

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE  
Meeting of Faculty  
Tuesday, May 22, 2007  
Trottier Building, Room 0100**

**ATTENDANCE:** As recorded in the Faculty Appendix Book.

**DOCUMENTS:** S-06-36 to S-06-44

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

**(1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Prof. Zuroff **moved**, seconded by Prof. Whitesides, that the Agenda be adopted.

**The motion carried.**

**(2) REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**a) Faculty of Science Excellence Award Committee**

**902.1** Prof. R. Roy, Chair of the Faculty of Science Excellence Award Committee, said that the purpose of the Faculty of Science Excellence Award was to acknowledge outstanding performance and contributions by members of the administrative and support staff.

**902.2** The Committee members were:

Prof. Richard Roy (Chair), Department of Biology  
Mr. Normand Trempe, Department of Chemistry (M)  
Mr. Michel Beauchamp, Department of Physics (T)  
Ms. Chantale Bousquet, Department of Psychology (C)

**902.3** Prof. Roy said that there were seven nominations. They were:

- Mona Bissada, Department of Biology (T)
- Raffaella Bruno, Department of Mathematics & Statistics (M)
- Liette Chin, School of Computer Science (C)
- Louise Decelles, Department of Physics (C)
- Mary Gauthier, Department of Psychology (C)
- Anne Kosowski, Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences (M)
- Marie LaRicca, Redpath Museum (M)

**902.4** Prof. Roy said that a major problem for the Committee was comparing the work and contributions of people in different categories. In addition, all the nominees were excellent. After considerable deliberation, the Committee had recommended **Raffaella Bruno, Administrative Officer, Department of Mathematics & Statistics**, for the award.

**902.5** Prof. Roy added that as a result of the difficulty in comparing different work categories, the Committee had recommended that in future two prizes be awarded.

**902.6**

was much more profound and infinitely more valuable...it was an affirmation of what this educational sanctuary should be."

"Paul Wiseman is a teacher-scholar of the very highest calibre and a most worthy recipient of the Leo Yaffe Award."

**902.12** On behalf of the Faculty of Science, Dean Grant congratulated Prof. Wiseman, and thanked Prof. Verstraete and the Committee for their hard work.

**(3) CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES**

**a) Bachelor of Arts and Science S-06-37**

Associate Dean Leighton **moved**, seconded by Prof. Hurtubise, that the above degree list be recommended to the Senate Steering Committee for the Bachelor of Arts and Science degree.

**The motion carried.**

**b) Bachelor of Science S-06-38**

"It is with regret that I inform you of the death of Professor Robert V.V. Nicholls who passed away on March 9, 2007 at the age of 94. He was born in Montreal and grew up in Halifax where his father was a professor in the Faculty of Medicine. He entered McGill at the age of 16, earned his B.Sc. in 1933 and his Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry in 1936. Upon graduation he was immediately offered a teaching position in the Chemistry Department. During World War II, he was part of an international research project on explosives. He was a Director of the first Board of the Chemical Institute of Canada in 1945 in the position of Director of Scientific Affairs. In the Department of Chemistry he was active in teaching and research and wrote several textbooks. He was the first President of the James McGill Society, set up in affiliation with the History of McGill Project. He retired from McGill in 1971.

"In his private life, he was instrumental in setting up the Canadian Railway Historical Association, eventually becoming its president. When the Association decided to develop a Museum, Professor Nicholls was the driving force to obtain both the land (outside of Montreal) and the first collections from Canadian National and Canadian Pacific. For this work he was awarded the Order of Canada. Retiring to Merrickville, Ontario in 1981, he took a very active interest in the village and regional heritage. He always maintained his love of history and an interest in the advances of science. He received two awards from the Government of Canada for his work for community and historical preservation. A scholarship was set up in his name at McGill in the Faculty of Science.

"He was devoted to his family, his wife of 61 years (Nora) two daughters, Sarah and Eleanor, two granddaughters, and four great-grandchildren. He was committed deeply to his family, his community, his friends and colleagues and to his faith.

"The Faculty of Science extends its condolences to Professor Nicholls's wife, Nora, daughters, Sarah and Eleanor, and grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

**The Resolution was adopted unanimously.**

(5) **MINUTES OF APRIL 10, 2007** **S-06-36**

Prof. Wiseman **moved**, seconded by Prof. Moore, that the Minutes be approved.

**The motion carried.**

(6) **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

(7) **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

c) **Scholarships Committee** **S-06-41**

**907.1** Associate Dean Leighton, Chair, Faculty of Science Scholarships Committee, said that two Governor-General's Silver Medals were awarded annually across all of McGill's undergraduate faculties. He said he was pleased to announce that one of the current year's winners was **Kevin Shopsowitz, First Class Honours in Biochemistry**.

