FACULTY COUNCIL
Special Meeting, 2007-08 Session
Tuesday, June 17, 2008
4:07 – 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Members (ex officio): Brian Cantwell Smith, Elizabeth Cowper (for Susan Pfeiffer)


Professional Librarians: Joe Cox, Edward White, Nalini Singh

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

Associated Instructor or Sessional Lecturer: Vicki Whitmell

Administrative Staff: Kathy Shyjak

Students:

Doctoral: Rhonda McEwen

Masters: Emily Beliveau, Janene Michalak (by phone), Bill Mann, Nathaniel Stone

Alumni/Alumnae: Bob Henderson, Kimberly Silk

External Members: Mary Ann Mavrinac (by phone)

Assessors: Tasha Caswell, Andrew Drummond, Laura Jantek, Eva Kupidura, Nadia Moro, Cheryl Pasternak, Alexandra Ross, Adriana Rossini, Kathleen Scheaffer, Elisa Sze

Observers: Max Dionisio, Theresa Power

Recorder: Areti Vourinaris
REGRETS:

The President of the University of Toronto, Chief Librarian of the University, Rachel Barton, Nadia Caidi (on leave), Jamon Camisso, Chun Wei Choo, Andrew Clement (on leave), Katherine Clubine, Juris Dilevko, Wendy Duff, Willow Fuchs, Rachael Hazlett, Christine Hwang, Twyla Gibson, Claire Lysnes, Les Moor, Jessica Nowlan, Aviv Shachak, Minakshi Sharma, Rebecka Sheffield, Siobhan Stevenson, Lynne Teather, Jutta Treviranus.

MINUTES

1. Call to order and acceptance of Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m., with quorum established. Chair, Joe Cox, welcomed all present members to the special meeting of the FIS Council. The Dean also announced and congratulated Vice-Dean and Professor Jens-Erik Mai on his appointment as the new Acting Dean effective July 1, 2008 until December 31, 2008, until the installation of Dean-Elect Seamus Ross. The purpose of the meeting, called at the request of Dean Brian Cantwell Smith, is to vote on the new Master of Information curriculum framework.

The Framework was distributed as a separate document.

Because Council would only approve such a document in principle, it was necessary to change the wording of the motion as appeared on the distributed Framework document. Therefore, it was moved by Dean Brian Cantwell Smith that the wording of the motion “that the Master of Information Curriculum Framework presented in the document Master of Information – Curriculum Framework dated June 17, 2008 with the exception all footnotes be approved” be changed and accepted with the addition of the words “in principle”. Seconded.

CARRIED

It was then moved by Dean Brian Cantwell Smith “that the Master of Information Curriculum Framework presented in the document Master of Information – Curriculum Framework dated June 17, 2008, with the exception all footnotes, be approved in principle”. Seconded and opened to discussion.

2. Discussion of Framework

The Dean announced that the Faculty has had approval to change its name from the Faculty of Information Studies to the Faculty of Information, effective June 30, 2008. The informal diction around the name of the Faculty would also change in the near future.

The Dean noted that the specificities of the courses need to be hammered out with the intent to submit the whole curriculum to the American Library Association for accreditation. It is clear that students want more challenging and dense curriculum which would compact the MIS program in the first session. Also, the name change of the Faculty does not mean an automatic change in the name of the degree which would be part of the collective endeavor of the Faculty as a whole alongside the coordination of courses. For the time being,
the prefix of the courses would remain provisional. The long-range vision is to have students take courses in common across the degree programs that would build community among learners. Another challenge would be how to integrate the “paths” from within the curriculum framework and how to integrate these in terms of direction, rigor, and accreditation. The Dean said that ideally the “paths” should have some merit to them in a way to cross-breed and engender ideas to percolate. Overall, the goal would be to approve the academic “templates” of the students so that they have integrity for the approved “path” based on each student’s background.

Kimberly Silk liked the approach for a customized program, but felt that it was a complex process for student advisory services to coordinate and especially right at the beginning of students’ programs when some of them still might only have a vague idea of what they wanted to do as far as designing their academic “paths.”

The Dean explained that documents and experience would guide students through their intellectual development instead of declaring a program type. Jens-Erik Mai added that there would be exit criteria established in order to determine if the requirements had been met for the student to have completed an approved “path.”

