HUMANITIES CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES OF THE HUMANITIES CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held on Tuesday, January 30, 2018 at 9:30 am in the
Governing Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall

Present

Mary Pugh (Acting Vice-Dean)  Sol Goldberg  Mary-Ann Pouls Wegner
Martha Harris  Terry Lago  Michael Ratcliffe
Kevin Mak  Leonid Livak  Josh Scott
Christine Babikian  Jeremy Lopez  Rachel Silvey
Alexandra Bolintineanu  W. Brock MacDonald  Anne Urbanic
Randy Boyagoda  Monika Morcos  Marie-Anne Visoi
Geneva Ferguson  Naomi Nagy  
Carol Finlay  Mirella Pasquarelli-Clivio

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 four items.

She highlighted the release of the new Strategic Mandate Agreement 2017-2020 that was signed between the
University and the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). Before proceeding
further, she demonstrated the ease of locating the signed document via a Google search and encouraged committee
members to read it. Also referred to as “SMA2,” the new Strategic Mandate Agreement outlines the new university
funding model, in which funds to be granted would eventually be contingent on the University meeting (and
exceeding) objectives and KPI’s unique to and agreed upon by each post-secondary institution. Departments are
encouraged to review both the system-wide metrics (as defined by the Ministry) and the institution-specific metrics
(presumably defined by the University) associated with the different objectives and priorities. A member asked for
clarification regarding the acronym KPI, to which Vice-Dean Pugh responded KPI stands for key performance
indicator.

Next, she took the time to get committee members and departments aware of the ability to create research project
courses and opportunities. At Vice-Dean Pugh’s home department of Mathematics, three Research Project courses
are offered, one at the 200-level, one at the 300-level and the other at the 400-level. For the course MAT497Y1 –
Research Project in Mathematics, students do not have to submit an application to the Faculty’s Research
Opportunity Program. Under the Research Opportunity Program (ROP) currently offered by the Faculty of Arts &
Science, a faculty member cannot work with the same student again the year after the completion of their Research
Opportunity. Departments that are interested in creating new research project courses still have time to submit
course proposals to have them reviewed at the next and final set of Curriculum Committee meetings for the 2017-
18 academic year in April.
The third item addressed was with respect to the self-study presently undertaken by the Faculty. The Arts & Science self-study is a procedure completed in a cycle in accordance with the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP). In the self-study document being prepared, the Faculty will be incorporating a considerable amount of applicant and program enrolment data. Vice-Dean Pugh provided a high-level view of the data presented at a recent Council of Chairs, Principals, Academic Directors (CPAD) meeting. There was a strong increase in applicant numbers in the areas of Math and Physical Sciences, as well as Computer Science. While registrant numbers have declined considerably in the Humanities, about 6,000 students have registered in a Humanities Minor program.

A committee member asked if the University was looking to implement a limit on the number of applicants being admitted to certain programs based on the registrant numbers presented as well as the quotas (i.e., enrolment corridor) introduced in the new Strategic Mandate Agreement. Vice-Dean Pugh responded that admissions are carried out strategically at the University. While there is pressure within the Faculty of Arts & Science to fill certain sectors/enrolment categories/programs of study, it is best to get the perspective of Ms. Deborah Robinson, Faculty Registrar and Director of Undergraduate Academic Services as she would be able to speak to the latest trends.

Vice-Dean Pugh also identified that marks correlate with graduation rates; the higher the entering marks, the graduation rate is likely to be higher. Another question was raised with respect to the extent of data tracking and trend comparison between variables such as undergraduate applications versus graduate applications, domestic applications versus international applications, or applications to humanities programs versus programs in the “hard sciences.” Vice-Dean Pugh responded that some programs do receive fewer applications in Canada. Certain departments offer unfunded Master’s programs whereas other departments have actual funded Master’s programs. In a case such as this, it would be comparing apples and oranges.

Before wrapping up her report, Vice-Dean Pugh briefly spoke to the issue of having topics courses counted towards program requirements. She reminded/informed the Committee that if a topics course is to be included as a program requirement, departments must be able to argue that the course is a pedagogical necessity. She also noted that some departments were offering topics courses using the same course codes and only using subtitles to disambiguate/differentiate the topics. This practice is not recommended as it may introduce tricky scenarios relating to enrolment and records.

2. Approval of Minutes of the November 14 and 15, 2017 Meetings of Humanities Curriculum Committee

Vice-Dean Pugh solicited feedback on the minutes from the previous set of two Humanities Curriculum Committee meetings. The meeting minutes were approved.

