

## MINUTES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEETING

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2001**  
**(As amended at the November 6, 2001 meeting)**

### **Members Present:**

C. Lajeunesse	E. Aspevig
G. Cressy	L. Grayson
M. Dewson	J. Sandys
R. Mendelson	I. Levine
C. Cassidy	S. Williams
M. Booth	D. Northwood
K. Alnwick	C. Matthews
T. Knowlton	B. Jackson
M. Barber	A. Furman
G. Mothersill	T. Barbiero
J. Cook	M. Dowler
K. Penny	D. Martin
M. Mazerolle	J. Monro
A. Pevec	F. Hare
N. Lister	J. Yee
Y. Yuan	D. Heyd
S. Quigley	G. Turcotte
D. Glynn	J. Hicks
D. Elder	K. Marciniec
D. Henriques	K. Lee Law
R. Kup	D. Tsanos
F. Frkovic	S. Sabih
S. Wasti	N. Parmar
M. Rashid	R. Virji
O. Bay	

### **Regrets:**

M. Creery	L. Lum
A. Cross	R. Ravindran
G. Inwood	F. Salustri
S. Wicary	N. Zaver
J. Ellimootttil	

### **Absent:**

M. McCrae
K. Hampson
D. Amernic

## 1. President's Report

he President presented the Brian Segal Award to Natalie Dabit, a student in the School of Nutrition and a member of the Women's Soccer Team. She was applauded for her contributions to the cultural and academic life of the University.

Introductions of New Staff: Robert Dirstein, Director of Research; Diane Schulman, Secretary of Academic Council. Judith Sandys appointed Associate Vice-President, Academic.

Recognition of CFI Awards: Lamya Amleh of the Civil Engineering Department received a \$60,000 grant to study Innovative Corrosion Techniques in Concrete Structures and Julia Lu of the Department of Chemistry, Biology and Chemical Engineering received a \$61,000 to study Mercury in the Natural Environment.

Construction Update: Linda Grayson was called upon to give a brief update on construction progress. The Center for Studies in Community Health is a year ahead of schedule. The Graphic Communication Management Building is also ahead of schedule. There will be a new schedule issued for the Center for Computing and Engineering. Student Campus Center is well under way. It is in the design stage and construction should begin in the spring. The Continuing Education Building is in the design stage. New schedules will be issued in the fall.

Giving Campaign: The Toronto Star donated \$1 million for improvements to labs and to establish an endowment for maintenance and improvements in the Journalism program. Chancellor John Eaton donated \$1.5 million and the McLaughlin Foundation \$0.5 million to name the Georege Brown Ryerson Centre for Community Health in honor of Sally Horsfall Eaton. The President will thank the Chancellor for his support on behalf of Academic Council.

Financial Update: The President announced that a message about the following would be issued via infoline this evening.

The University has many things to be proud of. Negotiations have been successfully completed with four of the five bargaining units without any strikes of slowdowns or lockouts. Enrolment is strong as is the demand for programs. In fact, in some programs there are more students than expected. Those programs making accommodations for these students were thanked. There are more than 200 registered graduate students, and the first of the graduate degrees will be given in Spatial Analysis at the October 19 convocation, where Jane Goodall will be presented with an Honorary Doctorate. Final confirmation is being awaited from Nelson Mandela, who will receive and Honorary Doctorate on November 17. Ryerson will be the only University in Canada to be given this honor. Plans are being instituted to deal with the 700 students who will be absorbed by Ryerson in the first year of the double cohort. The Giving Campaign has raised more than \$30 million, and members were urged to encourage further giving. Derek Northwood and the Faculty of Engineering were commended for receiving a high level of accreditation, which recognizes the quality of their programs. It was also noted that the current budget year is on target.

But the University also faces many challenges. The first challenge is the preparation for the double cohort. Meetings are being held to determine how best to plan ahead. The challenge is to concentrate on what the focus should be in five, ten or fifteen years from now. That will be shaped by how the challenge of accepting these new students is met.

The impact of the 3.7% across-the-board cut last year has created difficulties in many departments. After years of paring down at Ryerson, there was little fat to cut into. The President was aware of the difficulties in particular departments. Ryerson is, to his knowledge, already leaner than any other University. Across-the-board cuts cannot continue. Ryerson has a commitment to provide employees with fair compensation and competitive wages. Part of the financial challenge includes the provision of this compensation.

