

MINUTES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, March 4, 2003

Members Present:

C. Lajeunesse
K. Alnwick
E. Aspevig
M. Dewson
T. Knowlton
C. Matthews
S. Williams
B. Jackson
A. Cross
D. Snyder
J. Cook
M. Mazerolle
A. Pevec
A. Lohi
K. Raahemifar
G. Turcotte
M. Koc
G. Roberts-Fiati
M. Verticchio

S. Boctor
M. Booth
C. Cassidy
L. Grayson
I. Levine
J. Sandys
M. Yeates
M. Barber
A. Furman
K. Marciniac
M. Dowler
G. Meti
D. Smith
J. Welsh
R. Ravindran
J. Dianda
D. Martin
P. George
B. Yoon

C. Desouza
R. Kup
S. Marshall
R. Dutt
T. Nguyen
L. Merali
A. Tam
R. Rodrigues
V. Berkeley
S. Sutherland
E. Trott
J. Monro
L. Lum
D. Heyd
K. Tucker Scott
D. Elder
S. Kumar
F. Salustri
M. Creery

Regrets:

G. Inwood
D. Elder

Members Absent:

M. Potter
R. Walshaw
D. McKessock
S. Cody
M. McCrae

1. President's Report:

1.1 Achievement Report: The President congratulated Ken Marciniec on his election as President of RyeSAC.

The President reported on highlights of the Federal Budget which support Initiatives to Strengthen Research and Innovation. The MARs Project, which is focused on commercializable research in health and related areas, has received \$20M. There will be a presentation on the project on March 13. Ryerson is exploring ways to be an active participant in the initiative.

Peter Hiscock is being recognized for his efforts in the recruitment of women in engineering.

1.2 Academic Planning Update: Errol Aspevig reported that he has had six productive consultations with the community, has met with the PPAC and the Academic Planning group, and has received a paper from the RFA concerning the Draft Academic Plan. The thinking that has gone into the original draft plan has evolved as a result of these consultations. A supplement to the plan is being developed which will provide more concrete details. There will be consultation on that supplement. The final report will come to the May meeting of Academic Council.

1.3 Enrolment Update: Gene Logel, Paul Stenton and Keith Alnwick reported. Planning for the double cohort has been ongoing since 1999. The original MTCU projections were based on demographics with the assumption that there would be increased participation, and that the double cohort would occur over 3 years. The projections were updated in early 2002 because applications were more than double what was expected, but these projections continued to assume that the double cohort would be spread over 3 years. Last summer and fall enrolment targets were negotiated. Full funding for undergraduate students (101s) was guaranteed. There was a penalty clause for non-achievement of the target and there was a cap on funding.

The negotiated levels are short of what is needed to accommodate the actual intakes and the targets have been revised again. There is a renegotiation of the intake numbers with MTCU and there is no longer a penalty clause. Ryerson plans to increase by 700-750 students for next year, with increases in all Faculties. Plans are contingent upon SuperBuild funding for the Business building.

Students are making many more application choices than they have in the past. Ryerson has seen a 50% growth as a first choice. The average for the system is 47%. Admissions have been a team effort within the University. There will be a challenge to deal with the increase in both new and upper year students, as well as the increase in CE students. There is already high utilization of large rooms. There are a variety of strategies for meeting the space challenge. Current space utilization will be studied. Large room usage at night will be investigated and the Carleton Cinemas will be used as large space classrooms. There will be a contingency plan for unforeseen enrolment circumstances.

1.4 COU Colleague Report - Don Snyder reported that the double cohort has been the primary item of discussion at the COU Colleague meetings. The committee has met three times this year and presentations have dealt with the digital library, public awareness of quality issues in higher education and graduate programs. The COU disseminates a great deal of information on the Ontario system. The following reports will be available from the Secretary of Academic Council: Briefing Notes of COU (September 2002); COU Resource Document (Sept 2002); the Report of the Auditors on Undergraduate Program Reviews; University Applicant Survey; Inventory of Physical Facilities of Ontario Universities (2001-2002); Double Cohort Countdown: A Progress Report from Ontario Universities.

