



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

General Faculties Council  
**ACADEMIC PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE**  
Approved Minutes

Meeting #137  
June 21, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

By Zoom platform

***Voting Members***

Teri Balsler, Co-Chair  
Tara Beattie, Academic Co-Chair – arrived during Item 2  
Elena Braverman  
Nicole Culos-Reed – left during Item 8, before Item 7  
Andy Knight  
Nicole Schmidt  
Tanille Shandro  
Amy Warren  
Penny Werthner – left during Item 13  
Barry Wylant

***Non-Voting Members***

Violet Baron  
David Stewart  
Melanie Zimmer

***Secretary & Scribe***

Cherie Tutt

***Staff***

Elizabeth Sjogren

***Guests***

Jalel Azaiez, designate of the Co-Chair of the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee – present for Item 4  
Susan Barker, Co-Chair of the Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee – present for Items 5 – 8  
Janice Braun, Director of the Master of Biomedical Technology Program – present for Item 4  
Cindy Graham, Vice Dean, Faculty of Science – present for Item 9  
Bernhard Mayer, Interim Dean, Faculty of Science – present for Item 9  
Leslie Reid, Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning – present for Items 7 & 8

***Observers***

Sara Fedoruk, Analyst, Planning & Reviews, Office of the Provost – present for Items 4 & 9  
Christine Johns, Senior Director (Academic & International Strategies)  
Kelly Kay Spurlock, incoming Analyst, Planning & Reviews, Office of the Provost – present for Items 4 & 9  
Elizabeth Pando, Program Proposal Specialist, Office of the Provost – present for Item 4  
Jessica Revington, Program Proposal Specialist, Office of the Provost – present for Item 4

The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Agenda for the June 21, 2021 Academic Planning and Priorities Committee meeting be approved.

**Carried**

## **2. Remarks of the Co-Chair and Academic Co-Chair**

The Co-Chair and Academic Co-Chair acknowledged National Indigenous Peoples Day and recognized the Committee for their efforts over the past year and encouraged members, where possible, to take a break over the summer to recharge.

Andy Knight was thanked for his service on this occasion of his last Committee meeting and Melanie Zimmer was congratulated on her re-election to the Committee for another two-year term.

## **3. Approval of the June 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda.

### **Moved/Seconded**

That the Minutes of the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee meeting held on June 7, 2021 be approved.

**Carried**

## **4. Approval of a Load Change for the Master of Biomedical Technology**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Janice Braun and Jalel Azaiez presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponents provided an overview of the two load changes being proposed, which will result in a total load for the Master of Biology Technology (MBT) program changing from 33 units to 37 units:
  1. The MDSC 678 course, which runs over two terms, will change to MDSC 688 and the number of units for the course will increase from three (3) to six (6) units to better reflect the course workload, and
  2. A Science and Communication workshop that has been piloted for the past three years will be formalized into MDGE 615, a new one-unit, 12 hour-course
- In response to questions, the proponents:
  - Provided an overview of the course learning outcomes for the MDSC 678 course, explaining that this course includes a lab component and gives the students practical hands-on learning experience, as well as incorporates business components such as professional legal writing
  - Explained that, based on a recommendation from MBT alumni, the program will be introducing an international student scholarship in the future, and noted that it is not anticipated that the incoming cohort will have any international students and so this should not be an issue for this year
- The Committee discussed the change to MDSC 678 and noted the importance of ensuring students receive proper credit for the amount of work they are undertaking, the implementation timeline and the communication plan for informing the new cohort of students of the changes, in particular how these changes impact tuition
- The Committee suggested that the credential in the proposal for the one-unit MDGE course be changed from a Master of Science to the MBT

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the load changes for the Master of Biomedical Technology Program, Cumming School of Medicine, as set out in the proposals provided to the Committee and as recommended by the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee.

**Carried**

**5. Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee Report for the June 9, 2021 Meeting**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Susan Barker presented this item.

There were no questions.

**6. Approval of Changes to Work-Integrated Learning Section 3.4 Withdrawal Policies in the University Calendar**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Susan Barker presented this item.

