Call to Order and Acting Vice-Dean’s Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 1:12 pm by the Acting Vice-Dean, Undergraduate & International, Mary Pugh, who welcomed everyone. She noted a change to the order of agenda, so that items pertaining to program closure and new program proposals (i.e., items #5 to #7) be moved earlier in the agenda to allow for a more thorough discussion to take place within the Committee. These items would take place before the full review of departmental course proposals.

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

Vice-Dean Pugh addressed the Committee on three items. The first item was with respect to a self-study underway at the Faculty of Arts and Science. The self-study is in its initial stages and is being conducted as part of the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP). It will involve consultations widely with the various departments/programs/units. Additional details will be provided in the coming months.

The second item addressed was with respect to the course proposals and their related form fields. The completed form fields and course proposals on the whole serve as important documents to which they can be referred in the future when departments would like to inquire how decisions were previously made. Vice-Dean Pugh thanked the Committee for consistently consulting and talking to each other; taking the process seriously; and thinking through things carefully.

The third item addressed was with respect to the retention of untaught courses in the Calendar. When a course is included in the Calendar, it means that the course is visible to students. It creates disappointment and frustration when a student who has hopes of taking certain courses see them appear in the Calendar only to discover that they have not been taught for years nor would they be offered in the foreseeable future. Vice-Dean Pugh solicited feedback from the Committee on possible best practices pertaining to the treatment of these untaught courses, with the goal of ensuring that students would make informed decisions regarding their studies.
The Committee offered a considerable amount of comments. One member stated that there was an existing rule of keeping untaught courses for three years before they would be removed. Another member suggested keeping untaught courses for five years in the Calendar as three years would be too short in terms of time frame. Issues of resources and faculty members not being able to teach every year were raised as items of consideration, as were concerns surrounding new faculty hires and the overlapping of courses with other departments.

One member suggested the creation/publication of a student-facing calendar AND a version that would contain more comprehensive information, thereby facilitating the distinction of what students would see in terms of offered courses compared to the faculty members and administration counterparts. The initial general consensus was that three years would be an appropriate time frame for keeping an untaught course in the Calendar barring extenuating circumstances. Vice-Dean Pugh noted the distinction that most of the courses in the Sciences could be taught by more than one faculty member while in the Humanities, smaller departments would have courses taught by only one faculty member.

One member reinforced the idea that perhaps students would be interested in seeing when the next course offering would take place listed in the Calendar. This comment led Vice-Dean Pugh to ask for opinions specifically from the student members of the Committee. One remarked that the three-year retention period for untaught courses would be appropriate as that would allow students at least one opportunity to take courses during their undergraduate career. Another member mentioned having seen a course listed explicitly in the Mathematics section of the Calendar as being offered every three years. Vice-Pugh clarified that the course was no longer offered.

2. Course Modifications for Abbreviated Review: Questions/Discussions

Vice-Dean Pugh solicited feedback from the Committee regarding course proposals that were perceived by the Dean’s Office as benign and minor, with the recognition that discussions for a number of courses had already taken place during the Life Sciences Planning Committee meeting on October 30, 2017. A member raised a question regarding the removal of PSY399H1 from the list of Exclusions for HMB310H1 (Laboratory in Neuroscience). In response to that question, the Department of Psychology proposed adding PSY359H1 as one of the Exclusion courses. In addition, Mr. Thomas MacKay, Director, Faculty Governance & Curriculum Services raised a question regarding the proposed change of lecture hours from 12 to 11 for HMB311H1 (Laboratory in Fundamental Genetics and its Applications). It was suggested and decided that the lecture hours would revert back to 12. All of the course modification proposals were approved.

3. Proposals for First-Year Seminars (“199 Courses”) for Full Review

Vice-Dean Pugh solicited feedback from the Committee regarding a new first-year seminar course on dark matter and dark energy. A lively discussion emerged concerning the appropriateness of the course title “The New Black: Dark Matter and Dark Energy.” The concerns raised ranged from fashion commentary and social connotation, to political correctness and the public perception of the course title. Vice-Dean Pugh commented that course titles (for these first-year seminar courses) were meant to capture students’ attention. She asked the Department of Physics to further consult with the course instructor to express the Committee’s concerns about the perception of the course title. The content of the course was approved.

