



MINUTES OF MEETING #4 (2006-07)

SENATE TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2007, 3:00 PM

BOARD ROOM, 13TH FLOOR, SCHMON TOWER

PRESENT: Professor Anna Lathrop (Chair), Professor Michael Carter (Vice-Chair), Dr. Terry Boak, Ms. Karen Bordonaro, Professor Don Brown, Dean John Corlett, Professor Maureen Connolly, Professor Patricia Debly, Ms. Michelle Green, Ms. Margaret Grove, Professor Julian Kitchen, Professor Pierre Lizée, Dean Marilyn Rose, Professor Paul Zelisko

Mr. Patrick Beard, Ms. Margaret Thompson (Recorder)

REGRETS: Mr. Ron Dubien

Professor Lathrop welcomed members and called the meeting to order.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[Minutes of Meeting #3 held on November 22, 2006 had been distributed with the meeting materials.]

MOVED (Zelisko/Bordonaro)

THAT the minutes of Meeting #3 held on November 22, 2006 be approved.

CARRIED

2. REPORT OF THE CHAIR - None

3. TASK FORCE UPDATES

3.1 Core & Context

Professor Carter provided an oral update on the activities of the Core and Context Task Force which included the following:

- Barb Davis is still receiving information from other universities regarding their practices of core and context offerings; preliminary findings appear to mirror Brock's offerings.

- The potential to develop a context credit website to provide incoming students with detailed information regarding Brock's requirements is under discussion;
- The process/policy for the development and approval of new context courses is being investigated.

During discussion, it was suggested that the Task Force consider a change in terminology to "context courses" rather than "core and context courses" to more accurately reflect breadth requirements.

In response to a question, Professor Carter indicated that it was his understanding that the intention of the Task Force was to further examine the potential to expand the breadth of the context courses and to examine the policy/procedures required to develop new courses as opposed to changing the current model. He indicated that Senate had passed motions last year confirming the importance of the University's current core and context requirements and suggested that Deans examine the potential to offer more courses in the evening and spring and that the potential to offer ½ credit courses be explored. The exact recommendations approved by Senate would be confirmed following today's meeting.

3.2 Standardized Course Evaluations

Professor Connolly noted that data from the survey distributed to all faculty members and instructors were currently being analyzed. She was pleased to note that there had been a 92% response rate. A written report would be provided at the next meeting.

4. POTENTIAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT RE: INTERRUPTION OF ACADEMIC OPERATIONS

Chair Lathrop pointed out that at its meeting on November 15, 2006, Senate had tabled a motion that the Senate Teaching and Learning Policy Committee take up as its mandate the development of a policy regarding the interruption of academic operations due to pending negotiations. Should the motion be removed from the table, the Chair asked if it was the will of the Committee to take on this initiative or if it might be better to recommend that a task force, inclusive of many sectors of the University, formulate such a policy. Following a brief discussion, the Committee concurred that the development of such a policy should be deferred until the Pandemic Plan, which will be an annex to the University's Emergency Management Plan, is completed as much of the information in the Plan could be utilized. As well, information from the Science Safety Committee and the Interruption of Normal Operations Policy should be taken into consideration.

5. START DATE OF FALL TERM

Professor Lathrop noted following Senate's approval of a 12-week term (November 16, 2005), there remained concerns regarding the implications for the Faculty of Mathematics and Science, specifically with the scheduling of labs when the term commenced late in the week. To address the matter for the 2007-08 academic term, Senate (May 31, 2006), approved that, when necessary, science labs continue until the Saturday after the end of fall term. She noted that Professor Brown had questioned if it might be beneficial for the Committee to examine a more long term solution to the challenge.

An extensive discussion ensued during which members discussed potential solutions, limitations and challenges. The Committee agreed that there were pedagogical benefits of commencing the 12-week term on a Monday.

Following discussion, the Committee concurred that the Chair would further investigate the extent of the problem with those specific departments whose courses are affected by a late weekday start of term. Professor Lathrop would bring back her findings to the Committee and it would then be determined if there was a pedagogical scheduling solution for those affected courses or if other options would need to be pursued.

6. WEBSITE POSTING OF COURSE EVALUATIONS

The feasibility to post undergraduate course evaluations on departmental websites to raise students' awareness of the process/methods which will be utilized prior to completing the evaluation, had been raised at the previous meeting of the Committee. A recommendation to Senate proposing this initiative had been presented at Senate 518 (June 8, 2004) from the Instructional Development Committee and was referred to the Senate Teaching and Research Policy Committee for further consideration. *SECRETARY'S NOTE: Please refer to attached portion of the minutes of Senate 518 (Appendix 1).*

Following discussion, it was agreed that once the results from the standardized course evaluation survey were analyzed and presented to the Committee, the proposal to post course evaluations would be incorporated into a "best practices" document and forwarded to Senate for potential implementation in fall 2007.

7. ROOM UTILIZATION – EXAMS AND TEACHING

Professor Lathrop noted that at the previous meeting of the Committee, much information had been distributed by Barb Davis and Pat Cane with respect to room utilization. Several issues had been identified that the Committee might further examine such as mandatory exams for first year students and the need for three-hour exams.

Ms. Cane had indicated to Dr. Boak that a far better timetable could be developed and classroom space/technology could be much better utilized if the 3 hour large lectures scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. could be minimized, split into two 1.5 hour lectures, or shifted into the evening. While the Collective Agreement allows for faculty to request a 3 hour time slot, it may not be in the best interest of the University, in future, to accommodate such requests if it produces disadvantages for other members.

The Committee agreed that faculty members ought to be encouraged to think about alternatives to scheduling a 3 hour block for their large lectures and for exams due to the critical space shortage in the spirit of cooperation. It was further pointed out that faculty should not be scheduling 3 hour lectures classes for the purpose of convenience.

In response to a question, Dr. Boak indicated that decisions on whether to build teaching space and/or research space are determined based on information and input obtained from numerous sectors of the University and that the Teaching and Learning Policy Committee could also be of assistance.

8. OTHER BUSINESS - None

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday, February 7, 2007, 3:00 PM, Board Room

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

