PRESENT:

Members (ex officio):  Brian Cantwell Smith

Teaching Staff:  Kelly Lyons, Cheryl Meszaros, Jens-Erik Mai, David Phillips, Siobhan Stevenson, Lynne Teather, Lynne Howarth, Stephen Hockema, Wendy Newman, Andrew Clement, Eric Yu

Professional Librarians:  Joe Cox, Marte Misiek, Edward White, Kathleen Schaeffer (for Nalini Singh)

Senior Administrative Officers:  Susan Brown, Judy Dunn, Rob Harvie

Associated Instructor or Sessional Lecturer:

Administrative Staff: Kathy Shyjak

Students:

Doctoral:

Masters:  Emily Beliveau, Jamon Camisso, Katherine Clubine, Rachel Hazlett, Willow Fuchs, Christina Hwang, Jessica Nowlan, Rebecka Sheffield, Nathaniel Stone, Vicki Whitmell

Alumni/Alumnae:  Bob Henderson

External Members:  Mary Ann Mavrinac

Assessors:  Andrew Drummond, Eva Kupidura

Recorder: Andrew Drummond
REGRETS:

The President of the University of Toronto, Chief Librarian of the University, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, Nadia Caidi, Chun Wei Choo, Barbara Craig, Juris Dilevko, Twyla Gibson, Chris Halonen, Claire Lysnes, Mike McCaffrey, Aviv Shachak, Minakshi Sharma, Nalini Singh, Jutta Treviranus, Michelle Zadak.

MINUTES

1. Call to order and acceptance of Agenda
   The meeting was called to order at 4:08 p.m., with quorum established. The Chair, Joe Cox, welcomed all present members to the fourth regular meeting of the FIS Council.

   It was moved that the Agenda be accepted. CARRIED

2. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 12, 2007
   Two minor corrections were noted: Emily Beliveau had presented the report on behalf of the Museum Studies Students, and Christina Hwang noted that the statement on page seven of the minutes should read “had canvassed” instead of “was canvassing”.

   Motion to accept minutes was made and CARRIED.

3. Business arising from minutes:
   The minutes of the February meeting included reference to what Council was approving when it approved new courses. Vice-Dean Mai summarized the history of the discussions. It was agreed that the Programs Committee should resolve the issue.

4. Dean’s report
   Prior to his report, the Dean invited all members of Faculty Council to the end-of-term Dean’s Tea on April 9 to celebrate the end of a successful academic year.

   The Dean reported that Provost Vivek Goel would be relinquishing his position at the end of June, and that significant changes were occurring in the senior administration of the University.

   He also reported that a likely resolution to difficulties with the FIS-East space was pending.
The Master of Museum Studies program had recently undergone a review by the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies, and the Master of Information Studies and PhD programs had reviews pending for the 2008-09 year.

The Dean reported that the Government of Ontario had prioritized the area of ‘digital media’ as a key strategic asset and driver of economic growth in the Greater Toronto Area. The Faculty was well positioned to be an important part of the institutional strategy of the University of Toronto, and the prioritization of ‘digital media’ was, if handled properly, likely to be of lasting benefit to the Faculty. For example, he noted, the Faculty of Information Studies and the Jackman Humanities Institute had jointly held a workshop on the digital humanities at the University, and had received encouragement from the senior administration.

The Academic Board had granted its approval in principle to a proposal to renovate the Robarts Library, but that the plans did not seem to include the development of the whole Robarts complex (in which the Bissell Building was located).

Lastly, Dean Smith reported that he was at his last regular Faculty Council meeting as Dean. He described his enormous appreciation of Council and its members, noting that the discussions at the Faculty Council were reflective of a fundamental ethical public commitment to the traditions upon which the Faculty was based.

He then introduced the main item of business for the meeting, the proposal to rename the Faculty of Information Studies as the Faculty of Information. He stated that the proposal had had a long genesis, having been discussed following the creation of the 2004 academic plan, mentioned at the three previous meetings of Faculty Council, discussed with the Provost and President of the University (each of whom were in support of the change). More recently, the proposal had been discussed at a meeting of the faculty, endorsed by the Presidents of the student associations, discussed by the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association, and debated at a well-attended ‘town hall’ meeting.

