



ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE (APC) Minutes of Meeting

Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020
Time: 9:00am-10:40am
Location: Virtual Meeting

Present: Fazle Baki, Jeff Berryman, Judy Bornais, Maria Cioppa, Maria Cioppa, Emily Fraser, Erika Kustra, Scott Martyn, Janice McAdam, Aman Patel, Wansoo Park, Rashid Rashidzadeh, Antonio Rossini (chair), Anneke Smit, Jill Urbanic.

Absent: Mohammed Abdulaziz (regrets), Scott Cowan (regrets), Amana Patel (regrets), Anneke Smit (regrets).

In Attendance: Renée Wintermute (University Secretary), Alison Zilli (University Secretariat); Jennnifer Soutter, Dennis Jackson, Patti Weir.

1 Approval of Agenda

MOTION: That the agenda be approved.

F. Baki/J.Urbanic
CARRIED

2 Approval of Minutes

MOTION: That the minutes of the meeting of May 7, 2020 be approved.

S. Martyn/E. Kustra
CARRIED

3 Business arising from the minutes

Nothing to report.

4 Outstanding business

Nothing to report.

Items for Approval

5 Reports/New Business

5.1 Academic Policy Committee Mandate and Meeting Schedule

(See document APC2009150.5.1 for more details.)

NOTED:

- Academic Policy Committee (APC) is charged with receiving and reviewing annual status reports from a number of academic areas and academic service areas on campus, and reviewing and recommending policy changes, as appropriate.

5.2 Establishing Lead Readers for Annual Reports

(See document APC2009150.5.2 for more details.)

NOTED:

- Each year, one Committee member is identified as the lead reader for each of the annual reports that are presented to APC.
The lead reader will review the report thoroughly in advance of the APC meeting in order to (1) either

determine that the report is complete or identify the required additional material, (2) ensure that the report addresses the University's strategic plan priorities, and (3) ensure that the report is in the required format.

- Lead readers were identified for the various annual reports for 2020-2021.

### **Items for Approval**

#### **5.3 Policy on Undergraduate Admission Requirements – Business Revisions for International Applicants** (See document APC2009150.5.3 for more details.)

**MOTION: That the proposed revision to the admission requirements for international applicants to the Bachelor of Commerce be approved.**

W. Park/J. Bornais

NOTED:

- In some foreign countries such as India, high school students in the commerce stream do not take a Math course in Grade 12. As a result, these students cannot be recruited to Odette's Bachelor of Commerce program. This proposal addresses this issue.
- In response to a question raised, it was noted that admission officers have reported that this affects about 20% of applicants.
- Overall, math proficiency in many international high schools is taught at a very high level, so this is a sensible revision to the admission policy.

**CARRIED**

#### **5.4 Policy on Repetition of Courses – Revision for Graduate Courses** (See document APC2009150.5.4 for more details.)

**MOTION: That the proposed revisions to the Policy on Repetition of Courses (graduate) be approved and be effective as of the Fall 2020 semester.**

J. Urbanic/W. Park

NOTED:

- Currently, at the graduate level, all grades are used to calculate the cumulative average.
- If a student does not meet the minimum grade requirement, the failing grade and the new grade when the course is retaken are both incorporated into the cumulative average.
- This often presents a challenge for students to overcome a single poor grade which is often due to extenuating circumstances.
- The proposed policy will support academic progression by allowing the repeated grade to be recorded as a pass (P) on the academic transcript and neither the original grade nor the pass will be used towards the semester of cumulative average.<sup>1</sup>
- In response to a question raised about the frequency of this situation, it was noted that there are between 50-100 per given semester which are addressed at the academic standing committee level.

**CARRIED**

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<sup>1</sup> After the meeting, proposed wording was provided to clarify that students who do not pass the repeated course will receive an NP for the attempt and the grade of the original course attempt will stand in the calculation of average. As the proposed revision does not alter the intent of the proposal, members approved the following additional wording by general consent via email (sent October 1, 2020): "[...]When a course is repeated, the passing grade will be recorded as a pass (P) on the academic record. Neither the original grade nor the P will be used in calculating the semester or cumulative average. ***If a passing grade is not obtained, an NP will be recorded and the original grade will stand in the calculation of academic average.***"[...]