Highlights:

- The proponent provided an overview of the proposed changes to the Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Withdrawal Policies, highlighting that, to address concerns raised by the Committee at its March 15, 2021 meeting, which the last set of revisions to this section were approved, an overall safety statement and information on what a student should do if they find themselves in an unsafe environment has been incorporated into the regulations
- In response to questions, the proponent reported that:
  - To date, consideration has not been given to adding a section to the regulations regarding a withdrawal process for reasons relating to financial hardship, but that funds have been invested into bursaries associated with WIL and this is an important issue to ensure that financial hardship is not interfering with students abilities to participate in WIL experiences
  - The proponent explained the principles for revising the Calendar following its official release in March of each year and agreed that due to the nature of this change this could be an exception and be immediately implemented
  - An FAQ section which includes examples of unsafe environments could be incorporated into the Co-op and Internships Office's Student Handbook, and the proponent agreed to follow up with the Office on this point
- The Committee discussed the rationale for the choice of the word "may" in "These factors may be taken into account in the withdrawal processes above" and how this language could discourage a student from reporting or seeking a withdrawal, and suggested that "may" be changed to "will"
- The Committee confirmed the request that the change to the regulations be implemented immediately and be included in the 2021-22 Calendar

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the changes to the Work-Integrated Learning section 3.4 *Withdrawal Policies* in the University Calendar, as set out in the document provided to the Committee and as recommended by the Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee, with the requested amendments.

**Carried**

*Secretary's Note: Items 7 & 8 were addressed in reverse order.*

**7. Approval of Changes to the Academic Standing Academic Regulations Section F.1 Grading System and Transcripts**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Susan Barker and Leslie Reid presented this item.

**Highlights:**

- The proponents provided an overview of the proposed changes, which include the permanent addition of a flexible grade option for students, Credit Granted (CG) in the Grading System and Transcripts Academic Regulations, reviewed the extensive consultation for this proposal and reported that it is being proposed that the CG grade come into effect for use in the 2021 Fall Term
- In response to questions, the proponents explained that:
  - The Registrar's Office will work with the Faculties to establish any Faculty level regulations for the CG grade and these will then need to be submitted to the Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee (CCS) for approval before the end of the Fall term
  - A Faculty/Program has the flexibility to opt-out of using the CG grade, and one reason this may occur relates to accreditation requirements, however, the CCS will be responsible for reviewing and approving any exceptions and will be closely looking at the rationale for exclusion of the CG grade
  - For the Fall term, it may be challenging to indicate the courses which will allow the CG grade, but it is hoped that in the future this will be clearly articulated online and in the course outline
  - The CG grade is an option for Block Week Courses
  - The 9-unit maximum applies to both four-year and two-year after degrees
  - Students who have been completing their studies during the pandemic and who were permitted CR grades during the past year will also be eligible for the CG grade
  - The CG grade is not an option for Spring/Summer 2021
- The Committee expressed its support for this addition and noted that it is a progressive option for students
- The Committee then discussed the proposed effective date and whether it provides enough time for the Faculties to put their regulations around the use of the CG grade in place, how the CG grade will be viewed for admission to graduate school and other potential unknown impacts, the use of flexible grading options across the U15, accessibility concerns, and how students will know in what courses a CG may be an option

- The Committee suggested that a FAQ for students and Faculties be created to address the many nuances associated with the CG grade option, for example how this could impact program transfers and how a CG grade will impact the academic review process
- The Committee requested that a “Potential Impacts” header be included in the Calendar entry to draw students’ attention to this information

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the changes to the *Academic Standing Academic Regulations Section F.1 Grading System and Transcripts* to include the *Flexible Grade Option (CG Grade)* in the University Calendar, as set out in the document provided to the Committee and as recommended by the Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee, with the requested amendment.

**Carried****8. Approval of Changes of Changes to the Examinations and Test Academic Regulations Section G.1 Scheduling of Tests and In-Class Assessment**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Susan Barker and Leslie Reid presented this item.

**Highlights:**

- The proponents provided an overview of the changes, highlighting that, in response to feedback from academic staff and students, additional flexibility is being added to allow Deans to approve a different assessment modality from the course component modality for in-term tests and in-class assessments
- In response to questions, it was explained that:
  - “prior approval” means before the course is approved, so that the modality of the assessment can be included in the course outline
  - When shifting the assessment modality, the assessment practice should be similar, should not disadvantage students and should be incorporated only if it is an advantage for the whole course cohort
  - The intent behind these changes is not to allow for online or blended courses to offer in-person tests and assessments and it was noted that there are often fees associated with students using exam centres, which require separate approval
  - The changes are not currently being proposed for final examinations and assessments and this will be further explored in the future
- The Committee commented on the need for more robust guidelines for online assessment, and the proponents noted that this along with guidelines around online learning, in general, will be considered over the next year
- The Committee discussed the intent behind the statement “Approved shifts in assessment modality from the course modality should not disadvantage students in the course” and suggested that, to lessen the ambiguity, the statement should read “It is intended that approved shifts in assessment modality will not disadvantage students in the course”
- The Committee suggested a minor edit to the wording of the Regulation

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the changes to the *Examination and Tests* Academic Regulations Section G.1 *Scheduling of Tests and In-Class Assessment* in the University Calendar, as presented to the Committee and as recommended by the Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee, with the requested amendments.