Unlike last year, when there was no time to plan for cuts, this year there will be a process in place for how to reduce costs. There are currently 2000 students for whom Ryerson receives no government funding. This represents \$2 million in unfunded BIUs. If this funding does not materialize, the shortfall will be \$4-6 million. There were multi-year plans implemented in the 1990s because the deficit was getting out of hand. With the support of the President and the Executive Group, the Board has determined that Ryerson will not be permitted to operate in a deficit position, nor will another round of across-the-board be tolerated.

Planning must be done not only for the economic downturn, but for the issues which will arise in the future. Over the course of the next several weeks, the Vice-Presidents, with input from the Deans and Senior Directors, will establish a process that will identify all potential cost-saving options, including restructuring measures and priorities, and activities for reduction. The process will be as open and consultative as possible, while remembering that there is responsibility to the community to be fiscally responsible. It will not be possible to accommodate every interest, and that some areas of activity will be eliminated. This is not something that anyone wants to do, nor is it something Ryerson is alone in facing. This process is occurring in many other institutions.

It is clear that there will be controversy as this process proceeds, but it must be done to assure the future. The alternative is another round of across-the-board reduction, which is not acceptable. Cooperation is asked to determine the prescription for growth.

The President presented some of the fiscal assumptions that lead to the prediction of a budget shortfall of at least \$4 million.

## **Discussion**

**Q. Request for an explanation of unfunded BIUs.**

A. Before 1990 universities were given a funding corridor. Funds were granted at the level of the midpoint of the corridor. Any students above that level were unfunded, but the government said that the corridor would be modified periodically to reflect the changing reality of enrolment patterns. These did not occur. In 1993 when Ryerson became a university, more students were taken in than before based on the assumption that the corridor would be adjusted. This

amounted to a total of about 2000 students, with a funding shortfall of \$12-15 million. In 2000, \$2.8 million of that was given to the university. Every university in the province is experiencing the same problem. The government has now defined last year as the starting point for double-cohort funding.

Q. Why does the university take in more students than are funded?

A. The university will lose all of the potentially funded BIUs it has gained, and there will be a loss in tuition revenue. Pressure is being put on the government by the Council of Universities to fund unfunded BIUs.

Q. Last year a statement was made that Ryerson had \$12 million more in revenue than expenses. Does this not mean that Ryerson is making a profit?

A. Linda Grayson responded that there was a change in the audit process that included research grants, endowments and SuperBuild money as revenue. This money cannot be spent on overhead items such as utilities, so it is misleading.

Q. Is it anticipated that there would be tuition increases?

A. This has not been determined. The budget anticipates a 1.92% increase for next year.

Q. How will the process to make budget cuts be determined?

A. Errol Aspevig responded that the small working with the Vice President, Academic will be investigating methods used at other universities and seeking input from Deans and their Faculties on what is appropriate for Ryerson. The process would have to move quickly to achieve the goals. The decision making process and the development of the process will be inclusive. It is hoped that by the next Dean's meeting on October 10 there will be several options presented. The results must be consistent with the strategic plan of the University. It is hoped that the process will be in place in 3-4 weeks.

Q. What about using revenues gained from the naming rights for buildings?

A. In order to be given naming rights to a building, the policy states that 30% of the cost of the building must be donated.

### **Nomination of Vice Chair**

Two nominations for Vice-Chair were received in advance by the Nominating Committee. These were Odelia Bay and Jane Monro. The Secretary of Academic Council announced that the duties of the Vice Chair were to chair the meeting if the Chair was not present. She called for nominations from the floor, but none were made.

A ballot vote was held, and Odelia Bay was elected Vice-Chair.

## **2. Good of the University**

This section was chaired by Vice-Chair Odelia Bay.

C. Matthews announced that the Ryerson Library was one of 64 university libraries receiving CFI funding for the Canadian National Site Licensing Project. This allows Ryerson to become part of a consortium to negotiate for pricing on

electronic resources and providing a common platform with other Canadian universities.

K. Marciniec announced a \$1200 bursary raised by George's Hotdog Bursary Day, and a RyeSAC fall food drive from October 1-12.

J. Cook expressed disappointment that Ryerson did not organize a community event in response to the events of September 11. He felt that the University should have made an effort to find a place and time to gather together as had most other universities. Considering Ryerson's multiculturalism, solidarity should have been expressed with people across the world.