## 5.5 Proposal for Deletion of Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) Policy

(See document APC2009150.5.5 for more details.)

**MOTION: That the Policy on Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) and Mandatory Administration of SET be deleted.**

J. Urbanic/M. Coppia

### NOTED:

- The request to delete the SET policy arose out of concerns that SET feedback is subjective and biased, particularly towards members of equity-seeking groups.
- If departments fall back on SET scores as the only indicator of effective teaching this could have a negative impact on the hiring sessional instructors.
- Members were informed that there is a body of research indicating that SET scores are an ineffective method for measuring the effectiveness of teaching.
- Evidence gathered by word-of-mouth at the University of Windsor has indicated that the scores are also often biased based on an instructor's overall appearance.
- Although one of the original goals of the SET scores was to provide feedback to instructors, potentially identifying areas for improvement, there is concern that too much emphasis is still being placed on the results for career progression.
- In response to concern raised regarding data being collected where there are a small number of students in a course, it was noted that there are specific guidelines in place to safeguard collecting and reporting data in small classrooms. (i.e., if fewer than 6 students complete the SET, no breakdown should be reported by student characteristic at all; and no SETs should be administered in courses with 1-2 students, etc.)
- SET results should be viewed as one of a number of pieces of information which informs the promotion and tenure process as it relates to teaching effectiveness.
- If instructors feel that they are at a disadvantage, then this can and should be documented and contextualized in their teaching dossiers.
- Student questionnaires form an important part of evaluating teaching effectiveness or a course's value, but cannot be taken alone as a complete assessment of an instructor or course.
- *See also discussion under 5.5.1.*

### AGREED:

- Given that there is still an active SET Task Force working on this project, the overall consensus was that the deletion of the SET policy is premature.

**DEFEATED**

### 5.5.1 SET Task Force – Progress Report

(See document APC2009150.5.5.1 for more details.)

#### NOTED:

- Members were reminded that the Provost established a SET Task Force in 2019 to address the following issues:
  - Review the existing Student Evaluation of Teaching questionnaire and its implementation with a goal of identifying areas for improvement based on research into best practices;
  - Propose changes to practice and policy to enhance the quality, usability and impact of data collection;
  - Provide advisory support for a well-documented and systematically evaluated pilot project; and
  - Recommend how an online SET system would be best implemented, based on practices most likely to foster high student participation rates.
- A comprehensive overview was provided on the SET Task Force progress report. A discussion ensued.
- The Task Force did consider whether the use of student evaluations of teaching should be discontinued and determined against it.

- Members were informed that the goal is to establish a student feedback mechanism that is supported extensively by well designed and implemented research that will contribute to program and instructional improvement; student course choice; and a robust, fair, and reliable model for teaching evaluation.

AGREED:

- Student feedback on teaching is valuable and that students' voices should not be curtailed. By discontinuing the SET policy at this time, there would be no mandate for instructors to obtain feedback from students.
- The Task Force should be given the opportunity to complete its work (estimated reporting date of Fall 2021).
- A sessional instructor will be invited to serve on the Task Force given the particular concern raised about the impact of the SETs on sessional instructors.
- The current instrument is flawed and that the following issues need to be addressed: 1) validity and bias issues need to be addressed; 2) there needs to be a better way to parse and evaluate the data; 3) SETs are only one source of feedback on teaching effectiveness and should be viewed as "perceptions of teaching", not "evaluations of teaching"; and, 4) that student feedback should focus on topics where students are best able to provide valid input.

**5.6 APC Subcommittee – Timing Guidelines for Online Exams**

*(See document APC2009150.5.6 for more details.)*

**MOTION: That an APC Subcommittee be established, with the composition as outlined below, to consider the question of timing guidelines for online exams.**

Antonio Rossini (Chair)

Erika Kustra, APC Member

Emily Fraser, APC Member (Student Representative)

Rashid Rashidzadeh, APC Member

Nick Baker, Director of Open Learning

S. Marty/J. Urbanic  
**CARRIED**

**Additional Business**

**6 Question Period/Other Business/Open Discussion**

Nothing to report.

**7 Adjournment**

**MOTION: That the meeting be adjourned.**

S. Martyn/J. Urbanic  
**CARRIED**