ARTS AND SCIENCE COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCE COUNCIL held on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 9:00 am
in the Governing Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall

Present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melanie Woodin (Dean)</th>
<th>Kathleen Cook</th>
<th>June Larkin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gillian Hamilton (Chair)</td>
<td>Michelle Craig</td>
<td>Poppy Lockwood</td>
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<td>William Watson (Vice-Chair)</td>
<td>Asher Cutter</td>
<td>Vicki Lowes</td>
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<td>Lisa Feng (Secretary)</td>
<td>Samuel Delage</td>
<td>Sheela Manek</td>
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<td>Thomas MacKay</td>
<td>Andrew Dicks</td>
<td>John Marshall</td>
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<td>Martha Harris</td>
<td>Dickson Eyoh</td>
<td>Tirzah Meacham</td>
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<td>Kevin Mak</td>
<td>Harry Fox</td>
<td>Nathalie Moon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria Belais</td>
<td>Max Friesen</td>
<td>Branden Rizzuto</td>
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<td>Josie Alaimo</td>
<td>Austin Gaghadar</td>
<td>Marlene Rong</td>
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<td>Deirdre Baker</td>
<td>Daphne Goring</td>
<td>Atsuko Sakaki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teresa Baptista</td>
<td>Tim Harrison</td>
<td>S. Trimble</td>
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<td>Dwayne Benjamin</td>
<td>Grégoire Holtz</td>
<td>Jeremy Webb</td>
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<td>Seth Bernard</td>
<td>Franz Huber</td>
<td>Ira Wells</td>
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<td>Alana Boland</td>
<td>Tamara Jones</td>
<td>Kevin Wilkinson</td>
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<td>Antje Budde</td>
<td>Peter Jurgec</td>
<td>Vicki Zhang</td>
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<td>Caitlin Burton</td>
<td>Sharon Kelly</td>
<td>Yufei Zhang</td>
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<td>Samantha Chang</td>
<td>Michael Kessler</td>
<td>Runqun (Helen) Zheng</td>
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<td>Alison Chasteen</td>
<td>Natasha Lan</td>
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Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:08 am by the Chair.

1. Approval of Minutes of the December 11, 2019 Meeting of Council

The Chair called on a motion to approve the minutes, which was carried. There was no business arising from these minutes.

2. Report of the Dean

Dean Woodin acknowledged the recent deaths of several members of the Arts & Science community and the impact the recent tragedy had on the Faculty. In memory of Mohammad Amin Beiruti and Mohammad Saleheh, two computer science PhD students who lost their lives in the crash of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752, the Department of Computer Science established the Beiruti and Saleheh Memorial Fund. This scholarship will support international graduate students.

Dean Woodin informed Council of the release of the Final Report of the Presidential & Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health. She encouraged members to read the report since the Faculty will be working with the Office of the Vice-President & Provost to implement the many forward-looking recommendations. Professor
Joseph Desloges will be leading the University’s newly created Mental Health Services Redesign Team. Dean Woodin also highlighted the call to transform the current academic culture and to foster a culture of caring across the three U of T campuses. This requires a significant investment beyond dollars; it must also come from all members of the Arts & Science community. To engage in this culture of caring, it might mean faculty members taking a few more minutes each day to listen to students’ concerns, or in the case of students, including everybody in their daily conversations. Dean Woodin hopes the Arts & Science community will join her on these small actions.

The Dean’s Office recently held three interactive academic planning sessions known as “strategy hives.” Attendees including students and faculty members from across the Faculty were asked how best to leverage the strengths of Arts & Science, and many creative ideas were raised. There will be more of these sessions the next several years as most attendees found these sessions engaging and worthwhile.

Dean Woodin has identified two emerging areas that would require more leadership capacity at the Dean’s Office: space and infrastructure, and student affairs. The next five years would see the need for the Faculty to revitalize existing spaces for students and research work as well as add capacity. The new Associate Dean, Space & Infrastructure role will be working with different stakeholders to bring projects to completion. In addition, a new Associate Dean, Student Affairs role is being created with the aim of addressing the student experience within the Faculty as well as coordinating activities with the Colleges and the Faculty Registrar’s Office to better respond to student concerns. The Dean has convened an advisory group to fill these two roles.

Finally, based on feedback from faculty and staff regarding internal communications, the Dean’s Office is launching a weekly A&S Updates digest to communicate to stakeholders in a more streamlined fashion.

