



# Memorandum

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**Office of the Provost**  
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**TO:** Senate

**FROM:** Professor Anthony C. Masi, Provost, Chair of APC

**SUBJECT:** Academic Policy Committee

**DATE:** 5 December 2012

**DOCUMENT #:** D12-28

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  INFORMATION     APPROVAL/DECISION

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**ISSUE:** Report on Academic Policy Committee's 2011-2012 activities and statement of the Committee's plans and priorities for 2012-2013.

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**BACKGROUND & RATIONALE:** As a standing committee of Senate, the Academic Policy Committee is required to report annually to Senate on the Committee's activities of the past year and on its plans and priorities for the upcoming year. APC also presents regular report to every meeting of Senate. Full annual summaries of approvals are posted on APC's website <http://www.mcgill.ca/apc/approvals>

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**MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL:** N/A

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**PRIOR CONSULTATION:** Review by the Academic Policy Committee on 22 November 2012.

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**NEXT STEPS:** None.

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**APPENDICES:** Appendix A: Brief summary of 2011-2012 activities  
Appendix B: Terms of reference (approved by Senate, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009)  
Appendix C: Membership 2012-2013

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**McGill University  
Academic Policy Committee**

**Report on the Committee's Plans and Priorities for 2012-2013**

The following currently report to APC:

- **Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP)**, chaired by Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) Morton J. Mendelson;
- **Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning (STL)**, chaired by Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) Morton J. Mendelson (as Provost's Chair Delegate);
- **Subcommittee on Continuing Education (SCE)**, which is to be chaired by the Provost or delegate, and whose membership has now been determined;
- **Subcommittee on Research Policy (SRP)**, created by Senate on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009 (by amendment of the APC terms of reference, on recommendation by the Senate Nominating Committee), but not yet established; the Research Advisory Council (RAC) currently reports to APC on matters relating to research units and research policies;
- **Subcommittee on Academic Unit Reviews (SAUR)**, created by APC on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011 and chaired by Professor Ian Henderson, Faculty of Religious Studies;
- **Council of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)**, chaired by Associate Provost (Graduate Education) and Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Martin Kreiswirth;
- **Workgroup on Nomenclature of Academic Units**, created in March 2009.

**A) Review of proposals in teaching and research**

APC's regular business includes reviewing proposals for new programs and major revisions to programs, proposals for the creation, amalgamation, changes in name and reporting of all academic units and for revisions to research centre by-laws, policy proposals regarding the conduct of research, student exchange agreements and partnerships, proposals and policies relating to teaching and learning, ongoing continuing education activities throughout the University and proposals for broad policies regarding continuing educations, as well as the role of information systems and technology in the provision, management, and support of academic programs.

**Approval procedures for courses and programs:** the review of the implementation of the *Approval Paths for Courses and Teaching Programs*, approved by Senate on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008 and subject to review in 2011, has been conducted and will be presented to APC in Fall 2012.

**B) Maintaining standards and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning – academic policy proposals**

**1) Academic Unit Reviews**

The new review process, governed by McGill's Policy on **Cyclical Academic Unit Reviews** (approved by APC on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010 and presented to and approved by Senate on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011 in APC's 425<sup>th</sup> Report, D10-45), commenced in September 2011. APC assesses the academic unit review documentation with the assistance of a four-member Subcommittee on Academic Unit Reviews, which includes two constant members (the Chair and the Associate Director of the Cyclical Unit Review Office) and two rotating members, either from APC or from the broader McGill University community (professors and students). Having begun with the examination of three ad hoc reviews in 2011-12, the APC Subcommittee and APC now considers about two reviews per month. APC Review Assessments are sent to the Chair or Director of the unit and to the relevant Dean, and presented to Senate for information.

In 2012-2013, APC will be reporting its Assessments of the Reviews of the following units to Senate:

- Department of Linguistics;
- School of Computer Science;
- Department of Oncology;
- Department of East-Asian Studies;
- Institute of Islamic Studies;
- Career and Professional Development (School of Continuing Studies);
- Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology;
- School of Social Work;
- Department of Philosophy;
- Translation and Written Communication (School of Continuing Studies); and
- Department of Anthropology.

