive capacity for generating research funds are mainly concentrated in their disciplinary departments, it was noted that the MSE has taken steps to facilitate interdisciplinary research (Self Study, p.27) and provides examples of 32 funded interdisciplinary research collaborations. The Reviewers have identified the need for the MSE to establish itself as a major centre for environmental research around a small number of research priority areas. Clear research foci within the MSE seem to be an essential condition for supporting the graduate programs the MSE plans to propose. There also seems agreement among the Reviewers that the development of research foci should likely follow the appointment of a new director and the filling of the Liber Ero Chair, be sustained by new faculty appointments, and necessitate additional physical space (conditions for successful graduate program proposals).

III. Diversity and Community Involvement

The MSE has provided data showing diversity and gender-balance among students and staff. Community involvement takes on many forms, including engagement in environmental and sustainability projects at the University and in the broader community.

IV. Structure, Management and Administration

The MSE review was intended to address questions relating to the governance/reporting structure of this unique interdisciplinary, interfaculty school. APC expresses its support for a decision that would allow the School to receive appropriate attention, adequate space, and the best conditions for it to develop and prosper and remain the MSE of which McGill University is justly proud.