No questions were raised. The Chair thanked Dean Woodin for her report.

3. (For Approval) Major Modification to the Political Science Major and Specialist, Department of Political Science – Asher Cutter, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Issues & Academic Planning

As this item contained a motion requiring a vote, the Chair briefly outlined the process that would entail before inviting Professor Asher Cutter, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Issues & Academic Planning to speak to the item.

The proposed changes by the Department of Political Science to its Major and Specialist programs stemmed from an external review conducted in 2016. As part of the department’s curriculum renewal development process, a wide range of review and discussions took place with respect to teaching hours and curriculum structure. Students were also consulted extensively through surveys and focus groups.

With the goal of providing flexibility to students in mind, full-credit (Y) courses at the 100- and 200-levels would be converted to half-credit (H) courses to allow for more space for electives at the higher levels as well as better alignment with the structure of courses in related disciplines. To highlight the department’s commitment to supporting diversity, students pursuing the Political Science Major or Specialist will be required to complete 1.0 FCE of courses in diversity and identity-related topics.

Be It Resolved

THAT the proposed modifications to the Political Science Major and Specialist, as described in the attached proposal dated January 17, 2020, be approved effective March 1, 2020.

The motion was moved and seconded.

A member asked if courses offered as part of the One Programs could also be used to fulfill the enrolment and completion requirements. The member was also curious about the Department of Political Science’s process in determining which First-Year Foundations (FYF) courses from other academic units would be accepted. Associate Dean Cutter responded that the acceptability of these courses would be based on the content taught and its
relevance to political science. Professor Dickson Eyoh, Associate Chair and Undergraduate Director from the Department of Political Science added that the list of acceptable courses would be dynamic, and students are encouraged to consult the departmental website for the most up-to-date list of acceptable courses, which the number now stands at 7.

A follow-up question was raised asking if the completion of a half-credit (H) FYF course is mandatory in order to enroll in the Political Science programs. Associate Dean Cutter replied that the completion of an FYF course is not mandatory and that it’s merely a way that department is offering flexibility.

On the vote the motion was carried.

4. (For Approval) Major Modification to the Actuarial Science Specialist, Department of Statistical Sciences – Asher Cutter, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Issues & Academic Planning

The proposed addition of a professional experience requirement to the Actuarial Science Specialist builds on the previous restructuring of higher-year practical courses from the last several years. This Specialist program typically has high competition, and there has been a high demand from students looking to secure jobs in this field. The creation of a work-integrated learning component aims to provide students with a dedicated way for them to develop professional experience to complement their coursework. Students pursuing this Specialist will complete a non-academic skills training course prior to taking on a 12-week work placement in their third or fourth year.

Be It Resolved
THAT the proposed modifications to the Actuarial Science Specialist, as described in the attached proposal dated January 20, 2020, be approved effective March 1, 2020.

The motion was moved and seconded. There was no discussion arising from the motion. On the vote the motion was carried.

5. (For Approval) Major Modification to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Department of Psychology – Dwayne Benjamin, Vice-Dean, Graduate Education

The proposed addition of a direct-entry option to the Department of Psychology’s existing doctoral program aims to improve the competitiveness of the program in comparison to other top Psychology programs in North America. It will allow qualified students with a bachelor’s degree to be admitted without the completion of a master’s degree. The direct entry option will include the regular PhD program requirements and a foundational research project to be completed in the first two years of the program, as well as additional coursework. This will allow students to make more effective use of the five-year timespan to focus on their doctoral-level research project.

The department intends to admit most of its applicants into the direct-entry PhD option. Applicants with an eligible master’s degree will continue to be admitted into the existing four-year PhD program.

Be It Resolved
THAT the proposed modifications to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Psychology, as described in the attached proposal dated January 29, 2020, be approved effective September 1, 2020.

The motion was moved and seconded. There was no discussion arising from the motion. On the vote the motion was carried.
6. **(For Recommendation) Closure of the Collaborative Specialization in Ancient Greek and Roman History, Department of Classics – Dwayne Benjamin, Vice-Dean, Graduate Education**

This Collaborative Specialization is jointly offered by the Department of Classics at the University of Toronto and the Department of History at York University. Student enrolment was solid in the beginning but declined over the years. This combined with faculty changes at both institutions and the restructuring of the University’s Classics graduate program led to the ceasing of admissions in 2016.

