SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY PRIORITIES  
Wednesday, November 6, 2019  
2:00 – 3:00 PM  
AQ 6106


Absent: J. Derksen, R. Dunsford, Z. Naqvi, C. Shaw

1. Approval of the Agenda
   • Approved as submitted.

2. Approval of the Minutes of October 23, 2019
   • Approved with minor edits.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes of October 23, 2019
   Items forwarded to Senate (December 2, 2019):
   • External Review of the Department of English
   • External Review of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology
   • External Review of the School for the Contemporary Arts
   • External Review of the School of Communication

Open Session

4. Faculty of Science: External Review of the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry
   Guests: N. Hawkins and P. Kench

The Department is reviewing its biochemistry courses to ensure there is sufficient Enzymology content as this subject area overlaps in many fields of study in MBB. The courses will be surveyed and an action plan will be developed. There have been electrical issues with temperature control in the environmental rooms that have caused loss of ongoing experiments and delays in research productivity. A committee member asked whether the delay in research productivity had any impact on faculty career trajectory. The Department Chair noted no known impact. A committee member commented that perhaps a course release could be provided to faculty members who are impacted by lost research due to facilities issues. The Department is working with Facilities who has hired a consultant to assist with temperature control issues. It was noted in the external review that Department should provide cross-training for staff, however the Department Action Plan indicated they would update the “how to manual”. A committee member suggested that in addition to updating the “how to manual” for administration positions, staff should also be cross-trained and provided an opportunity for job shadowing to cover essential tasks during absences. The Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences noted that potential collaboration between the FHS and MBB was not included in the external review report nor in the action plan. The FHS Dean expressed interest in having a mechanism in place to collaborate with MBB to address cross Faculty initiatives, share financial burden, and address space issues. The collaboration between the two units will maximize resources for the students. Although it is not
specifically identified in the Dean’s comment section of the action plan, the Faculty of Science Dean’s office is working with MBB to ensure appropriate resources are in place to accomplish the majority of the planned actions. There are structural problems related to the current MSc and the Department is making changes such as developing a 2 Unit Seminar course, reducing course load requirements, and enhancing student attendance at seminars by attracting robust speakers. MBB will explore the development of an accelerated MSc program. A committee member commented that the accelerated master’s is an admissions process and not a program. Students who have successfully completed at least 90 units of undergraduate course work with a minimum CGPA of 3.67, can submit a request to the undergraduate and graduate program to be considered for an accelerated master’s. A committee member commented that it was good to see that the issue of reduced research funding was included in the external review report and this needs to be discussed at the Associate Deans, Research, table. It was noted that there is an EDI concern regarding recruitment of graduate students. The MBB Chair commented that the department will discuss this initiative with the Dean of Graduate Studies Office. A committee member raised issue of the Life Sciences building and whether there were plans to complete it. The Department Chair noted the building was not discussed in the action plan as faculty members and departments need to come together to discuss curricula that will best benefit the students.

Motion:

“That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the Action Plan for the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry that resulted from its external review, subject to including the collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences."

Moved: C. Walsby
Seconded: A. Parmar

The question was called and the motion: Carried

N. Hawkins and P. Kench left the meeting.

5. Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Full Program Proposal for a Master of Arts in Terrorism, Risk, and Security Studies
   Guests: S. Hart and S. Zwagerman

The projected enrolment for this program is approximately 25 students per year. A committee member asked if the name of the proposal may have negative connotation as other institutions offering related programs include “Disaster” or “Emergency” management in the name. S. Hart commented that the program addresses terrorism by teaching skills on how to identify, analyze, and respond to threats to national security and public safety. This program is about prevention, identification, and mitigation of risk assessment. A committee member asked if the intent of the program will be understood outside of the classroom. There is a very specific audience for this program as it is targeted at national security or public safety professionals working within government agencies. Domestic and international applicants for this program must be eligible to obtain security clearance in Canada at the Reliability Status level or greater as sensitive information may be discussed during lectures. In order to have the appropriate level of participation for on-line courses, cohort numbers will not exceed 30 students but in-person enrolments can be higher. There is a lot of student interest in this program but currently enrolments are capped due to the requirements of the Cohort Special Arrangement Program. A committee member commented that the tuition may be too low as the embedded cost of courses is often higher than anticipated. It was noted that this is a premium fee program. The committee expressed concern about the budget and the statement
about government grants. It was recommended that the proponents meet with the offices of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the VPA, and the Faculty Dean to clarify the language around budgets. As some of the letters of support contained personal information, it was recommended to redact the information prior to submission to Senate.

Motion:

“That SCUP approve and recommend to the full program proposal for the Master of Arts in Terrorism, Risk, and Security Studies in the Department of Psychology within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, effective Spring 2021, subject to clarification of the budget and redaction of the personal information.”

Moved: T. Leacock
Seconded: P. Tingling

The question was called and the motion: Carried

S. Hart and S. Zwagerman left the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.