## 2) Matters relating to **Graduate Studies**

In 2012-2013, CGPS will be dealing with the following:

- o Cross-university initiative for improved supervision;
- o Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Writing Initiative;
- o Ongoing Review of regulations and procedures.

## 3) **Teaching and learning** matters

In 2012-2013, STL will continue to work on the following issues:

- o Survey on the classroom environment;
- o Undergraduate outcomes;
- o Nexus between teaching and research/scholarship;
- o Enhancing student engagement;
- o Guidelines on distance education;
- o Assessment of student learning;
- o Streamlining communication with instructors;
- o Recognizing and rewarding teaching.

The STL currently has four active working groups:

- o Working Group on the Nexus between Teaching and Research/Scholarship;
- o Working Group on Undergraduate Outcomes;
- o Working Group on Distance Education;
- o Assessment Working Group.

## 4) **Research** matters for APC consideration

The Research Advisory Council (RAC), chaired by the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations), is the committee that currently deals with research-related policy items and research centre proposals and reports to APC on such matters.

The following items of relevance to APC are included in the RAC's Workplan for 2012-2013:

- o Revision of the McGill Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects;
- o Policy on Research Centres;
- o Review Research Centre proposals seeking university approval.

### **C) Broader academic issues**

As time permits, APC will focus on selected general issues, such as monitoring quality implementations of goals outlined in the University's Strategic Plan (e.g., interdisciplinarity) and the possible impact of current economic considerations on academic matters.

APC also intends to

- Activate its Subcommittee on Continuing Education
- Consider the Report from its Workgroup on Nomenclature of Academic Units with a view to proposing new definitions for terms used to designate academic units at McGill.

### **Appendices:**

- 1. Brief summary of 2011-2012 activities of APC and committees reporting to APC**
- 2. Terms of reference** (approved by Senate, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009)
- 3. Membership** 2012-2013

*Helen M.C. Richard, Secretary to APC  
Approved by APC on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012  
Submitted to Senate, meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012.*

**McGill University  
Academic Policy Committee  
Brief summary of 2011-2012 activities**

Full annual summaries on APC's activities and SCTP/CGPS/APC/Senate/Board approvals can be consulted at: <http://www.mcgill.ca/apc/approvals>

**Course and teaching program approvals:**

|                           | 2011-12 | 2010-11 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|
| New programs:             | 9       | 15      |
| Program retirements:      | 5       | 21      |
| Major programs revisions: | 14      | 9       |
| Minor program revisions:  | 99      | 197     |
| New courses:              | 228     | 234     |
| Revised courses:          | 490     | 440     |
| Course deletions:         | 123     | 101     |

**Student mobility and student exchange programs (approved by APC)**

APC reviewed and approved 10 student mobility and exchange partnerships. In addition, one interuniversity partnership was approved contingent on the necessary resources being provided.

**Policies and standards**

- Revised Thesis Review Procedures: On Senate's request, APC ascertained that the new procedures implemented as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011 meet the requirements of the policy requiring external Ph.D. theses reviews, avoid conflicts of interest, and that their suspension would not serve the interests of students;
- Revised approval process for program name change proposals; they are now treated as major revisions requiring APC approval and are thus appropriately recorded;
- Course descriptions: APC endorsed a set of recommendations concerning course descriptions.
- Revisions to nomination guidelines relating to the Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching (PPET)
- Revisions to nomination guidelines relating to the Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Learning

**Academic units**

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| New units:                       | 6 (4 research centres and 2 departments) |
| Merger of units:                 | 0  |
| Name changes:                    | 0  |
| Reporting change:                | 0  |
| Revised research centre by-laws: | 1  |

**Academic Unit Reviews**

In accordance with McGill's Policy on Academic Unit Reviews, APC assessed the documents pertaining to the *ad hoc* reviews of three academic units: the School of Architecture, the School of Urban Planning, and the School of the Environment.

