HUMANITIES CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES OF THE HUMANITIES CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held on Thursday, April 5, 2018 at 9:30 am in the Political Science Conference Room, Room 3130, Sidney Smith Hall

Present

Mary Pugh (Acting Vice-Dean) Jane Chew Jeremy Lopez
Thomas MacKay Linda Rui Feng Jennifer Mori
Martha Harris Geneva Ferguson Naomi Nagy
Kevin Mak Sol Goldberg Anne Urbancic
Alexander Andrée Tamara Jones Marie-Anne Visoi
Christine Babikian Rachel Kulick Carly Whitfield
Amani Bosi Moragia Terry Lago
Randy Boyagoda June Larkin

Call to Order and Acting Vice-Dean’s Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 9:39 am by the Acting Vice-Dean, Undergraduate & International, Professor Mary Pugh, who welcomed everyone.

1. Report from the Acting Vice-Dean, Undergraduate & International

Vice-Dean Pugh addressed the committee on two items.

Credit/No Credit (CR/NCR):

In response to the recent change to the Credit/No Credit policy at UTSC, which changed the deadline for choosing the CR/NCR option until the last day of classes, Vice-Dean Pugh sought opinions from the committee on the existing CR/NCR policy at the St. George campus.

When the CR/NCR option was first introduced in Arts & Science in 2008, students were allowed to opt in for up to 1.0 full course equivalent of their twenty-credit degree. Several other conditions were attached to this policy:

- the selection of this grading arrangement must be made by the last date to add courses;
- a minimum final grade of 60% would be required for the CR notation to appear on a student’s record; and
- generally speaking, courses with a final grade/notation of CR would not be counted towards a student’s program requirements.

The approved revisions to the CR/NCR policy in Arts & Science in 2012 included:

- lowering the minimum grade/threshold required to secure the CR notation to 50%;
- allowing students to select this grading arrangement for up to 2.0 full course equivalents; as well as
- extending the deadline for declaring the CR/NCR option to a course’s drop date.

Committee members expressed concerns with students who had opted in the CR/NCR arrangement withdrawing from course activities midstream and not contributing as much as other team members in group work. A member felt that the current policy creates a burden pedagogically on classes that have long waiting lists and are offered by
small departments (e.g. language courses). Vice-Dean Pugh noted that the CR/NCR policy is currently not available for such courses as First Year Seminars, Research Opportunity Program (ROP) courses, Research Excursions, and Foundational Year Program courses. She indicated that this list of courses could be revisited in the future. Another member commented that students would sometimes discover after the fact that they should not have selected the CR/NCR option for a course, as grad schools would like to see all final grades visible on the transcript. In cases such as these, students are expected to consult with their College Registrar’s Office for further advising. The Calendar language around CR/NCR has recently been updated to reflect this scenario.

Arts & Science Self-Study: Commencement Data

Vice-Dean Pugh updated the committee that the self-study is still ongoing, and presented some commencement data that would be incorporated in the self-study. With reference to program of study combinations, there has been an increase in the number of graduates having completed a Specialist and a Minor. It has also been observed that about 30% of graduating students pursued cross-sector Majors (e.g., one Major in the social sciences and one Major in the sciences). The first draft of the self-study will be circulated for feedback later this spring.

2. Presentation and Discussion: “When does the academic year start – May or September?”

Mr. Thomas MacKay, Director of Faculty Governance & Curriculum Services, and Dr. Tamara Jones, Associate Director, Enrolment Services & Records from the Faculty of Arts & Science presented a new proposal to introduce a formal effective date for, as well as the fall implementation of the Arts & Science Calendar.

Academic changes can impact students significantly, yet the current Arts & Science Calendar does not explicitly state the time period for which it is in effect. The current situation is such that the Calendar is primed for a mid-March publication and is implemented in systems as being in effect from May to the following April. In theory, this means that all changes to course prerequisites and program requirements, albeit last minute on occasion, can be in effect as of the summer following the publication of the Calendar. This would therefore come as a shock to students who have been using the previous year’s Calendar to map out their academic plans.

By implementing the Calendar with course and program changes effective in the fall, students would have more time to absorb the new information and requirements. It would also allow the Enrolment and Records unit at the Office of the Faculty Registrar to implement the necessary changes across various student information systems, most notably ROSI and Degree Explorer.

The committee raised questions about the current practice of implementing course and program changes in May as opposed to September, as well as next steps and possible changes to curriculum committee meeting dates as a result of the fall implementation of the Calendar. Mr. MacKay responded that the existing May implementation of course and program changes might be related to the fiscal year starting in May, as well as alignment with the start of the summer session. He also stated that while the curriculum committee meeting dates would remain largely unchanged next year, a more noticeable change would be on the actual curriculum proposals being discussed, as changes to program requirements would not be in effect until the year after they have been approved. Dr. Jones added that under the new proposal, the new Calendar would be published in late April or early May, which would be one month later than the current practice.