5. Program Closure Proposal: Developmental Biology Specialist

Professor Tony Harris, Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies of the Department of Cell & Systems Biology presented the proposal to close the Developmental Biology Specialist program. Current enrolment in the program has dropped to only six students. The Department consulted with five of the students through face-to-face meetings. There were no objections from the students regarding the program closure as long as they were able to complete
the existing requirements, which were confirmed by the Department. This proposal was approved and recommended to be sent to the Arts & Science Council for approval.

6. Program Closure Proposal: Health Care Ethics Major

Professor Ron Wilson, Acting Director of the Human Biology Program presented the proposal to close the Health Care Ethics Major program. The proposal to close the program was as a result of the shift in attention to other existing programs. Only one student remains in this program but has already met the completion requirements. The proposal was approved and recommended to be sent to the Arts & Science Council for approval.

7. New Program Proposal: Data Science Specialist

Vice-Dean Pugh presented the new program proposal for the Data Science Specialist, a restricted enrolment program developed by the Department of Computer Science and the Department of Statistical Sciences. Approximately half of the required courses would be run by the Department of Computer Science and the other half of the courses would be run by the Department of Statistical Sciences. There would be an interdisciplinary course in each of second, third, and fourth years for students to take. Since the weighting of courses leans more towards Computer Science than Statistical Sciences, the Specialist program is to be managed by the Department of Computer Science.

Vice-Dean Pugh solicited feedback from the Committee concerning the new program proposal. The Department of Chemistry indicated that they would be able to suggest projects for students to pursue. The Department of Molecular Genetics inquired about the possibility of its students taking some of the Data Science (JSC) courses. The response given was that enrolment in the three JSC courses (i.e., JSC270H1, JSC370H1, and JSC470H1) would be restricted to students enrolled in the Data Science Specialist. This enrolment eligibility could be revisited several years down the road.

A student raised a question regarding the need to complete both CSC108H1 and STA130H1 in first year and the impact for students who might not be following the same trajectory. The Department of Computer Science recognized that some first-year students might not have a concrete plan in place. These students would be encouraged to make use of academic advising on campus and be mindful of subsequent application periods for this program.

A member inquired about the possibility of introducing a Data Science Major in the future. Professor Pitt responded that it would be a bigger undertaking given the amount of subjects/topics that the students would need to learn. The Department of Statistical Sciences also added that it would be difficult given the new resources needed.

Another member asked about the amount of tuition students enrolled in this program would pay. It was confirmed that students would pay deregulated program fees as this new Specialist would be managed by the Department of Computer Science. A follow-up question followed to seek clarification on the definition of “deregulated fees.” Vice-Dean Pugh clarified that students in Computer Science and Rotman Commerce are charged higher fees beginning in their second year. Ms. Robinson added that students entering those programs after second year would be charged retroactive fees. It was noted that the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering would also charge deregulated fees.

The proposal was approved and recommended to be sent to the Arts & Science Council for approval.

4. Course Proposals for Full Review

Trinity College:
Professor Michael Ratcliffe, Dean of Arts of Trinity College presented one new course proposal. TRN141Y1 (Environmental Science and Pathways to Sustainability) was created as part of the new Environmental and Sustainability Stream to be offered within the Trinity One Program. Vice-Dean Pugh provided additional context regarding the One Programs offered by the different Colleges and clarified that these foundation courses taken by first-year students would not count towards their program requirements. A question was raised regarding the need to include Exclusion courses for TRN141Y1. It was confirmed that the other Ones Programs (i.e., Innis One, New One, UC One, Vic One, etc.) would be added as Exclusions to TRN141Y1. This course proposal was subsequently approved.

**New College:**

Professor June Larkin, Vice-Principal of New College presented two new course proposals. NEW106H1 (Science and Social Justice I) and NEW116H1 (Science and Social Justice II) would be offered as part of the New One Program. Even though these two courses would be geared towards science-oriented students, students would not be doing experiments. Instead, the focus of these two courses would be on the social and human context of scientific issues, as well as the development of students’ skills and competencies in research. Both of the course proposals were subsequently approved.

**Cell and Systems Biology, Department of:**

Professor Tony Harris, Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies of the Department presented one new course proposal. A question was raised to seek clarification of the CLTA acronym. Vice-Dean Pugh clarified that CLTA stood for “Contractually Limited Term Appointments.” This course proposal was approved.