**907.2** Associate Dean Leighton presented the Sc

**907.3** Regarding the Dean's Honour List (the top 10% of students), the number of students and the CGPA cutoff points were as follows:

**B.A. & Sc.:** 4, 3.81  
**B.Sc.:** 77, 3.88

**907.4** Associate Dean Leighton noted that over the past six years, the CGPA cutoff fo6.15952 629.09702



**907.10** That the Faculty of Science deplores the use of material incentives to encourage students to complete course evaluations.

**907.11** Associate Dean Hendren said that the Academic Committee had passed the above motion in response to learning that material incentives were being used to encourage students to fill out course evaluations.

After a short discussion, Associate Dean Hendren **moved**

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Levine, that Document AC-06-125 be adopted as the official Report of the Faculty of Science Academic Program Review.

**The motion carried.**

**SECTION H: OTHER (For Information Only)**

**(1) Biology B.A. Program Changes:**

- Minor Concentration in Science for Arts Students; Organismal Stream
- Minor Concentration in Science for Arts Students; Cell & Molecular Stream

**(2) Geography:**

**New B.A. Program:**

- Honours in Urban Systems

**(3) Computer Science:**

**New B.A. Program:**

- Minor Concentration in Advanced Computer Science (Combinable)
- Major Concentration in Computer Science

**B.A. Program Changes:**

- Minor Concentration in Computer Science

**B.A. Program Retirements:**

- Minor Concentration in Computer Systems (Combinable)
- Minor Concentration in Foundations of Computing
- Major Concentration in Foundations of Computing

**(8) DEAN'S BUSINESS**

**a) Recognition of Technology Transfer and Commercialization Activity**

**908.1** Dean Grant said that the Faculty of Science wished to recognize commercialization of research, and so, starting in the current year, plaques would be presented to Faculty of Science principal inventors for:

- (a) The first filing of a patent application further to the submission of a report of invention.
- (b) The signature of a license agreement for a technology.

**908.2** The plaques being presented would cover the period from June 1, 2006 to April 2007. Dean Grant said that he would like to ask Associate Dean (Research & Graduate Education) Burns and the Research & Innovation Officer, Dr. Erica Besso, to consider organizing another event to recognize earlier Science investigators whose research had been led to licensed technologies.

**908.3** Plaques were presented for

The first filing of a patent application further to the submission of a report of invention

to:

Prof. Scott Bohle  
 Prof. David Burns  
 Prof. Masad Damha (twice)  
 Prof. Chao-Jun Li

and for:

The signature of a license agreement for a technology

to:  
Prof. Nicolas Moitessier  
Prof. Masad Damha  
Prof. David Burns

**908.4** Dean Grant thanked Associate Dean Burns and Dr. Erica Besso for their efforts in regard to these awards.

**b) Support Staff and the Academic Mission**

**908.5** The meeting moved into the Committee of the Whole, chaired by Associate Dean Burns.

**908.6** Associate Dean Burns said that obviously support staff are invaluable to the workings of the Faculty of Science, and that the question is often raised as to how support staff could be more involved in the Faculty's academic mission. He asked for ideas on how to better integrate the Faculty's support staff into the academic mission.

**908.7** Among the ideas proposed were:

- Providing support staff with opportunities to attend lectures
- It was mentioned that the Department of Physics already offers once a month presentations by its academic staff on their research to support staff. These are well attended, even sometimes by outsiders.
- That researchers needed assistance with management of accounts, due to the complexity of Banner.
- That in many cases, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows were assisting researchers in such tasks as information technology support, account management and research laboratory administration, that could be more appropriately performed by support staff.
- Hiring more support staff would enable greater assistance to be provided to academic staff. Over the years, the num17755rt,

community in a manner that interferes with the personal privacy and freedom of individuals.

She announced the appointment of Drew Love as Director of Athletics.

#### **Task Force on Non-Tenure Track Academic Staff**

Provost Masi announced the creation of a Task Force on Non-Tenure Track Academic Staff, to establish procedures and guidelines, as well as to analyse related statistics, to ensure equitable practices across campus.

#### **Report of the APPC (APC)**

During the 389th report of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee, Senate approved programs including these for Science:

The graduate "Environment Option" for  
the M.A. in Geography,  
the M.Sc. in Geography,  
the Ph.D. in Geography,  
the M.Sc. in A&O,  
the M.Sc. in Biology,  
the Ph.D. in Biology, and  
the M.Sc. in Earth and Planetary Science.

Also, Senate approved the "Development Studies Option" for the M.A. in Geography.

#### **University Budget for 2007-08 (with look ahead)**

With Dean Todd as Chair, Senate discussed the University Budget for 2007-08, following a presentation by Provost Masi.