Dean Smith described four reasons for the proposal: the removal of the word ‘Studies’ marked, in his view, the removal of a type of inferiority complex for the Faculty; conceptually, intellectual ‘fields’ are named for the field of study, not the study of the field; the Faculty’s changing and expanding mandate was better reflected by the change; and lastly, the name change would allow greater understanding of the growth of Information as a formal discipline in the academy. He noted that the acronym “FIS” was frequently thought to refer to “Financial Information Systems”.

The Dean noted that he would prefer that “FI” not be the new designation, but rather, as “Information” or the “i-School”. That change would be some time in coming, but once it took hold, it would be hard to remember why the change was significant at all.
The degree name (Master of Information Studies) would not be changed by the adoption of a new Faculty name, nor would the course prefix (“FIS”) used in the program. Separate proposals would be coming forward in the 2008-09 academic year to effect those changes.

Motion to recommend to the Academic Board that the name of the Faculty of Information Studies be changed to the Faculty of Information, effective June 30, 2008 was made and CARRIED.

It was noted for the record that one member opposed the motion.

5. Council Committees’ Reports

a) Executive Committee

   No report.

b) Standing Committees of Council

   i. Admissions Committees (submitted by Judy Dunn)

      Judy Dunn reported that 127 MISt and 44 MMSt. offers had been made, as well as two unofficial offers to PhD applicants. A member asked why the number of applications was down, to which Assistant Dean Dunn responded that numbers were lower all over many disciplines and that it was a concern. Dean Smith added that the Graduate Deans of the Association of American Universities (AAU, of which the University of Toronto was a member) had met to discuss the dropping numbers of graduate applications across all disciplines, and especially in the sciences.

   ii. Awards Committee

      Judy Dunn referred members to the written report offered and her congratulations to students in FIS who had received awards.

   iii. Committee on Standing.

      No report

   iv. Information Technology Services Committee (presented by Rob Harvie)

      Rob Harvie referred members to the written report and added that he and his staff were developing some policies and guidelines on networks and planning AV equipment renewal for the Faculty. He then noted that a longer-term plan was to develop an overall roadmap for IT at the Faculty.
A member asked what plans there were for AV renewal for the summer. Mr. Harvie responded that the summer would be spent getting facilities ready and upgrading classrooms as a first priority. Dean Smith added that the roadmap was necessary to identify what resources would be needed in order to bring the Faculty up to par with other top i-Schools. A member then noted that planning for a new curriculum should be the major driver in determining needs.

v. Inforum Committee:

No report

vi. Programs Committee (submitted by Prof. Jens-Erik Mai, Chair)

Members reviewed a course proposal for JIE 1001. Vice-Dean Mai noted that the ‘JIE’ designator stood for ‘Joint Information and Engineering’, and was to be jointly offered by both Faculties. As a result, the course would require approval from the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering Council as well as that of the Faculty of Information Studies.

A member pointed out that there seemed to be significant overlap between the proposed course and FIS 2034, though it should be offered in any case. The member was concerned that FIS 2034 would require some significant change in order to attract students if the course was approved.

The Chair reminded members that the portion of the package for approval was the Course Proposal Form for the School of Graduate Studies, and that the attached syllabus was illustrative of what would be offered in the course.

Members discussed the issue of overlap with other courses. Dean Smith stated that he felt this issue should be resolved in the future. Members spoke of a feeling that it was easy to ‘start up’ a course but that there seemed to be little by way of overall planning for courses within a strong curricular framework. A member stated that it might be possible to amend the existing FIS 2304 course so that the two complemented each other better; it would also be possible to develop FIS 2304 into a more specifically oriented and less introductory course.

CARRIED

It was noted for the record that one member opposed the motion and nine members abstained.

Members then agreed that a roadmap for curriculum change should be developed and carried through in the fall of 2008.
c) Special Committees

Life & Times (submitted by Judy Dunn)

Assistant Dean Dunn reported that the job fair had been extremely successful, as had the research day. Applicants for programs had been invited to research day, and had responded with some good interest.

