PRESENT:

Members (ex officio): Seamus Ross


Professional Librarians: Tasha Caswell, Joe Cox, Kathleen Scheaffer, Nalini Singh, Elisa Sze

Senior Administrative Officers: Susan Brown, Judy Dunn

Associated Instructor or Sessional Lecturer:

Administrative Staff: Kathy Shyjak

Students:

Doctoral: Lysanne Lessard

Masters (MIST): Julia Brewster, Katherine Clubine, Jonathan Loftt, Terri Rodak, Rebecka Sheffield, Leslie Thomson

Masters (MMSt): Emily Beliveau

Alumni/Alumnae: Bob Henderson, Kelly McKinley

External Members: Mary Ann Mavrinac

Assessors: Andrew Drummond, Amy Hoffmann, Nadia Moro, Anna Oh,

Recorder: Areti Vourinaris

REGRETS:

The President of the University of Toronto, Vice-President and Provost, Chief Librarian of the University, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, Matthew Brower, Nadia Caidi, Andrew Clement, Juris Dilevko, Max Dionisio, Twyla Gibson, Caroline Higgins, Lynne Howarth, Klara Maidenberg, Rachel Isaac-Menard, Meaghan, Marte Misiek, Morgan, Brian Cantwell Smith (on leave 2008-2009), Erica Sum, Lynne Teather, Cassandra Tilson, Jutta Treviranus

MINUTES

1. Call to order and acceptance of Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 10:18 a.m., with quorum established. The Chair, Joe Cox, welcomed all present members to the second regular meeting of the Faculty of Information Council. Prof. Seamus Ross was also warmly welcomed by the Chair and introduced to his first regular meeting of Council.
It was moved that the Agenda be accepted. CARRIED.

2. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 5, 2008

There was a correction under the section heading of 5. b. i. 1. where ‘MMSt Admissions Committee’ and should read ‘MISt Admissions Committee.’

Motion to accept minutes was made and CARRIED.

3. Unfinished business from the meeting of December 5, 2008:

Chair Joe Cox reminded Council members that there was unfinished business from the last meeting, namely, the motion to approve the new core course proposals.

The motion on the floor was: To approve of the new curriculum core course proposals INF 1001, INF 1002, INF 1003, and INF 1004 as a package. Moved by Vice-Dean Jens-Erik, seconded by Prof. David Phillips.

Vice-Dean Mai said that due to the very limited time that was available at the last meeting to discuss outstanding questions about the new core courses, it was agreed by Council to postpone a vote on the new core curriculum. As a result of the brief discussion at the last Council meeting, faculty members went back and re-drafted syllabi of each of the four courses.

Vice-Dean Mai noted that there had been a few changes on the SGS forms of each of the courses such as INF1001 and INF1002 so as to have an increase in contact hours between faculty and students, from two hours to three hours per week. There was also a decrease in the contact hours per week for INF1004, from six hours to three. In INF1001, INF1002, and INF1003 there will be small class discussions to supplement the large lectures.

Vice-Dean Mai introduced the new core courses in turn, with brief introductions by faculty members.

- It was moved by Vice-Dean Mai that Council approve INF1001 – Knowledge and Information in Society, as part of the new core course curriculum. Seconded by Prof. Lynne Howarth.

  The course was introduced by Prof. Matt Ratto as being an extension of FIS 1210H – Information and its Social Contexts. It is a means to provide students with contexts for information technology and practices. It would allow students to make informed choices about these processes and technologies and to provide theoretical as well as concrete frameworks for thinking about such methods and theories. The idea behind the tutorial is to provide a concrete example and a forum for discussion around the example.

  Motion to approve INF1001 – Knowledge and Information in Society was CARRIED.

- It was moved by Vice-Dean Mai that Council approve INF1002 – Representation, Organization, Classification, and Meaning-Making, as part of the new core course curriculum. Seconded by Prof. Wendy Duff.

  The course was introduced by Prof. Heather MacNeil. She said the course was structured in a similar way to INF1001 – Knowledge and Information in Society, where during the one-hour tutorial the students would be able reflect on theoretical issues and understand notions of representation and classification in more concrete terms. The assignments, some of which will be developed within the tutorials, are intended to reflect and augment the theoretical content of the lectures. Prof. MacNeil outlined that the course would spend three weeks on representation, three weeks on organization, then there will be an exploration of the ethics of classification and representation. The following three weeks up to the end of the course would include a series of guest lecturers to bring together the concepts of the course. The idea behind the debate at the end of the course is to pull together the themes of the course.

  Motion to approve INF1002 – Representation, Organization, Classification, and Meaning-Making was CARRIED.