3. Program and Course Modifications for Abbreviated/Expedited Review: Questions/Discussions

Vice-Dean Pugh acknowledged/explained that the smaller package contained program and course modifications, listed separately by departments, as benign from the perspective of the Dean’s Office. The Committee was asked to identify to items that appeared unusual or odd. No issues were raised.

4. Major Program Modifications for Full Review

*English, Department of:*

Professor Jeremy Lopez, Associate Chair and Director of Undergraduate Studies from the Department of English presented proposals to modify both the English Specialist and the English Major. The motivation behind the proposed modifications was the desire for more sequence in the programs, which would enable students to take advantage of elective choices in their third and fourth years. Among the changes would be the restructuring of year-
long survey courses into half-year required courses. The Department hopes to attain the goal of allowing all students to have the same amount of preparation.

A member asked if there was a connection between the proposed program changes and the changing demographics. Professor Lopez responded that the required 200-level courses would be viewed as gateway courses that would attract students hoping to fulfill breadth requirements. It might be possible that these courses would retain students as they would give students a sense of the opportunities available ahead. The Department is introducing ENG102H1 (Literature and the Sciences), a new non-program course not geared towards anyone in particular. Having said that, the Department is attempting to make the programs more meaningful for students.

Vice-Dean Pugh thanked Professor Lopez and the Department of English for distinguishing Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies and for creating a course that would be suitable for students in the sciences. She also offered her assistance should the Department want to request data on the whereabouts of students after completing certain first-year ENG courses. Furthermore, she suggested that the Department could use the discussion website, Reddit to promote its English courses in June, July, and August.

A third question was raised asking whether the Department of English intends/plans to use graduate students pertaining to the hiring of summer instructors. Vice-Dean Pugh commented that summer time is a great opportunity to put graduate students to teach, as faculty members are not expected to teach more than two terms in a row.

Another committee member asked about ENG376H1 and ENG377H1 (Topics in Theory, Language, Critical Methods), two new courses containing a linguistic background. Professor Lopez responded that there’s a departmental faculty member who is a linguist who would be suitable to teach these 300-level topics courses. Should there be an expansion of more of these courses, consultation would take place with the relevant departments to ensure boundaries are maintained. In response to the new ENG320Y1 (Shakespeare) course proposal, Professor Lopez confirmed that the prerequisites should be listed as “2.0 ENG FCE and any 4.0 FCE,” which would be the same as other third year English courses.

A question was asked about possibility of the Department offering courses that would teach English to non-native speakers. Professor Lopez responded that while there were discussions around the University’s increased internationalization, there are currently no plans to teach English as a language, as there would need to be enough money and resources available for language instruction.

A final question was raised about possible collaboration in the area of African literature. Professor Lopez was open to the idea and would pass on the message to Professor George Clarke. All of the course proposals were approved. The program modification proposals for the English Specialist and Major were recommended for approval at the February 14, 2018 Arts & Science Council meeting.

St. Michael’s College:

Professor Randy Boyagoda, Principal and Vice-President of St. Michael’s College presented the proposal to modify its Christianity and Culture Major program. The proposed changes derived from the most recent UTQAP review in 2014. The UTQAP review found the existing Major difficult to navigate as it lacked meaningful distinction of courses and that the high number of full-year courses affected students’ mobility. The new changes would include a gateway course at the 200-level that would lead to four distinct streams, as well as an increased focus on research seminars as opposed to having too many niche seminars. It is hoped that the revised Major would be easier to navigate, promote greater mobility, as well as encourage students to become Catholic high school educators.

A question was raised to inquire about the distinction between 200- and 300-level courses. Professor Boyagoda responded that 200-level gateway courses could be viewed as big topic courses, while the 300-level courses would be more discipline-specific and encourage greater specialization.
Another Committee member asked if there would be opportunities to have courses offered by other departments count towards the program requirements for the Christianity and Culture Major. Professor Boyagoda indicated that he looks forward to collaborating with departments to update and publicize this list of courses. Vice-Dean Pugh expressed her preference to see cross-listed courses appear in the same calendar section as the home department administering the program as opposed to having to be redirected to another department’s listing. This program proposal was recommended for approval at the February 14, 2018 Arts & Science Council meeting.

*French, Department of:*

Professor Marie-Anne Visoi, Associate Chair, Undergraduate of the Department of French presented proposals to modify six of its programs, create three new courses, as well as retire three existing courses. The majority of the proposed program changes stemmed from a revision of the Department’s pedagogical objectives and approaches.