Nathaniel Stone expressed concern for the academic and administrative logistics of students enrolled in the first session and wondered if perhaps, at the outset, each student should be paired with a faculty advisor. In addition, Mr. Stone wanted clarity on students knowing which courses would be offered and what the remedy would be if some were not committed to being offered.

The Dean proposed the idea that student work would be undertaken in small group projects to organize around issues. Ideally, the ability to change paths should be as easy as completing whatever is required before graduation. Prerequisites place demands on students and faculty and therefore those demands should be clearly articulated.

Prof. Stephen Hockema stressed that the new curriculum built community which would mean that the disciplines would not be bifurcated into separate areas and that these different points of view would build contexts and bridge issues across disciplines.

Janene Michalak, as a part-time student, raised the question of whether core courses would be offered as evening courses and whether they would be offered in every session. Also, she wondered about what provisions would be in place to ensure that part-time students would “catch” core courses within the required and established time limits for the completion of their programs.

The Dean recognized that input would be required from students about part-time course delivery and there would be a clear articulation of consistent course offerings. In the second academic session, the intent would be to offer and identify courses for part-time students in recognition of the route for part-time students that would not slow them down in their progress.

Janene Michalak brought up the issue of the faculty advisers in light of the new curriculum and asked what would be in place for the replacement of advisers in the event of any
unexpected and premature departures.

The Dean agreed that the distribution of faculty advisers to students must be addressed and that the right mechanisms should be in place to ensure that this organization occurs.

Laura Jantek suggested that the issue of the “path” should be the responsibility of the faculty adviser assigned to his/her respective student(s) to ensure that the “path” gets completed even if a student’s adviser leaves in the middle of his/her program.

The Dean agreed that there should be recognition of the fulfillment of the academic criteria for the student and if there is a need for any reconfiguration, that there would still be a commitment on both sides of the student-faculty relationship vis-à-vis the end-goal of the completion of the “paths.”

Prof. David J. Phillips suggested that the development of the templates should not be tied to the adviser only.

Prof. Wendy Duff wanted clarity on whether or not student services would be involved with the approval of the “paths” as she didn’t think that this was the case. She thought that the Programs Committee was the instrument that would approve “paths” at the Faculty.

The Dean confirmed that the Programs Committee would approve the “paths” and students would satisfy their respective templates.

Vice Dean of SGS, Elizabeth Cowper, clarified the question of the templates in light of the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies (OCGS) guidelines in that four faculty members would be in one field as templates were being built. Dr. Cowper cautioned against specific “paths” and specific courses because, as a Faculty, it would mean entering into contractual agreements and obligations that would be difficult to uphold and fulfill.

The Dean assured Dr. Cowper that even if the Faculty had already retroactively implemented the “paths,” the students would satisfy more than one requirement of the “path” structures. The Faculty would be committed to having the proper supervision in place for all “paths.”

Bill Mann congratulated the Faculty for its work on this new curriculum initiative. He recommended that there should be a supportive structure in place for the team project work as this assignment style has caused major crisis points during courses as, traditionally, there have been different responsibilities and maturity levels at play during team projects.

The Dean agreed with Bill Mann that the issue of team projects was a significant one and that guidelines should be implemented about them in a concrete way on both the part of faculty and the students.

Adriana Rossini stated that courses under the new curriculum would be offered and planned two years in advance.

Vice Dean Jens-Erik Mai clarified that the Faculty would not have fixed courses set in a regimented way as the Faculty would need some flexibility with them.
Kimberly Silk wondered whether or not the Faculty would allow adjunct instructors to fill in the curriculum gaps in light of the rapid changes in the professional workplace.

The Dean affirmed that, indeed, the adjunct instructors would be filling in the gaps in the new curriculum.

Susan Brown inquired as to whether or not the Faculty would be specifying exact courses for students and the Dean told her that we would not be engaging in this practice.

The Dean envisioned having a strong undergraduate teaching component emerge through which the students would propose courses themselves.

The motion before Council was restated for a vote: “that the Master of Information Curriculum Framework presented in the document Master of Information – Curriculum Framework dated June 17, 2008, with the exception all footnotes, be approved in principle”. CARRIED.

3. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.