- It was moved by Vice-Dean Mai that Council approve INF1003 – Information Systems, Services and Design, as part of the new core course curriculum. Seconded by Prof. Eric Yu.
Prof. Stephen Hockema said that the course was designed to supplement the technical needs and requirements of the iSchool curriculum and professional skills development. The course is a combination of several courses but draws more heavily from FIS 1340H – Introduction to Information Systems. He said that there were four deliverables for the course, including a take-home midterm exam based on essay-answer questions, as well as an individual project that would be based on modelling. This would give students the skills to interpret technical specifications that they may encounter in various systems. Prof. Hockema outlined that there would also be a group project. This would involve construction of a type of technology that would get presented at the end of a festival week, with a poster presentation and/or demonstration.

Prof. Hockema said some units were based on communication and concepts such as networking and different types of protocols and issues of the formalization of communication and technology. The next few weeks were based on design for diversity which would probe how technologies are adapted and customized for different global contexts and problems. The final two weeks were designed to be a synthesis of the material as well as looking at paradigms and structures that exist today from a historical lens.

Motion to approve INF1003 – Information Systems, Services and Design was CARRIED.

- It was moved by Vice-Dean Mai that Council approve INF1004 – Information Workshop, as part of the new core course curriculum. Seconded by Prof. Siobhan Stevenson.

Prof. David Phillips outlined that the purpose of the course was to provide participatory and experiential projects while integrating the topics covered in the other three core courses. He said that the point of the workshops was to integrate all the topics and skill sets of the core courses together. Prof. Phillips outlined that there will be two workshops per term, each workshop will be six weeks long, with some team-taught and others by individual instructors. Students would be able to choose, insofar as the Faculty could logistically manage, which workshops they could sign up for so that there would be a certain specialization in the workshops.

Motion to approve INF1004 – Information Workshop was CARRIED.

Vice-Dean Jens-Erik Mai thanked Council for approving these courses.

He also indicated that the change in the requirement of having 4.0 full course equivalents as part of the Master of Information (MI) Program was approved by the Graduate Education Council (GEC) on January 20, 2009, so that the Faculty can officially begin advertising the change. Over the past few months the Faculty had been working on the requirements of each path and that by mid-February; the Faculty would be able to announce the exact composition of each of the requirements for each of the areas/paths.

Ms. Christina Kim inquired about the timetable structure of the course offerings.

Vice-Dean Mai said that INF 1001, INF 1002, and INF 1003 would be offered for the incoming, full-time students during the fall semester and that INF1004 – Information Workshop would be offered during the winter semester in order to integrate the earlier material. Structurally-speaking most students would take three of the core courses in the fall semester and one required course from their path. He also said that the Faculty was trying to set up the norms for the program requirements while being as flexible as possible, taking into consideration factors such as the start dates of collaborative programs as well as students who are on part-time schedules.

4. Other business arising from the Minutes:

There was a reference made on page 8 of the Minutes of the meeting of December 5, 2008, to the way the designation of lab courses at the graduate level appears on academic transcripts and how they are weighted on transcripts. At that meeting Chair Joe Cox had asked to receive further clarification from the Registrar at the next Council meeting on the status of a stand-alone lab course on transcripts. Ms. Judy Dunn, Assistant Dean, Academic and Program, said that she had spoken to Vice-Dean Elizabeth Cowper, Vice-Dean, Programs and Chair of the Committee on Program Matters for the School of Graduate Studies, and she said that it did not matter what the Faculty called the courses and whether they are offered as credit or non-credit.
courses. Vice-Dean Cowper did recognize, however, that in using the word ‘lab’ in the titles of graduate-level courses, there could be some difficulty in the way that these courses may be interpreted as being too practical, but it is at the Faculty’s discretion in designating ‘lab’ courses. Judy Dunn did not find any other reference in the SGS calendar of a course being called a ‘laboratory’ in the title, nor does the iSchool at Michigan.

5. **Dean’s report**

Dean Seamus Ross noted that CUPE had been poised to be in a strike position. He expressed his gratitude that, in the end, CUPE membership ratified the new contract with a 90% approval rating.

He announced the appointment of Prof. Cheryl Misak as the new Vice President and Provost of the University of Toronto and enumerated her strong leadership and decision-making skills.

Dean Seamus Ross gave an overview of the University’s financial plan for the next year and said that if the world economic crisis improves, the Faculty will be all right, but if the world markets deteriorate further, there may be difficult challenges ahead at the Faculty level. At the moment, all Faculties are allowed to run deficits, but due to the deft handling over the past few years of the finances of the Faculty of Information by the previous Dean Brian Cantwell Smith and Ms. Susan Brown, the Faculty is in a surplus position.