The APC Workgroup on **Interdisciplinary Programs** completed its mandate by proposing to APC a way of integrating Interdisciplinary Programs into the Academic Unit Reviews. The template for Self Study reports was revised accordingly in the summer of 2012.

### **APC Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning (STL)**

#### *Initiatives to enhance the quality of teaching and learning*

**Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching (PPET):** First awarded in 2000, the PPET was established to promote excellence in teaching at all levels (faculty lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor and full professor). Revisions to the nomination guidelines were approved by STL (14<sup>th</sup> March 2012) and by APC (15<sup>th</sup> March 2012). The purpose of the revisions was to clarify the text in order to bring the guidelines close in line with the Guidelines for Developing a Teaching Portfolio (also revised) and make them easier to conform to the 3M Awards application regulations.

**Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Learning:** Drafted in 2009, the nomination guidelines were revised to clarify the language used, particularly that pertaining to former students, and were presented to and approved by APC on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

**Nexus between research/scholarship and teaching:** In order to promote undergraduate students' exposure to research, STL recommended that faculty champions be identified and be asked to participate in demonstrations of their successes with integrating teaching and research/scholarship to benefit student learning within undergraduate courses. These demonstrations specifically target junior faculty members.

**Enhancing student engagement with "clickers":** STL received a report indicating that usage of the Student Response System ("clickers") drops dramatically after first-year courses. STL expects another report in Fall 2012 on information sessions on the use by instructors of second-year courses

#### *University-wide teaching and learning policies recommended to APC*

##### **Guidelines for developing a teaching portfolio**

The STL were presented with working drafts of the revised teaching portfolio guidelines. Following Senate's approval by Senate on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012 of the revised "Regulations Relating to the Employment of Academic Staff, the guidelines will be presented to departments and University tenure committees to ensure broad dissemination.

##### **Course evaluations**

Following Senate's approval of the revised course evaluations policy (23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011), guidelines for interpretation of course evaluation results for instructors and chairs were developed and presented to STL. They are intended to provide assistance to professors in interpreting results of course evaluations, to provide assistance to Chairs and Deans in using the results, to help make the results useful in improving teaching, and to increase the credibility of course evaluations with students. The guidelines were presented at the Information Session on Reappointment for Junior Faculty on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2012, distributed to Deans, Directors and Chairs, and posted on the TLS website.

##### **Assessment Working Group**

The University Student Assessment Policy was approved by Senate on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011 to take effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011. STL members were invited to communicate information about the Policy to their Faculty to ensure that it receives as broad a distribution as possible.

*Maintaining communication with the Faculties on matters relating to teaching and learning*

**Working Group on Distance Education:** As a follow-up on discussions begun in Fall 2010, STL struck a new Working Group on Distance Education. Its terms of reference were approved by APC on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012. A draft report is expected for STL's review by December 2012.

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

In addition to its regular review of courses and teaching program proposals, SCTP continues to focus on the following:

- **Review of Missing Course Descriptions:** The review of active courses that do not contain a description was completed by Enrolment Services. The results of this exercise were brought to SCTP in October and to APC in November 2012.
- **Revised Course Description Style Guide:** Following APC's approval of an increase in the maximum number of words in a course description (from 50 to 100 words), Enrolment Services undertook a review of the current style guide for course descriptions and completed draft revisions, which will be submitted for review at SCTP in November 2012. A final revised style guide will be submitted to APC for discussion and approval shortly thereafter.
- **Revisions to the Course and Program Streamlining Approval Procedures:** A review of the streamlining approval procedures for courses and program was undertaken. The revised document will be submitted to APC for approval in December 2012.
- **SCTP Process Mapping:** Enrolment Services, which is responsible for monitoring and processing course proposals and minor/moderate program revisions that have been approved by the faculties, conducted a process mapping to review the steps involved. No revisions to the existing procedures or processes of how reports are submitted to SCTP by faculties or to the processes of how SCTP reports to APC/CGPS/faculties were deemed necessary.