3. Approval of Minutes of the January 30, 2018 Meeting of Humanities Curriculum Committee

The meeting minutes were approved.
4. **Course and Program Modifications for Abbreviated/Expedited Review**

No issues were raised.

5. **Course and Program Proposals for Full Review**

*New College:*

Professor June Larkin, Vice-Principal of New College presented proposals to create two new Interdisciplinary Special Topics courses, one at the 200-level (NEW271H1) and the other at the 300-level (NEW372H1).

A question was raised regarding the dissemination of course descriptions and prerequisite information to students. Professor Larkin replied that these courses would be advertised through the College. It was recommended that additional text be included in the respective course descriptions to ensure students would know where to go to obtain details regarding specific topics. Ms. Christine Babikian, Associate Director, Scheduling & Examinations from the Office of the Faculty Registrar mentioned that the existing in-house Timetable Tool allows academic units to add subtitles and other specific information relating to topics courses. This information would then appear on the Arts & Science Timetable website to be accessible by all.

When asked if the creation of two Interdisciplinary Special Topics courses would be plentiful enough given the tendency of departments to offer multiple topics under the same course code, Professor Larkin responded that while students could technically take multiple topics courses simultaneously, the practice is generally not recommended. Both course proposals were approved.

*St. Michael’s College:*

Professor Randy Boyagoda, Principal and Vice-President of St. Michael’s College presented proposals to modify four of its existing programs as well as create one new course. He indicated that the new SMC445H1 course (Directed Research in Middle Welsh) would be taught by a faculty member from the Centre for Medieval Studies. All of the course and program proposals were approved.

*History, Department of:*

Professor Jennifer Mori, Associate Chair, Undergraduate from the Department of History presented the proposal to modify the enrolment requirements of the existing History Major. The department noticed that students were attempting to enroll in its program later in their academic career. With these students having already maxed out on the number of 100-level courses that could be counted towards their twenty-credit degree, more of them were requesting exceptions to the enrolment requirements. This program modification proposal was approved pending the outcome of the Committee on Admissions meeting, scheduled to take place on Wednesday, April 25, 2018. [Addendum: The modification to the enrolment requirements was approved by the Committee on Admissions on Wednesday, April 25, 2018.]

*Medieval Studies, Centre for:*

Professor Alexander Andrée, PhD Coordinator from the Centre for Medieval Studies presented a new course proposal. He mentioned that even though the Centre does not have an undergraduate department or division, it has been launching undergraduate courses over the past few years. MST300H1 (Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages) is meant to build on the existing 200-level courses and will be taught by a new Assistant Professor hire. This course
would also be cross listed with the Mediaeval Studies programs offered through St. Michael’s College. This course proposal was approved.

Asian Institute:

As there was no one from the institute to speak to the course and program proposals, these were held for the Social Sciences Curriculum Committee meeting, scheduled to take place later that afternoon. In response to the course modification proposal for CAS201H1 (Asian Sites, Global Questions, Part 1), a student committee member expressed hesitation with the institute’s usage of the word “insights” in the proposed revised course title given the course’s theoretical nature as indicated by its description.

French, Department of:

Professor Marie-Anne Visoi, Associate Chair, Undergraduate from the Department of French presented a new course proposal for FSL415H1 (Professional Communication in French (Oral)). This course aims to improve students’ ability to demonstrate oral communication skills at an advanced level, thereby exposing students to more opportunities in a wider variety of career paths. This course would not be open to native French speakers.

A member asked how her department would screen out native speakers. Professor Visoi replied that these students would not normally take the placement test. In addition, the department as well as its instructors could interview these students to assess their language fluency. She added that FSL courses are generally different from FRE courses in which the former are meant to perfect students’ language skills. She also acknowledged that certain students might argue that they have not spoken the language in a long time despite it being their mother tongue for instance. This course proposal was approved.

East Asian Studies, Department of:

Professor Linda Rui Feng, Undergraduate Coordinator from the Department of East Asian Studies presented the new course proposal for EAS477H1 (Samurai Culture). The creation of a half-year version of the course would give faculty members more flexibility with respect to teaching needs. It was confirmed that EAS478Y1, the full year version of the course would be added as an exclusion to this new half-year course. This course proposal was approved.

History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Institute for the:

As there was no one from the institute to speak to the proposals to modify two of its existing programs, both proposals were not approved.

6. Other Business

A student member commented that there are a number of courses that could be included in the collection of cross-listed courses initially identified by Woodsworth College for its new Digital Humanities Minor. Vice-Dean Pugh provided her with the contact information for Woodsworth College so that she could share recommendations with that office.

A member raised his concerns about the scarcity of course codes that could be allocated for Special Topics courses for his own unit. He stated that he is currently looking into possible solutions but would not be surprised if other departments are having the same dilemma.
7. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:54 am.

Minutes prepared by Kevin Mak, Curriculum and Governance Assistant, Faculty of Arts & Science