The Dean also reminded Council about the policies and protocols for expense reimbursement that have been recently circulated by Susan Brown. The Dean asked everyone to follow the terms and conditions for travel expenses that are justifiable and accompanied with suitable documentation during this austerity culture at the University.

Yesterday, Dean Ross attended an Academic Board meeting where there was a discussion about the new Rotman School of Management building and the decision to add an additional two stories to the top of the structure. The Dean fully endorsed the additional space at Rotman with the hope that the residents of Rotman at the Bissell building would be accommodated in this new space. He was assured that this was Rotman’s intention.

Dean Seamus Ross also expressed his appreciation to Judy Dunn for working with him on a proposal to improve the student class representatives system. In the past, the Dean said that the sole job of the class representatives had been to collect course evaluations for each course of the Faculty. However, the Faculty is moving towards giving the students a more active role in communication between the students and the faculty members. He commented that, unfortunately, not enough student evaluations are being completed for the courses. The Dean proposed the idea that students would not be able to see their marks if they did not complete the evaluations (a practice already done at the Faculty of Medicine).

In terms of doctoral advising, the Dean said that Vice-Dean Jens-Erik Mai has put forward a proposal outlining procedures along with Prof. David Philips’ recommendations for changes and improvements to the doctoral program.

Dean Ross said that the financial position of the university was so tight that he and Susan Brown and a few other colleagues were looking in detail at where the Faculty was spending its money. At the last Faculty meeting he mentioned that when young, untenured, and indeed tenured faculty and academics come forward with research projects involving overheads, this represented a positive thing in terms of research money on top of actual grant money that is used to off-set the cost of running the projects within the University. The Dean outlined that if a person brings in money to employ a staff member, that staff member ends up on the University payroll, and the Faculty gets charged for money for their use of the library, although they may never go there, for human resources costs, although none may arise, and lots of other cost ‘bins.’ The Dean said that these costs represent an overhead charge on top of the grant and if one’s project does not bring in the overhead, the Faculty must look at its budget to find the money from somewhere else. In essence, he said that the funds come from student income, the money that usually comes with student tuition, and this source can be justified by arguing that research is important to keep the academic environment alive and exciting, to keep teaching relevant to new developments, and to allow for the Faculty to experience the new discoveries that these academics make.
However, the Dean cautioned that the Faculty must contain these ways of conducting business and said that he looked at units even as exciting as the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC) and the way it is a major grant-getter for the University of Toronto in terms of $2.5 million a year. However, the Faculty has been underwriting the ATRC to the tune of $250,000 to $400,000 a year, which, for instance, represents two or three faculty lines. The Dean inquired about where the Faculty’s contribution to the work of ATRC money was coming from and would he be looking at every aspect of the Faculty from that perspective. The Dean said that he was not making these inquiries to be difficult but to ensure that there was a significant return on the investment the students were making in the Faculty by getting them access to cutting-edge research, and making sure that the Faculty was making the best use of scarce resources for the students and Faculty as a whole. He concluded by saying that grants and overheads are a major issue to be investigated and resolved.

Dean Ross expressed his appreciation to Judy Dunn, Kathleen O’Brien, and other staff and faculty members for their efforts around recruitment days that have taken place and the ones that will follow in the near future. He emphasized that if the Faculty wants to be better enabled to act, it needs to increase the number of students within the Faculty’s constraints and we need income growth to do better. As a community, the Faculty needs to work well with our current and potential students as well as future alumni with whom there is a very strong relationship. For this the reason the Dean will be visiting and engaging with alumni in the cities of Hamilton, Toronto, and Ottawa.

The Dean was very concerned and apologized to those people who were experiencing synchronization problems with the SAM (Student Admissions Management) system that takes applications submitted to the School of Graduate Studies.

Dean Ross mentioned that the Faculty was in the process of collecting the course syllabi in light of the renewal of its ALA accreditation scheduled for March 2010. He said that the ALA accreditation panel requires access to all our syllabi from the last seven years and the Information Services team will be asking for all the syllabi and encouraged everyone’s cooperation in this process as it is of great value to faculty and students.

Prof. Wendy Duff assumed that the university automatically archived all the syllabi on Sakai, Blackboard, etc., and were automatically transferred to the Inforum.

The Dean responded that not all faculty members put their syllabi on Sakai or Blackboard or are as diligent about transferring copies of them to the Inforum.

Chair Joe Cox said that the Inforum has been building a repository of syllabi and other course materials and that Ms. Tasha Caswell had sent email requests to the faculty at least four times.

Tasha Caswell noted that sending reading lists for course support to the Inforum did not equate with the official submission of syllabi.