The Colleagues' focus has been on what constitutes a good university education and related issues. There has been a lot of information on the double cohort, Ontarians with Disability act, and the younger students. There has been discussion on the relationship between research and teaching and the development of a creative strategy to bring research and teaching into harmony.

2. Report of the Secretary of Academic Council – Diane Schulman reported on the policies eliminated as the result of the approval of the Admissions Policy at the February meeting, and made a clerical correction to that policy as noted in her report.

3. Good of the University – K. Marciniac distributed a letter on the change to the GO Transit student discount. There is a student campaign to stop this change and letters to the GO Transit Board would be appreciated. He also made a brief statement on the Federal budget, and reported that there would be Student Day of Strike and Action against the War in Iraq on March 5 at 4:00 p.m.

E. Trott commended members of the student union for their conduct at a meeting she had attended.

4. Minutes of the February 4, 2003 Meeting.

Motion to approve: S. Williams, seconded by C. Matthews.
Minutes approved.

5. Business Arising out of the Minutes

The Secretary of Academic Council reported on the reasons for the revision of the Appeals Policy and the consultation process. The need for change to the policy was based on basic principles, and was not driven by the number of appeals.

- Appeals take too long. Students are sometimes having final appeals well into the end of the following semester.
- Having three levels of appeal is unusual. The policy requires that a student tell the same story three times to three different people/groups.
- Chairs are put in the position of being problem solvers and then making a judgment on a student's formal appeal. This is unfair to both the Chair and the student.

- Instructors are not required to formally address student's concerns. The Chairs are required to speak for instructors.
- The policy is sometimes difficult to interpret and there is a need for clarification
- Both policies are applied inconsistently. Some departments and Faculties have hearings and committees, some do not.
- Decision makers are not trained in the process.
- The process for Continuing Education students was not spelled out in the policy.

Consultation process:

- There has been ongoing consultation as the document is revised. There have been many responses to the various iterations, and all respondents have been contacted and their concerns discussed and often incorporated. It made no difference which iteration they responded to, as each was simply a fine tuning of the last.
- There were consultations with Deans, Chairs, Departments, students.

Motion: That Academic Council approve the *Policy on Academic Consideration and Appeals*. E. Aspevig moved and J. Monro seconded.

Discussion:

- A student from the Theatre School stated that there is concern about the de-formalization of the Chairs role in appeals. The current policy works well.
- The Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science stated that while the policy is 10 years old and needs adjustment, it works in FEAS where most of the appeals are from. There are no hearings, but faculty members and the chairs are available. About 10-30% of appeals are granted at first level. About half of the students whose appeals are denied appeal to second level. There are 150 first level (40 granted) and 60 second level (90% standing appeals.- suspended and withdrawn). It took five weeks to respond to the second level appeals. Six were granted and 54 denied. There are now 14 at third level. He believes the proposed policy will increase appeals, confuse the role of the Chair, and increase the workload. It will be too difficult to get all parties together at a hearing.
- A faculty member in the Faculty of Community Services said that she spoke for her colleagues in support of the change. It is an important cultural shift that links the two policies. It is agreed that there are many more cases of appeals in FEAS and they should work to prevent appeals. She believes the Chair is not disempowered and needs to take on the role of problem solver. If one or more Faculties are disadvantaged they need to be given the resources to deal with the need. The role of the facilitator is important.
- The Dean of Communication & Design endorsed the concerns of the Dean of FEAS. The notion of improving appeals is worthy, but he believes the proposed policy will result in the proliferation of appeals. The mechanism will be detached from academic units. There is no way that the process will be timelier in FC&D. There are 40-50 first level appeals in late May or early June, 2-5 to second level appeals, and rarely any third level appeals. Faculty will not volunteer their time in June to sit on

committees and instructors and part-timers will not be found. He believes the process will be extended, and will be no fairer. Chairs are most able to deal with issues on appeal. There will need to be more administrative support and teaching release time. Resources would be better spent on other things. There are good things in the policy which can be preserved, but the policy should not change what is done currently.

