



OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

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**ATTENTION** Senate **DATE** June 16, 2015  
**FROM** Gord Myers, Chair, Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies **PAGES** 2  
**RE:** Revising degree requirements for Honours Programs

In January 2014 SCUS recommended to Senate that the university-level degree requirements for an honours degree be revised from requiring 132 units (credit hours) to requiring at least 120 units (see S14-16). After a good vigorous debate at Senate this change was approved.

At the May 2015 Senate meeting, a Senator raised an objection to a change in units required for a particular honours program. Based on the Terms of reference for SCUS (see below), he argued that requiring less than 132 for a particular honours degree was not a minor change and therefore was not an appropriate change for SCUS to approve under delegated authority.

The Chair of Senate decided that this issue should be referred back to SCUS and then brought back to Senate. At the June 4 meeting of SCUS, I asked for an opinion as to whether the approval process for revisions to unit requirements for a particular honours program should be viewed as a minor change or as a major change.

The question asked was; should a revision to an individual honours program which changes the unit requirement from 132 to the 120 to 131 range, be considered a minor change or a major change? Members of SCUS were referred to the way in which the words "minor" and "major" are operationalized in terms of necessary approvals.

A minor change requires approvals by the department/school/program, the Faculty, and SCUS under delegated authority, which then goes to Senate for information. A major change requires approvals by the department/school/program, the Faculty, SCUS in recommending to Senate, and then Senate.

The opinion was unanimous that these should be viewed as minor changes. The rationale was that S14-16 explicitly changed the degree requirements to allow honours programs with at least 120 units. This was a major change. In the opinion of SCUS, subsequent changes in particular honours programs that have at least 120 units required, should be viewed as minor changes.

## **SCUS Terms of Reference**

- 1. Taking into consideration the need for coordination and development of undergraduate programs within the University, SCUS shall:**
  - a. review and make recommendations to Senate on curriculum changes of a major nature and general matters affecting the curriculum**
  - b. under delegated authority, review and approve, where appropriate, all proposed new courses, course deletions, course changes and program revisions of a minor nature. These changes shall be reported in summary form to Senate.**
  - c. review and make recommendations to SCUP regarding new programs and credentials.**
- 2. To recommend to Senate grading, examination, standing and continuance policies.**
- 3. To recommend to Senate policies on undergraduate admissions, re-admissions, and credit transfer and where necessary, to provide general direction to the Registrar's Office in the interpretation of such policies.**
- 4. To consider and decide on policy recommendations concerning undergraduate course registration and course withdrawal procedures and on the administration of undergraduate student records.**
- 5. To consider and recommend to Senate policy recommendations from the Diverse Qualifications Adjudication Committee.**
- 6. To consider and recommend to Senate policy recommendations regarding the WQB requirements.**

**Meetings convened at the call of the Chair.**