Five students are currently registered in this program, and four other students have completed their requirements except their dissertation. Two of the current students who have not yet completed their requirements will be given the opportunity to do so. All the original objectives of the program can still be met even with the Collaborative Specialization closure as students from both universities can replicate the program by taking graduate courses at the other university through the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student (OVGS) program.

**Be It Recommended**

THAT the proposed closure of the Collaborative Specialization in Ancient Greek and Roman History, as described in the attached proposal dated February 4, 2020, be approved effective September 1, 2020.

The motion was moved and seconded.

A member asked if there would be a way for lapsed students to complete their program if they choose to return. Vice-Dean Benjamin indicated that these students are registered at York University, and there are different rules there. Since they have already completed their coursework, they may return to complete their dissertation.

On the vote the motion was carried.

7. **(For Approval) Creation of the Institute of Iranian Studies as an EDU:C – Dwayne Benjamin, Vice-Dean, Graduate Education**

The proposal to create the Institute of Iranian Studies has been in development for many years. With the new Institute’s administrative home in the Faculty of Arts & Science, it aims to serve as a focal point more generally for scholarship on contemporary Iran and Iranian civilizations, advance understanding about Iran in society, inform the general public, as well as raise the profile of the Iranian studies endeavours at the University. In addition to fostering research, the Institute hopes to promote community and intercultural dialogue. This proposal was developed through the University’s Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, and consultation was undertaken with both the University of Toronto Mississauga and the University of Toronto Scarborough.

**Be It Resolved**

THAT the Institute of Iranian Studies be established as an EDU:C in the Faculty of Arts & Science, effective July 1, 2020.

The motion was moved and seconded. There was no discussion arising from the motion. On the vote the motion was carried.

8. **(For Approval) Special Committee of Arts & Science Council on Academic Policy – Thomas MacKay, Director, Faculty Governance & Curriculum Services**

Mr. Thomas MacKay, Director, Faculty Governance & Curriculum Services explained that Council has the power to establish Special Committees in accordance with the By-Laws of Council to consider specific issues. The current governance structure is such that the Agenda Committee serves as an executive function for Council, and the Standing Committees of Council recommend policy and regulation changes specific to their portfolios. However,
there’s no governance home or arm within the Faculty to discuss and review broader policies. For the past while, discussion and review of big-ticket items would normally take place through intensive task forces created on an ad-hoc basis. The proposed creation of this Special Committee on Academic Policy would allow for the prioritization and review of these different policies in a more holistic way.

When the proposal was initially conceived, the plan would also include the creation of an Executive Committee to help vet ideas and proposals. The initial feedback received from the December 2019 Arts & Science Council meeting gave rise to the recognition that many of the current Standing and non-Standing Committees already play a strong role in vetting policy-related ideas. The revised proposal would see the elimination of the Executive Committee, ensure minimum representation of constituencies for quorum, as well as loosen and clarify the membership category language so that administrative representation would also reflect an individual working in the capacity as a College Registrar or Dean of Students.

The Dean’s Office and the Governance unit are working on the logistics regarding soliciting nominations. Ideally, members of this Special Committee would have some governance experience. It’s expected that the Agenda Committee will review the membership nominations in consultation with the Dean’s Office. Some of the work by the Special Committee could start as early as March 2020, with the bulk of the work to resume in September 2020.

**Be It Resolved**

THAT the Committee on Academic Policy be established as a Special Committee of Arts & Science Council, as described in the attached proposal dated February 3, 2020, be approved effective February 12, 2020 until June 30, 2021.

The motion was moved and seconded.

A member inquired about the freestanding nature of the title of the Special Committee. Mr. MacKay emphasized the Council’s need to recognize that no such committee as this exists in a long time within the Faculty. Factors such as the natural evolution of the Faculty’s programs, requirements, student bodies, and the rise of issues surrounding student mental health motivate the Faculty to reexamine what is considered normal policy wise.

On the vote the motion was carried.

9. **(For Discussion) Academic Planning Update – Poppy Lockwood, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning**

Professor Poppy Lockwood, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning provided an overview of the consultation already undertaken as part of the Faculty’s academic planning process before delving into the draft plan content.

Consultation began with the development of the 2018 A&S Priorities Discussion Paper in Winter 2018 leading up to the preparation of the Faculty’s Self-Study. Following an external review and corresponding site visits in Fall 2018, eight working groups were established and tasked with responding to review recommendations targeting the different priority areas for the Faculty. The Dean’s Office provided a response to the external review in Summer 2019, and an Academic Plan Advisory Committee was formed in Fall 2019 to start drafting the new academic plan.