For the French Language Learning Major, graduates of the existing program did not become teachers due to a gap between their language skills and what was actually demanded professionally. The proposed changes would now emphasize the development of students’ language skills and the broadening of students’ exposure to French and Francophone culture. As for the Minor in Practical French, the Department would like students to be able to be more autonomous and have the option of extending their learning outside of the classroom. To attract more students to its programs, the Department is looking at the inclusion of research component and online learning. It is hoped that these changes will fulfill the learning outcomes of encouraging students to become global learners and preparing them for international options, as well as ensuring that its curriculum will touch the Canadian benchmarks.

In response to the new course proposal for FRE226H1 (Tools and Strategies for Learners of French), a question was raised to inquire about the intention behind adding an online component to the course. Professor Visoi responded that the course was created for committed students who would like to perfect their skills. The online section of the course can have more students compared to the in-class section. She also reiterated the Department’s plan to offer more courses for oral and writing, as she would like to see students to have sufficient skills and abilities to present in occasions such as business meetings.

Vice-Dean Pugh inquired to learn more about the Department of French’s language labs and how students would use these labs to learn and practice. Professor Visoi responded that audio and visual components were already embedded in courses. The online component allows for ease of integration and would make it easier for students to access from home. The Department still values the language labs and the approach by which students learn and practice the language.

An additional question was asked regarding courses that would enforce/encourage more speaking. Professor Visoi highlighted FSL315H1 (French Oral Communication for Professional and Academic Contexts), a new course that was just approved last fall which would serve that need. It’s expected that smaller tutorials would allow students to practice what was taught in class.

All program proposals containing minor modifications as well as all course proposals were approved. The program modification proposal for the French Language Learning Major was recommended for approval at the February 14, 2018 Arts & Science Council meeting.

*Woodsworth College:*

Professor Brock MacDonald, Vice-Principal of Woodsworth College presented the proposal to create a new freestanding Minor in Digital Humanities. Digital Humanities explores the use of digital platforms, tools, methods and techniques in the scholarship realm. The first offering of the two introductory courses in Digital Humanities has attracted students from all backgrounds, who are also interested in the job readiness skills being offered by these courses. The program consists of two 200-level required courses, seven 300+ level courses plus a wide list of cross-
listed courses from which students can choose. In particular, the 400-level courses would provide students with the opportunity to gain research experience, as well as develop skills/competencies in communication, information literacy, and social responsibility. Professor MacDonald looks forward to more discussions and collaboration down the road with other departments. This program proposal was recommended for approval at the February 14, 2018 Arts & Science Council. In addition, Vice-Dean asked Professor MacDonald to present this program proposal at the Sciences Curriculum Committee scheduled later in the week.

**Slavic Languages and Literatures, Department of:**

Professor Leonid Livak, Chair of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures presented proposals to overhaul its Specialist, Major and Minor programs. The proposed changes would involve the merging of existing programs as well as the creation of new streams. The rationale behind these program modifications was to make better use of available faculty members and to create new synergy and collaboration among students.

The merging of the two existing Specialist programs into one single Specialist would allow the comparative program to draw on multiple language areas, thereby creating an interdisciplinary experience in which students would be able to study any combination of Slavic languages. The merging of the six existing Major programs into one single Slavic Languages and Cultures Major alongside the creation of five streams was meant to reflect integration and collaboration among the program areas, with language areas being reflected through the streams. Furthermore, the language names were dropped from the actual program names to reflect the fact that the Department teaches more than just languages; it also teaches cultures and literatures. All course proposals and all program proposals containing minor modifications were approved. All program proposals containing major modifications (i.e., Specialist; Major and Streams) were recommended for approval at the February 14, 2018 Arts & Science Council meeting.

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

**Jewish Studies, Anne Tanenbaum Centre for:**

Professor Sol Goldberg of the Department for the Study of Religion presented proposals to create five new courses. Originating from special topics courses, the Centre would now like to offer these five courses as permanent courses. Vice-Dean Pugh asked if these courses would be suitable for other programs of study. Professor Goldberg responded that he would be comfortable with other departments counting these courses toward their respective program requirements. He was formally asked to reach out to these departments for further discussion. Vice-Dean Pugh also mentioned that the upcoming April Curriculum Committee meeting would be an opportunity for departments to present amended program requirements. All five course proposals were approved.

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

As there was no one from the Institute to speak to the two program modification proposals, these were held for the next Humanities Curriculum Committee meeting, scheduled to take place on April 5, 2018.