**Carried****9. Quality Assurance Unit Review Report: Faculty of Science**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Teri Balsler, Bernhard Mayer, and Cindy Graham presented this item.

**Highlights:**

- The presenters provided an overview of the Faculty of Science Unit Review, noting that the review team was very experienced, the site visit was done in February over Zoom with high participation, and the report included constructive recommendations, many of which had already been identified by the Faculty, but eight, which were unexpected or caused concern for the Faculty
- The presenters then reported on their responses to and progress on the recommendations
- In response to questions, it was explained that:
  - The Dean's Circle is an industry advisory group and is made up of members external to the University
  - The Faculty was puzzled over the findings mentioned in recommendations 21 and 22 around graduate student completion rates and is digging deeper into the data to better understand and address this
  - The response to Covid-19 communications was drafted before the announcement regarding the return to campus for Fall Term and the Faculty is working with HR and University Communications on detailed messaging for the Faculty
- The Committee discussed:
  - Recommendation 17 and how realistic it is during the current funding climate for faculty to increase the number of students they support beyond 2-3. The presenters explained the ways they hope to achieve this, including increased administrative support, but emphasized that high-quality laboratory space is also needed to make this achievable.
  - The space issues on campus and how this is tied to expanding the graduate student population
  - A concern that increasing the number of students a faculty member supports may compromise the student/supervisor relationship, and how important it is to maintain this relationship
  - Recommendations 6 – 8 and being mindful of workload and communications and other lessons learned resulting from staff and budget cuts

**10. Annual Committee Performance Review and Review of the APPC Terms of Reference**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda. Teri Balsler and Tara Beattie presented this item.

**Highlights:**

- The Academic Co-Chair reiterated her thanks to the Committee members for their engagement and their participation over the past year and reported that the Committee had over 30 hours of meetings, reviewed roughly 1500 pages of preparatory committee material, including Quality Assurance Unit Review and Mid-Term Reports, academic programming proposals, Academic Regulations, and priority initiatives and policies
- The Academic Co-Chair highlighted the feedback from the Committee's mid-year survey, noting that the results were mostly positive, and reported that further efforts have been made to communicate with new Committee members. Members were encouraged to reach out to the Co-Chairs with any feedback or send it anonymously via the Secretariat.
- The Committee discussed possible changes for the Fall, including the potential for a hybrid model of in-person and virtual participation in future meetings
- The Committee suggested the following changes to the Committee Terms of Reference:
  1. That the Committee membership should be expanded to include an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion representative, and
  2. That the reference to the Comprehensive Institutional Plan be removed.

The Secretariat reported that a full review of the General Faculties Council Standing Committee Terms of Reference will be done in the summer.

**11. Future Outlook**

Teri Balsler presented this item. The Co-Chair explained that this proposed regular item is intended to allow for preliminary discussion of matters by the Committee and invited members to suggest topics to be considered.

**Ideas included:**

- Expansion of online programming, including programs aimed at improving access
- How to offer quality online teaching and learning
- Decision-making and processes around program termination
- Staffing models for new credentials
- Micro-credentials, including stackable certificates
- Lessons learned from the pandemic
- Integration of EDI principles into curriculum and programs
- Professional Development and how to better utilize the non-credit/Continuing Education sphere
- Information about future performance-based funding metrics and other Ministry of Advanced Education priorities, to ensure proposals are consistently aligning with these
- Recognizing barriers for Faculties to work together and practical processes for removing these and creating incentives for transdisciplinary study/proposals

**12. Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee Report for the May 26, 2021 Meeting**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda for information only.

**13. Other Business**

The Committee discussed the morale of the University community and the importance of clear communications and guidelines around the return to in-person learning/business.

**14. Adjournment**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee adjourn the June 21, 2021 meeting.

**Carried**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

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Cherie Tutt  
Meeting Secretary