### **APC Subcommittee on Research Policy (SRP) / Research Advisory Council (RAC)**

In 2011-2012 the RAC considered the following items of relevance to APC:

- Revisions to the McGill Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects;
- Review of proposals for the creation of three research centres, two of which were recommended to APC for approval;
- Review of proposals to revise the by-laws of two research centres;
- Review of a proposal to change the name of a research centre.

### **Council of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)**

The Council of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) reported on the following 2011-2012 activities:

- Introduce Program Milestones to replace Current Student Tracking;
- Ongoing Graduate Admissions Project (GAP) to replace current admission structure;
- Programs to use an "early admit" structure to recruit and ease transition for undergraduate students;
- Graduate Enrolment Management Initiatives for 2011-12;
- Review of regulations and procedures.

## ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE (APC)

### Terms of Reference

Academic Policy Committee  
Terms of Reference (approved by Senate 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009)

The Academic Policy Committee (“the Committee”) is a Standing Committee of Senate charged with making recommendations to Senate on all matters regarding academic policy. In particular, it shall, for the University and in consultation with faculties, develop proposals for the establishment and continuous review of academic programs, policies and structures, and proposals relating to teaching, learning, and research. The Committee may create subcommittees or working groups to deal with issues as appropriate.

The Committee shall review academic course and program proposals in order to determine whether they meet academic standards and are aligned with the academic mission and priorities of the University, whether they are based on an adequate body of knowledge, whether proposed teaching or learning methods and methods of evaluation of student performance are satisfactory, and whether the necessary human and material resources are in place.

#### SPECIFIC AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

1. The Committee or its subcommittees shall review:
  - a. existing programs and proposals for new or revised courses and academic programs, considering, as appropriate, the resources needed to offer these in line with the University’s academic standards;
  - b. proposals for the creation, assessment, renewal, restructuring, dissolution and non-honorific name changes of academic entities;
  - c. issues and proposals relating to international education;
  - d. proposals for teaching and learning policies for the University and for initiatives that enhance the quality of teaching and learning;
  - e. ongoing continuing education activities throughout the University and proposals for broad policies regarding continuing education;
  - f. the role of information systems and technology in the provision, management, and support of academic programs.
  
2. The Committee shall advise Senate and the appropriate officers of the University on developments that have implications for the long-term academic planning of the University, on the probable consequences of such developments, and on appropriate responses to them. In order to carry out these functions, the Committee shall keep informed of matters that have implications for academic planning, including developments in the field of higher education and in the public and private sectors.
  
3. The Committee shall report regularly to Senate on the following matters approved in the name of Senate:
  - a. creation, revisions and deletions of courses that are approved by the unit proposing them and by the faculty or faculties in which they are taught;
  - b. revisions and deletions of academic programs that are approved by the unit proposing them and by the faculty or faculties in which they are taught;
  - c. initiatives for enhancing teaching and learning for the University that are approved by the unit proposing them and by the relevant faculty or faculties;
  - d. new student exchange agreements that are proposed by the Office of the Provost.
  
4. The Committee shall report to Senate on all academic matters relating to teaching, learning, and research, with recommendations on the following:
  - a. creation, restructuring, dissolution, and non-honorific name changes of academic entities that have been approved by the faculty or faculties proposing them, and by the Research Policy Subcommittee in the case of new research units;



- b. creation of academic programs that have been approved by the unit, faculty, and, where appropriate, the Council of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and that, in the Committee's opinion, have met established criteria for the University;
  - c. changes in degree designations;
  - d. adoption and amendment of policies and regulations relating to teaching, learning, and research that have been approved by the University committees proposing them;
  - e. adoption and amendment of policies relating to research matters that have been approved by the Research Policy Subcommittee;
  - f. adoption and amendment of policies relating to other academic matters under the purview of the Committee.
5. The Committee shall report at least annually to Senate on matters dealing with teaching and learning and other academic matters, and on its activities, concerns and plans for the academic year.
6. The Committee shall meet at least three times per semester during the academic year and may meet during the summer months.