6. Additional Reports

a) FIS Students

i. PhD

No report from PhD students.

ii. MIS (submitted by Christina Hwang)

Ms. Hwang reported that nominations for Council were open and would be until April 4. She reiterated the excellent turnout at the job fair, and noted its value in promoting both the students and the Faculty. She summarized a series of other new events, especially a brown bag lunch series organized by Bill Mann. Lastly, the Student Council was planning an outing to a baseball game for April.

iii. MMSt. (submitted by Emily Beliveau)

Ms. Beliveau reported that nearly half of the MMSt students had recently visited Ottawa for a valuable behind-the-scenes look at the area’s museums and collections. She thanked Dean Smith and Dr. Cheryl Meszaros for their invaluable assistance with the trip.

b) Alumni

i. FIS (Presented by Bob Henderson)

Bob Henderson reported that the Association was nearly at the deadline for receiving nominations for the Alumni Jubilee Awards, and encouraged as much participation as possible. He also announced the student conference grant program, which would provide up to $500 for a student to attend a conference. Next, he announced that the Association had hired a student to put the job shadowing program online. Lastly, the Association would be sponsoring the ‘Connect at FIS’ event.
ii. MMSt

No report.

c) Adaptive Technology Resource Centre

Jutta Treviranus reported on many new projects at the ATRC, with several opportunities for both student and faculty engagement: CulturAll 2.0, with many links to museums and other cultural organizations; an open source project funded by Mozilla; an ‘Internet 2’ project in conjunction with Brown and other universities; renewed funding for the ‘Smart Campus in Your Pocket’ (SCYP) project; an open collection project sponsored by the Mellon Foundation; and several others. She noted that workshops would be held and the opportunity to meet digital curators would be forthcoming, so students interested in meeting them should contact her. Lastly, several new research proposals were being launched, most especially in the development of an exchange program in Inclusive Design in conjunction with Columbia University and the Open University.

d) Communication and Development

Kathleen O’Brien reported that the Web Advisory Group was wrapping up its final sessions, and would be reporting its findings to the Dean thereafter. She informed Council that an Alumni Portal project was underway. She had recently expanded promotion of the ‘Ask an Alum’ program, and within two weeks, double the number of individuals had participated.

A member asked if a URL had been reserved for the name change, and what plans existed to publicize it. Ms. O’Brien responded that the 80th Anniversary celebrations of the Faculty in the fall. The member then asked what the message of the change would be for the identity shift. Dean Smith noted that promotion of the change was not appropriate until it had been approved by the Governing Council’s Executive Committee, but that the i-School caucus was interested, and that there was great potential in the fact that the University of Toronto was the only member in Canada of the i-Schools group.

e) Inforum

No report.

f) Professional Learning Centre
Eva Kupidura reported that preliminary registration statistics were being compiled, but that courses were continuing all the time. PLC was moving away from short (one-day) courses and beginning to push for certificate courses. There were interesting proposals for new courses, such as one on non-profit organizations. It was promising because several health foundations were looking for researchers, but it was hard to find people trained in what such organizations needed. This course, if offered, might be available to degree students who could gain some very concrete skills.

A member asked how the statistics compared to the previous year. Ms. Kupidura responded that they were comparable, but more and more interest and enrolment was in online records management courses.

g) Academic Board

No Report.

7. Question Period: None

8. Announcements

Dean Smith congratulated Mary Anne Marvinac for the design excellence award given for the Hazel McCallion Academic Learning Centre at the University of Toronto at Mississauga.

Susan Brown reminded members that Earth Hour would be celebrated worldwide from 8:00 to 9:00 on March 29, 2008. No external common areas would go into darkness for security reasons, but she asked all members to consider how to reduce their consumption of power.

9. Other Business

Professor Chun Wei Choo noted that as a member of the search committee that proposed Brian Cantwell Smith as Dean in 2003, he was privileged to view the phenomenon of the amazing transformation that had taken place over the past five years. He MOVED, and all other members seconded a motion to express the Council’s deep appreciation for the efforts of Brian Cantwell Smith as Dean of the Faculty of Information (Studies) for the previous five years.

CARRIED

All members applauded Dean Smith.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.