#### **Some highlights:**

- a 2007-08 deficit of less than \$15 million, with a goal of balancing the budget in 4 years;

#### **- Revenue assumptions included:**

an increase in tuition of \$100/year/FTE;  
an 8% increase in tuition for international students of which 4% would go to McGill;  
a modest FTE growth over 5 years, mostly at the graduate level;  
an increase in targeted funding donations; and  
decreasing optimism about future revenue growth;

#### **- Forecasting of expenses for 2008-09 and beyond included:**

competitive salary increases;  
no net change in the number of academics for 2010 and beyond, with a steady state of 1579 tenure-track professors (the same as at present, to be increased by new arrivals and decreased by estimated departures);  
priority spending to be justified by "the white paper", the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning, the Campus Master Plan, and the Capital Campaign;

- Disciplinary benchmarking on academic productivity was noted under the title of "performance evaluation";

#### **- The "priority envelope" included:**

support and recognition for end-career academic staff;  
wise use of carry-forward balances;  
generation of more indirect cost recoveries and overheads.

Responding to a question from Prof. Glenn about encouragement of interdisciplinary teaching and research, Provost Masi remarked that new positions must now be justified in terms of their contributions to the university's objectives in those regards, and that through incentives, Deans would be encouraged to work together to find joint or interdisciplinary hires.

#### **Sabbatic Leave Report**

Provost Masi reported that all \*eligible\* sabbatic applications were approved this year. (Eligibility involves several technical points.)

#### **Harrasment Assessor Appointment**

Senate approved the appointment of Prof. Prakash Panangaden of Science as an alternate assessor under the Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited by Law, for a two-year term to end beginning June 1, 2008.

#### **Athletics Fee Increase**

The Athletics Fee for 2007-08 has increased, by recommendation of the Finance Committee of the Athletics Board, which is constituted roughly half by students.

### **Senate Meeting of May 9, 2007 - Prof. D. Ryan:**

#### **Principal's remarks**

As a result of some file migration activities, a number of student records were accessible to external search engines for about one day. Only twelve access events were logged and the affected people have been notified. A review of migration routes is underway so that there are no repeats.

The extreme cost over-run on the UQAM building projects was discussed. The Principal was careful to distinguish the current under-funding of Quebec universities, which leads to us all running deficits that are responsibly managed, from the severe mis-management that appears to have led to the problems at UQAM. There is a danger that such incidents might be used as an excuse to impose more oversight or intrude on the autonomy of the Universities.

There is a big G13 meeting in Ottawa that is being hosted by our Principal and will aim to foster links with governments.

#### **Questions**

There was a question regarding the participation rate in course evaluations now that the entire process has gone online.

The numbers given as evidence that there is no real decline, showed a steady downward trend (54%, 51%, 49% for the past three semesters) and it was stated that the more extensive comments now being provided by the students were more helpful to the instructors.

There were repeated claims that there was no bias introduced by the reduced sampling rates, although since the reference points are the modest return rates on the paper-based system, it might be more correct to argue that there was no evidence of *additional* bias.

Strategies for improving participation were mentioned. We have an iPod draw, and various "reminders" every time students access the online systems. Allowing access to their grades in a course only after the student has provided an evaluation was discounted for the moment.

A reason given by students for not completing the evaluations was that they did not know *why* the evaluations were being done, what use was made of the numbers, and could not access the results. The extra effort required to generate the comments that are being held up as more useful, is also leading fewer students to embark on the evaluation process.

A processing problem was provided as the source of the publication delays. There was some discussion about making more of the evaluations accessible to students and it was suggested that rather than allowing instructors to make their evaluations public, we should consider making the default state publication and permit instructors to opt-out. This was identified as likely illegal as silence can not be construed as assent.

The low response rates are a bigger problem for faculty seeking to use the results for tenure or promotion, as poor statistics might be seen as reducing the significance of the numbers. However while defending the procedure against this criticism, the statement was made that the evaluation procedure was "robust" against both the response rate and the time of evaluation. It was clear from the further comments that this was intended to mean that the evaluations obtained were not affected by variations in student participation rates or the stage in the class (at the end, after the mid-term, during the first few weeks of term) when the evaluation was run. If it is indeed true that the results are *independent* of both the response rate and the timing, what exactly is being evaluated?

#### **Confidential report of the Honorary degrees and Convocations Committee**

It is possible that various people may have been nominated and approved, but no records were kept and this part of the tape is mysteriously blank.

#### **390<sup>th</sup> report of the academic...**

Wild flapping of voting arms as pages of course revisions were rubber-stamped.

#### **Report of the Senate Nominating Committee**

More rubber-stamping, however the back of the report was blank, providing a convenient