- One member was concerned that the biggest user of the policy is urging against its use and that some students have expressed concern. She questioned if there is data on the number of appeals.
- A member stated that in the proposed policy Chairs will still be able to deal with the issues as they arise and there will be no need to go to the Dean. A formal piece of paper will not be necessary. Not every student who loses at the first level will go to the Dean and there will be no more appeals than there are now. The number may go down.
- The Dean of Community Services stated that there are many things in the proposed policy that strengthen the appeals process. The linking of the Code of Conduct and the Appeals Policy is good, and the policy is clear on the responsibilities of students and Chairs. The issue is dealing with students fairly. There is no difference in how Chairs deal with a student, the policy simply clarifies their role more articulately. Students are thoughtful enough to support the policy.
- A member of the policy committee state that in the School of Business Management there were about 50 standing appeals. It is hoped that the number of appeals to Academic Council will decrease because students will be dealt with at the front end. The Appeals committee cannot deal with the fact that many appeals are filed out of desperation, but the departments must. Most schools do not formally talk to students. The third level appeal is often the first time students have a chance to talk to anyone about their concerns. If there is nothing new to be presented it is unfair to keep the process going on and on, with students giving the same story and hoping for a miracle. There must be more help for students up front. The appointment of Hearing Officers was included to address the volume issues. There is a conflict when the Chair has to make a decision.
- There is a process for how items such as this policy are brought to Academic Council and there needs to be consideration given when issues are addressed, and the work that has been done. There is speculation on how people will react to the policy. After all of the work meeting the fundamental objectives, the policy should be endorsed and reviewed in a year or two to see how it is working.
- There is concern about over-regulation. The policy should be simplified
- J. Cook, while supporting the policy, was concerned about the considerable degree of opposition and believed that there needs to be a review.

MOTION: That Academic Council recommit the *Policy on Academic Consideration and Appeals*. Moved by J. Cook, seconded by K. Raahemifar.

Motion approved.

MOTION: That Academic Council approve the Student Code of Academic Conduct.
Moved by E. Aspevig, seconded by S. Williams

MOTION: That Academic Council recommit the *Student Code of Academic Conduct*.
Moved by K. Marciniac. Not seconded.

MOTION: That wording be added to section A1.a regarding the paying of someone to edit and/or proofreading work. Moved by M. Dowler, seconded by E. Trott.

Discussion:

- Allowing for professional editing encourages sloppy writing. An argument can be made that the ideas are not those of the students. Revision is as much a creative activity as is the writing. Students must learn how to express their own ideas.
- Putting a price tag on the process leaves a gaping hole in the issue. Perhaps this could be under the heading of misrepresentation of performance. Students might believe that taking something to the Writing Centre is considered plagiarism. In the Writing Centre students are told to read what they have written.

Amendment defeated.

MOTION: That Section B1.b be changed to include a penalty of a partial or total loss of marks on an assignment. Moved by S. Marshall, seconded, J. Welsh.

Discussion:

- A student member stated that if a student cheats or plagiarizes they deserve to fail the assignment. There needs to be a clear message that cheating is not acceptable.
- A faculty member stated that often plagiarism is more subtle, and the amendment is supported.
- A member of the work group stated that the group had discussed this issue. If an instructor really felt that a student didn't understand what he or she had done, the instructor would craft their own solution. But the policy was meant to send a clear message.

Amendment defeated.

The Motion to approve the Student Code of Academic Conduct was passed.

7. Reports of Actions and Recommendations of Departmental and Divisional Councils – The Vice President, Academic presented the report as outlined in the agenda.