**Chemistry, Department of:**

Professor Rebecca Jockusch, Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies presented four course modification proposals to officially add MAT157Y1 as one of the Prerequisite courses. These course proposals were approved.

**University College (Joint with Department of Computer Science):**

Professor François Pitt, Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies from the Department of Computer Science briefly talked about the new COG260H1 (Data, Computation, and the Mind) course proposal. A question was raised regarding the significant enrolment pressure CSC108H1 might encounter as a result of it being listed as the Prerequisite for the new COG course. Professor Pitt responded that the Department is working on addressing this particular issue.

As there was no one from University College to speak further to the course proposal, this proposal was held for the next Sciences Curriculum Committee meeting on February 2, 2018.

**Computer Science, Department of:**

Professor François Pitt proceeded to present remaining proposals to create, modify and retire additional courses. CSC303H1 (Social and Information Networks) would be a version of an existing course taught at the University of Toronto Scarborough. It was later suggested and confirmed that CSCE46H3 would be added as an Exclusion of this course. Professor François Pitt and Professor Nathan Taback of the Department of Statistical Sciences presented the new course proposal for JSC270H1 (Data Science I). JSC270H1 is the first of three courses created for the new Data Science Specialist. A request was made to change the first line of the course description to “this course is restricted
for students in the Data Science Specialist program” due to the course’s exclusive nature. All of the course proposals were approved.

Earth Sciences, Department of:

Professor Ulrich Wortmann, Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies of the Department presented proposals to create one new course, modify one course and retire one existing course. In response to the proposed creation of ESS223H1 (Earth System Chemistry 1: Earth Materials) and retirement of ENV233H1 (Earth System Chemistry), a member inquired about past inclusion of ESS221H1 and ESS262H1 as Prerequisites for ENV233H1. The Governance unit from the Faculty of Arts and Science indicated “no.” Another member commented on the need to change the course code of the Chemistry Prerequisite from CHM139H1 to CHM135H1 as CHM139H1 was no longer offered. There were a few other interactions taking place among the different departments regarding prerequisites in general. All of the course proposals were approved.

Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Department of:

Professor Asher Cutter, Associate Chair, Undergraduate, presented proposals to modify one and retire three existing courses. He requested MAT137Y1 to be added back as a Recommended Preparation course, as it was initially struck out in the course proposal; the request was confirmed.

Professor Cutter also provided context regarding the retirement of EEB492H1 and EEB492Y1 (Internship in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology) courses. He explained that while the internship courses were useful for students to gain professional experience, it was challenging to get employers/placements on board once they had seen the amount of liability documents and paperwork they had to review and process. The Department is rethinking professional experience in a different context and has an interest in work-integrated learning. Ms. Deborah Robinson, Faculty Registrar and Director of Undergraduate Academic Services at the Faculty of Arts and Science, followed up with a question to better understand the nature of the existing courses and internships. She also stated her concerns regarding students going into repayment mode depending on their attendance status. A member suggested the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology to connect with the University’s Centre for Community Partnerships to obtain additional information and advice. All of the course proposals were approved.

Geography and Planning, Department of:

As there was no one from the Department to speak to the new course and course modification proposals, these were held for the next Sciences Curriculum Committee meeting, scheduled to take place on February 2, 2018.

Human Biology Program:

Professor Ron Wilson, Acting Director of the Program presented proposals to modify twenty and retire two existing courses. Since most of the proposals consisted of course modifications, Professor Wilson solicited feedback from the Committee on the modifications on a page by page basis. A suggestion was made by a member to add MGY311Y1 as a Prerequisite to HMB401H1, and subsequently to all HMB courses containing the “three-pack” grouping of Prerequisite choices (i.e., BCH311H1/CSB349H1/PSL350H1).

Vice-Dean Pugh inquired about the existing inclusion of a CGPA requirement as opposed to course marks for both HMB421H1 (Seminar in Fundamental Genetics and its Applications) and HMB432H1 (Topics in Histology & Histopathology). While the Human Biology Program indicated that there were no complaints received thus far from students, the Program was asked by the Vice-Dean to establish reasonable thresholds, as CGPA might not be the best way to determine if a student would encounter difficulty in these two courses. Professor Wilson indicated that
the Program would remove CGPA for this year but would (likely) introduce a new set of requirements the following year.