### **COMPOSITION:**

Provost (Chair)  
 Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) – Vice Chair  
 Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations) or delegate  
 Director of Libraries or delegate  
 Associate Provost (Graduate Education)  
 Dean of Continuing Studies or delegate  
 Board of Governors representative  
 Chairs of APC Subcommittees  
 Director, Teaching and Learning Services  
 One member from each of the faculties (named by Senate Nominating Committee).  
 Student members:  
 Three undergraduate students  
 One graduate student  
 One student representative of Macdonald campus  
 One Continuing Studies student  
 Committee Secretary

Source: Senate Minute 98, May 13, 1981

Amendments:

Senate Minute 8, September 22, 1993  
 Senate Minute 49, December 7, 1994  
 Senate Minute 120, May 15, 1996  
 Senate Minute 10, November 5, 1997  
 Senate Minute 7, January 31, 2001  
 Senate Minute 7, May 14, 2003  
 Senate Minute 11, October 6, 2004  
 Senate Minute 6, September 28, 2005  
 Senate Minute 12, October 31, 2005  
 Senate Minute 7, March 8, 2006  
 Senate Minute 8, May 23, 2007  
 Senate Minute .., October 15, 2008  
 Senate Minute IIB4.2, May 20, 2009

**Academic Policy Committee of Senate  
2012-2013**

**Membership**

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Anthony C. Masi                 | Provost, Chair of the Committee  |
| Morton J. Mendelson             | Deputy-Provost (Student Life and Learning), Vice Chair<br>Chair of the Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP)<br>Chair of the Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning (SCTL) |
| Martin Kreiswirth               | Associate Provost (Graduate Education) & Dean of Graduate and<br>Postdoctoral Studies, Chair of the Council of Graduate and<br>Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)                               |
| Sarah Stroud                    | Associate Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations)  |
| Judith Potter                   | Dean of Continuing Studies   |
| C. Colleen Cook/Carole Urbain   | Dean of Libraries or delegate  |
| Cynthia Weston                  | Director, Teaching and Learning Services   |
| Sally McDougall (2010)          | Board of Governors   |
| William Hendershot (2014)       | Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences   |
| John Galbraith (2015)           | School of Social Work, Faculty of Arts   |
| Laura Stone (2014)              | Faculty of Dentistry   |
| Kimiz Dalkir (2014)             | School of Information Studies, Faculty of Education  |
| Arun Misra (2014)               | Faculty of Engineering   |
| Wendy Adams (2014)              | Faculty of Law   |
| Paola Perez-Aleman (2013)       | Desautels Faculty of Management  |
| Craig Mandato (2014)            | Faculty of Medicine  |
| Marcelo Wanderley (2013)        | Department of Music Research, Schulich School of Music   |
| Ian Henderson (2013)            | Faculty of Religious Studies   |
| Laurie Hendren (2014)           | Faculty of Science   |
| Haley Hatch-Dinel               | Vice-President (University Affairs), SSMU  |
| Edward Chiang (to 11-2012)      |  |
| Nikhil Srinidhi (fr 14-11-2012) | Undergraduate student  |
| Max Zidel                       | Undergraduate student  |
| Avik (Jim) Ghoshdastidar        | Graduate student   |
| Peter Tikasz                    | Student, Macdonald Campus  |
| Eric Laverdiere                 | Continuing Studies Student   |
| Helen M.C. Richard              | Academic Planning Officer (Secretary to the Committee)   |

**Meeting dates**

**Thursdays**, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. unless otherwise announced.

Meeting place: Room 302, James Administration Building, unless otherwise indicated.

September: 13 (*cancelled*)  
 October: 4 and 25  
 November: 8 and 22  
 December: 13 (*Arts 160*)  
 January: 17 and 31  
 February: 14

March: 7 and 21 (*James 301*)  
 April: 11 (*Ferrier 456*)  
 May: 2 and 23 (*Arts 160*)