M. Booth, Dean of Continuing Education, reported that CJRT has been working with the Faculty of Arts to review the history courses offered through open college. These will now be offered through distance education.

Report from the School of Graduate Studies: Maurice Yeates reported.

MOTION: That Academic Council approve the submission of the proposal for a *Master of Arts in Immigration and Settlement Studies* to the Ontario Council for Graduate Studies for standard approval. Moved by M. Yeates, seconded by A. Cross

M. Yeates outlined the process by which the program had been extensively reviewed at several levels prior to seeking Academic Council approval for external review. There will be two external reviewers who will visit campus. Myer Siemiatycki and Michael Doucet were introduced to speak for the need for the program and the faculty strength in the area and support for the program.

Motion approved.

MOTION: To approve following changes to the School of Graduate Studies Policy – Policy 142.

M. Yeates moved, J. Monro seconded.

The report was presented as outlined in the agenda.

Discussion:

- It was suggested that the Chair of a Master's examining committee should be selected from outside the program. When the Chair is from inside the program, s/he cannot be selected as an examiner. M. Yeates replied that the proposal was to deal with committees in an efficient way at a time when there are many committees working. If a supervisor wishes to have someone else Chair, that can be done.

Motion approved.

There is a further report to academic council from SGS for Academic Council information.

8. Reports of Committees – There were no reports.

9. New Business

MOTION to establish an *ad hoc* committee to review the feasibility of a Fall semester study period: Whereas Ryerson's curriculum has become primarily a semesterized one, and whereas the duration of the Fall and Winter semesters is unfairly unbalanced at present, and in light of the desirability of offering students and faculty an increased opportunity for critical reflection and study, a committee of interested parties be convened to explore the feasibility of introducing a week-long study period into the Fall semester. The committee is charged with reviewing the length of both the Fall and Winter semesters in light of pedagogical needs and the requirements for examination periods, promotion meetings, and grade processing by the Registrar. The committee will be chaired by the Registrar and be made up of two members of faculty, two students, two Chairs, and an ex-officio member of the Registrar's office. The committee will report back to Academic Council at its October 2003 meeting with final decision by Council to be made at the November 20 meeting.

Moved by J. Cook, seconded K.Marcienic.

Discussion:

- There should be an exploration of a reading week in the Fall semester. Students need reflection time and reading beyond the course.
- There is unfairness in the system as work in the Fall semester is done in 13 weeks, in the Winter there are 14 weeks, with a week in the middle.
- There are possible implications for the length of the semester.
- The timing of the final report to Academic Council should be reviewed as it seems to fast.
- Friendly amendment of add “a *maximum* of a week-long study period” .
- In Engineering Faculties, midterm weeks are used for testing. The length of the semester is an important issue. The Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science spoke against the motion.
- Friendly amendment to include one member from each Faculty, including at least 2 Chairs, and no less than 4 student representatives.
- Friendly amendment to include a member of the School of Graduate Studies.
- Friendly amendment to remove the final decision date of November 2003.

Final Motion:

Whereas Ryerson's curriculum has become primarily a semesterized one, and whereas the duration of the Fall and Winter semesters is unfairly unbalanced at present, and in light of the desirability of offering students and faculty an increased opportunity for critical reflection and study, a committee of interested parties be convened to explore the feasibility of introducing a maximum of a week-long study period into the Fall semester. The committee is charged with reviewing the length of both the Fall and Winter semesters in light of pedagogical needs and the requirements for examination periods, promotion meetings, and grade processing by the Registrar. The committee will be chaired by the Registrar and be made up of: one faculty member from each Faculty, including two Chairs; a representative of the School of Graduate Studies; a minimum of four students representing the student body, both full and part-time; and an *ex officio* member of the Registrar's office. The committee will report back to Academic Council at its October 2003 meeting.

Motion passed.

10. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane R. Schulman, PhD
Secretary of Academic Council