In late January and early February of this year, Dean Woodin hosted three community consultation sessions known as “strategy hives.” At these sessions, students, staff, faculty and alumni were asked the question: “How can we enrich opportunities for teaching, learning, and research in Arts & Science by capitalizing on the breadth and strengths across the Faculty?” Some of the key themes identified from these consultation sessions included interdisciplinarity in teaching and research, cross-disciplinary exploration, simplifying and de-stressing the student experience, as well as Indigenous and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives.

Vice-Dean Lockwood previewed a few sections of the academic plan that had already been drafted. In the area of
research success, a question expected to be addressed in the academic plan is the notion of recognizing the excellence of research of students and faculty members both internally and externally.

In the area of student experience, investment in experiential learning and supporting internationalization are viewed as important at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. At the undergraduate level, the Faculty looks to partner with various stakeholders to implement recommendations from the Final Report of the Presidential & Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health. The Faculty is also looking at the feasibility of offering a new Bachelor of Arts and Science as part of its innovations in academic programming. Meanwhile, improving base funding packages and facilitating improvements in time-to-degree are approaches that would be essential in enhancing the graduate student experience.

The Faculty is considering the creation of a new standing committee to promote the values of equity, diversity and inclusion among leaders. It is also pondering ways to develop more outreach programs to attract students from diverse backgrounds to the Faculty. Depending on the results of the broad-based admissions pilot currently undertaken by the Department of Computer Science, the Faculty may consider this approach more broadly. Vice-Dean Lockwood reiterated Dean Woodin’s comments about the need for the Faculty to promote and embrace the culture of caring to ensure student success.

To build partnerships with local and global communities, an idea being considered by the Faculty is the creation of an Arts & Science speaker series that would allow for discussions of public significance. The Faculty also understands that it could do more than just recognizing the contributions of alumni, that more engagement with them on a deeper level is required.

Vice-Dean Lockwood indicated that sections pertaining to space and infrastructure, communications, information and instructional technology, and Indigenous research have yet to be drafted. It is expected that the draft Academic Plan will be posted on the Faculty’s Academic Planning website in early March. Based on initial feedback gathered from stakeholders including the Provostial Advisory Group, the updated Academic Plan will be circulated to Council members in advance of the April 15, 2020 Council meeting. Provided that the Arts & Science Council endorses the Academic Plan “in principle,” it would be reviewed by the University’s Planning & Budget Committee on May 7, 2020 and by the Academic Board later that month.

A member commented that the size of the funding package was what impacted graduate students’ time-to-degree completion during their time as a graduate coordinator. Vice-Dean Lockwood replied that improving funding would be at the top of the list in order to enhance the graduate student experience.

A member suggested the Faculty to be mindful of inadvertently creating a particular type of experience for students when evaluating its academic programming and policies as certain experiences could be difficult to share among students, and that dealing with a competitive environment is already stressful for certain students. Vice-Dean Lockwood clarified that the Faculty’s focus is on streamlining existing processes to reduce redundancy. For instance, the Faculty would like to communicate more effectively to prospective students given the confusing admissions process currently in place.

A member felt that supporting non-academic pathways is a false position from their department’s perspective since most of the MA and PhD applications their department receives indicate the desire to pursue academic pathways. The member also expressed concerns about the internationalization of the graduate student body considering the quota system currently in place in their department. Vice-Dean Lockwood responded that the Faculty would like to provide more support for international students. She acknowledged that the desired pathways could vary for students from one unit to the next, and that the Faculty is simply ensuring the support is there for students regardless of the pathways they choose to pursue.

The same member expressed concerns that the Faculty appears to be swayed by the economics model as opposed to the acquisition of knowledge. Dean Woodin replied that the Faculty does focus on the acquisition of knowledge and research of graduate students. She explained that since the vast majority of students do not go on to assistant
professorship positions, the Faculty is trying to show students the different opportunities available, which would include non-academic careers.

A member commented that it is important to let students know it’s acceptable to pursue non-academic pathways to help them open their eyes.

A member asked about the possibility of overlap posed by the internal postdoctoral fellowship program with current postdoctoral fellows. Vice-Dean Lockwood replied that the Faculty is looking into this and that the Faculty has a different way of supporting postdoctoral fellows.

The Chair thanked Vice-Dean Lockwood for her presentation.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:16 am.

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