In response to the proposal to retire HMB395Y1 (Human Biology Research Project), a question was raised as to whether students interested in securing a research project were successful in doing so. Professor Wilson stated that they never had the experience of having students meeting the prerequisite requirements and wanting to do the project not being able to secure one. Approximately 140 out of 3,000 students in the program have completed a research project. All of the course proposals were approved.

Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology, Department of:

As there was no one from the Department to speak to the two course modification proposals, these were held for the next Sciences Curriculum Committee meeting, scheduled to take place on Friday, February 2, 2018. The Department of Cell and Systems Biology expressed interest in connecting with the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology for further discussions.

Molecular Genetics, Department of:

Professor Richard Collins, Associate Chair & Undergraduate Coordinator of the Department presented proposals to modify eleven existing courses. The modifications mainly involved adding BIO255H1 as a Prerequisite to the specified MGY courses. He also requested to have the combinations of Immunology prerequisite courses adjusted to ensure better clarity. All of the course proposals were approved.

Pharmacology & Toxicology, Department of:

Professor Michelle Arnot, Undergraduate Coordinator of the Department presented proposals to create one new course, modify two existing courses and retire one course. In response to the PCL490H1 (Advanced Topics in Pharmacology and Toxicology) course proposal, Professor Arnot specified that this new course would actually be an elective course for fourth-year students to take; and that this course proposal would not trigger program modifications. As for PCL200H1 (Drugs & the Brain), Professor Arnot clarified that the course modifications were meant to reinforce that this would be a breadth course designed for students not studying in the life sciences. All course proposals were approved.

Physics, Department of:

Professor Jason Harlow, Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies presented proposals to modify two existing courses and retire one course. In response to the PHY131H1 (Introduction to Physics I) and PHY132H1 (Introduction to Physics II) course proposals, Professor Harlow proposed adding one more lecture hour per week to allow for more time for the instructors to go over the same amount of material. Ms. Christine Babikian, Associate Director of Scheduling & Examinations at the Faculty of Arts & Science, noted that flexibility might be required to implement the third hour, especially if the Department would like to retain the Convocation Hall location for its PHY131H1 and PHY132H1 classes. Vice-Dean Pugh made mention that there were two departments – Cell and Systems Biology; and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology – wanting to use Convocation Hall for their respective courses. The Department of Chemistry expressed interest in moving some of its classes to the 500-seat auditorium within the new Centre for Engineering Innovation & Entrepreneurship building.

In addition, Professor Harlow proposed removing first-year Calculus courses as Co-requisites. This change was made after receiving feedback from students who would like to take these first-year Physics courses in their fourth-year for grad school purposes claiming that they couldn’t take first-year Calculus concurrently.
In response to the proposal to retire PHY495H1 (Research Topic in Geophysics), a question was raised by the Department of Earth Sciences regarding a replacement course for students wanting to conduct research in Geophysics. Professor Harlow suggested replacing PHY495H1 with PHY478H1 (Undergraduate Research Project) instead. It was recognized that the Department of Earth Sciences also has its own undergraduate research course. All of the course proposals were approved.

*Statistical Sciences, Department of:*

Professor Alison Gibbs, Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies in Statistics, presented proposals to create one new course (in addition to JSC270H1 presented earlier in the meeting) and modify five existing courses. Professor Gibbs suggested that a curriculum renewal exercise was forthcoming. In response to the STA314H1 (Statistical Methods for Machine Learning I) course proposal, Professor François Pitt added that CSC411H1 (Machine Learning and Data Mining) would have a close connection to this course and hence would be cross-listed with the Department of Statistical Sciences.

Comments were raised regarding the proposed minimum grades in specific Prerequisite courses for STA355H1 (Theory of Statistical Practice) and the importance of the Department providing a rationale behind the establishment of these thresholds when completing the course proposal submissions.

Professor Gibbs also indicated that the course proposal for STA238H1, a course to be added as a possible Prerequisite for STA302H1 (Methods of Data Analysis I), would be submitted for review in the next round of committee meetings along with proposals for program changes. A follow-up question was raised regarding the Department’s plan to communicate the prerequisite changes to its students. The Department indicating that the waiving of requirements would be possible. Ms. Deborah Robinson suggested adding effective date for changes in the course proposal submissions.

With the exception of STA302H1 and STA355H1, all of the course proposals were approved.

8. **Other Business**

There was no other business.

9. **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 3:24 pm.