**History, Department of:**

There was no one from the Department to speak to the proposal to retire HIS410H1 (Spectacle, Crowds, and Parades in Canada). The course retirement proposal was approved, with Vice-Dean Pugh’s noting it be an exception.
University College:

There was no one from the College to speak to the proposal to modify its Asian Canadian Studies Minor program. This was held for the Social Sciences Curriculum Committee meeting, scheduled to take place later in the week, on February 1, 2018.

Religion, Department for the Study of:

Professor Sol Goldberg returned to present new course and course retirement proposals relating to the Department’s second- and third-year offerings. The redistribution of 14 to 15 second-year courses to third year was meant to improve curricular sequence; and the creation of new courses was as a result of new faculty hires.

Vice-Dean Pugh expressed concerns that instructor information was not listed for selected courses. Professor Goldberg responded that faculty searches are currently in place for certain courses, while instructors for other courses are shared in different areas. More than one person could teach a course such as RLG319H1 (Death, Dying and Afterlife). A follow-up question was raised regarding the use of sessional instructors for regular courses. Professor Goldberg indicated that graduate students would be able to teach these courses as well. A Committee member expressed interest in learning more about RLG387H1 (Religion and Science). Professor Goldberg confirmed that there were gaps in between offerings, but this course was taken by students in the Sciences as well. He further commented that depending on the instructors of these RLG courses, courses such as RLG309H1 (Religion and Human Rights) and RLG387H1 might appeal to students outside of the Religion programs. The Department would like to see more students taking their courses. A question was raised regarding the lack of prerequisites listed for specific 300-level courses. Professor Goldberg responded that general prerequisites information already exists in the Calendar section text for the Department. The Department is rethinking how best to present this information but there has not been a lot of consensus across the board. All of the course proposals were approved.

Asian Institute:

Professor Rachel Silvey, Richard Charles Lee Director of the Asian Institute, presented proposals to modify one of its programs, two of its existing courses and to create one new course. The Institute was looking to add a first-year introductory course to the Contemporary Asian Studies Major so that students would develop sufficient background to tackle upper-year courses. In response to this program proposal, Vice-Dean Pugh asked whether there were more students completing the 1.0 FCE 300- and 400-level course group requirement or the 1.0 FCE Asian language requirement. Professor Silvey responded that students tending to take the language courses for credit are the ones not familiar with that particular language; and students who already have familiarity with any of the languages would opt for those 300- and 400-level courses from the three course groups (in Political Transformation; Social and Economic Transformation; and Cultural Expression/Exploration).

In response to the new course proposal for CAS101H1 (Contemporary Asian Studies 101), Vice-Dean Pugh inquired about the instructor who would be teaching the course. Professor Silvey responded that the Asian Institute has several highly skilled instructors who would be good candidates to teach this course; it’s expected that the correct person would be found. Vice-Dean Pugh also voiced her concerns about this course not being included as a prerequisite for the two existing 200-level courses, as well as students bypassing this course and subsequently missing the whole program together due to the maximum number of 100-level FCE/credits that could be counted towards a student’s degree requirements. Professor Silvey indicated that she would be open for recommendation. The Institute was suggested to consider renumbering CAS101H1 to CAS200H1 instead.

All of the course and program proposals were held for the next Humanities and Social Sciences Curriculum Committee meetings scheduled to take place on April 5, 2018.
Italian Studies, Department of:

The new course proposal for CDN240H1 (Italian Canadian Studies) was not presented and instead was held for the Social Sciences Curriculum Committee meeting scheduled to take place later in the week on February 1, 2018.

Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, Department of:

Professor Mary-Ann Pouls Wegner, Associate Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator from the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations presented two new course proposals. Both course proposals were approved.

Trinity College:

Professor Michael Ratcliffe, Vice-Provost and Dean of Arts from Trinity College presented the program modification proposal for the Ethics, Society, and Law Major. The proposed change to the minimum enrolment average grade from 73% to 77% was meant to better reflect the competitive nature of the program. Currently, about 600 applicants vie for 75 spots in the program. For many years, the average cutoff typically has not dropped below 79%, so raising the enrolment thresholds does not change the fact that attaining the minimum enrolment average grade does not guarantee a student a spot in the program. This program modification proposal was approved.

6. Other Business

A committee member raised a question about the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures’ practice of including specific breadth requirements as part of the program completion requirements for its revised Specialist and Major (plus the five streams). Professor Leonid Livak, Chair of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures responded that the Breadth Category 5 (The Physical and Mathematical Universes) requirement used to be implied for its program students. By explicitly stating this requirement this time around, the Department hopes to minimize student confusion with the increased transparency.

7. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 11:57 am.