The Dean was excited and pleased about the approval of the new core courses of the MI program and indicated that the Faculty could begin to negotiate collaborations with other programs, not necessarily within this Faculty, to create further paths of collaboration with areas such as Computer Forensics. Discussions have begun with Mr. Andrew Drummond and Prof. Gage Averill at the University of Toronto Mississauga regarding offering an undergraduate level program. While the Faculty will not get 100% of the income from funding these future students in these programs, it will meet one of the other goals of the University, namely to integrate the three campuses.

The Dean expressed his appreciation for the people who put so much effort and work into the intellectual framework of the MI program.

6. Council Committees’ Reports

a) Executive Committee – No report.

b) Standing Committees

i) Admissions (from the Registrar) – No report.
(1) MIST Admissions

Submitted and presented by Prof. Joan Cherry. She said that the Faculty had received 202 applications thus far and had five acceptances. There were also some incomplete applications with 230 admissions being the target goal. Prof. Cherry noted that the most commonly asked question was about the issue of funding and that February 13, 2009, would be the deadline for the consideration of new applicants for funding.

(2) MMSt Admissions

Presented by Prof. Jennifer Carter. She said that there had been 100 applications received which represented an overall increase of 30 as compared to last year. Prof. Carter expressed her enthusiasm at the quality of the students who had applied. Applications have now closed.

(3) Ph.D. Admissions

Submitted and presented by Prof. Wendy Duff. She reported that the Ph.D. applications were closed and that all 53 applications had been reviewed. Prof. Duff said that 12 candidates had been interviewed by the Committee and that the membership would be meeting to discuss the applicants further.

ii) Awards

Report submitted by Adriana Rossini and presented by Judy Dunn. She expressed her appreciation to Adriana Rossini for keeping the Faculty abreast of all the events and mentioned the Cressy Awards that would be presented on March 31, 2009.

iii) Committee on Standing – No report.

iv) Information Services – No report.

v) Programs – No report.

c) Special Committee

i) Life and Times

Written report submitted by Judy Dunn. She said that the Committee continued to meet on a monthly basis about the iTeas and other events.

6) Additional reports

a) iSchool Students

i) MIST – No report.

ii) MMSt – No report

iii) Ph.D. – No report.

b) Alumni

i) MIST and Ph.D.

Presented by Bob Henderson. He said that the Alumni Association would be co-hosting the iTea on February 25, 2009 with Ex-Libris on the topic of the reasons for students to join professional associations. The Association was also seeking graduates with PhDs from Archives and Information Services to serve on its Board of Directors.

ii) MMSt

Presented by Prof. Lynne Howarth. She said that the Museum Studies alumni, with the help of the Museum Studies Faculty, were trying to establish an active Museum Studies Alumni Association.
c) Adaptive Technology Resource Centre – No report.

d) Communications and Development

Written report submitted by Kathleen O’Brien and presented by Judy Dunn. Judy Dunn acknowledged Kathleen O’Brien’s tremendous efforts in her drive towards the re-branding of the Faculty as the iSchool.

In addition, Dean Ross expressed his appreciation for such an active communications team and acknowledged that the Faculty needs to be mindful and more organized about approaching Kathleen O’Brien about last-minute publicity requests. He also reminded the Faculty about the Housing Memory Conference set to take place from March 13th to March 14th as well as expressing his appreciation to Kathleen O’Brien and the students for their organization and work.

e) Information Services Unit – Written report submitted by Nalini Singh.

One correction was noted, with the addition of Mr. Nakul Hoelz as part of the Information Services staff membership.

f) Professional Learning Centre – No report.

g) Academic Board – No report.

7) Question Period – None.

8) Announcements – None.

9) Other business

Ms. Meghan Ecclestone announced the publication of the second issue of the Faculty of Information Quarterly. She said that the second issue would consist of student-contributed and practitioner-based articles. Ms. Ecclestone mentioned that her motivation in founding this publication was to encourage digital participation as a way to foster community. She also said that she was soliciting support for a faculty adviser for the journal to dedicate five to ten hours of work per issue.

Ms. Terri Rodak thanked Meghan Ecclestone for her efforts in establishing the journal.

Dean Ross mentioned that if the Faculty wanted to be considered a professional iSchool, it needed to have its own review or journal.

Meghan Ecclestone said that the publication is a communication medium for the continuity of the development of the iSchool movement as a mediating space for its emerging scholars.

Chair Joe Cox announced that the next Faculty Council meeting, originally scheduled for Friday, March 27, 2009, has been moved to Friday, March 20, 2009, from 1 to 3 p.m. He also reminded Council that there would be a demonstration of the new Faculty website immediately following the current Council meeting.

10) Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.