S. Wasti expressed appreciation for the renovations to the Business building.

O. Bay announced a RyeSAC- Women's Centre cosponsored event, the SHEro Awards and "Girls Night Out" on October 10.

### **3. Approval of the Minutes**

K. Alnwick moved to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2001 meeting, and D. Northwood seconded.

D. Glynn asked to clarify the statement attributed to him on page 7 of the minutes. He wished to say that he felt students who took courses in the ITM program, who were not program students, would be adversely affected by the laptop policy.

The minutes were unanimously approved.

### **4. Business arising out of the minutes**

- a) An addendum to the Report W-2001-1 of the Learning & Teaching Committee was attached. There was no discussion
- b) A list of Universities with laptop programs was included, as per a request from the previous meeting.

### **5. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

### **6. Reports of Actions and Recommendations of Departmental and Divisional Councils**

These were received for information as presented in the agenda, except that the Course Change Form from Graduate Studies was withdrawn until the next meeting. It was noted that the changes to the Geography Program served to semesterize the program.

### **7. Reports of Committees**

#### **a) Academic Standards Committee (Report #F-2001-1)**

E. Aspevig gave an overview of the role of the Academic Standards Committee in the Program Review Process by referring to the Appendix to the Report. Attention is paid not only to the strengths and weaknesses as outlined in the review, but also to the quality of the review itself. He also informed Council of its possible actions with respect to Program Reviews.

Council may: Endorse the review as submitted; Endorse the review with qualifications; Refer the review to the Dean for further actions on weaknesses; Reject the review and refer to the Vice President, Academic for further action.

He noted that the Academic Standards Committee works with the Programs to help satisfy policies, and that the review of the committee was quite thorough. The committee endorsed both of the reviews submitted.

**1. Program Review for Interior Design:**

This review took place in two stages, a self-study and a peer review. FIDER which is an accrediting body for this program, affirmed most of the points made in the self study, and recommended more electives, the need for more CAD integration, an internship program, more integration between design dynamics and design technology courses, the need for more technical and support staff, increased space for resource/reference materials, and the need to keep faculty current without burnout. Faculty are being asked to carry heavy teaching loads due to the retirement of faculty. They also noted a high student-faculty ratio and a relative lack of interaction with other disciplines at the University.

The School has responded by establishing an internship program, expanding the CAD component and beginning to develop curricular changes incorporating more elective opportunities. A developmental plan is in place, but this will need more work.

The text of the committee's comments was reviewed, and it was noted that there were three different School Chairs involved in the review process, and a dramatic shift from Mode1 to Mode 2 faculty due to retirements. The School had been asked for a further review after its submission of its first report. Elements of the review were highlighted, and it was noted that the School was advised that development of a graduate program was premature.

E. Aspevig moved and I. Levine seconded that based upon the initial program review report and the later addendum, Academic Council approve the Interior Design program review.

**The motion was passed.**

**2. Proposed Professional Study Courses in Interior Design:**

Note was made of proposed curriculum changes to the third and fourth year courses.

E. Aspevig moved and I. Levine seconded that Academic Council approve the proposed Professional Study sequence in Interior Design.

The motion was passed.

**3. Periodic Program Review, Applied Computer Science:**

E. Aspevig commented that although the Academic Standards Committee had noted that the "analysis of the strengths and weaknesses and the developmental plan are scant, but in other respects the report is very solid," this was a well-presented self-study. Student surveys showed a high degree of satisfaction in most categories, with the exception of oral and written communication skills. Ethics in practical professional practice are not currently taught in a systematic way. The peer reviewers also noted this. Note was made of the concern over gender balance, which seems to be a societal issue, and the school has taken some measures to attract more women students to the program. The imbalance is disturbing, and the school is encouraged to make this a priority. The developmental plan needs to be expanded considerably, particularly in setting up timelines and program objectives. The lack of faculty with a Ph.D. was noted. Further note was made of the competition for faculty in this area.

E. Aspevig moved and S. Quigley seconded that Academic Council approve the Applied Computer Science program review as submitted.

Discussion

Q. There seems to be a contradiction between a "scant" analysis of strengths and weaknesses and a "solid" report.

A. The Academic Standards committee was satisfied with the quality of the review. R. Goldsmith spoke for the 2000-2001 Committee, stating that the strengths and weaknesses were only one part of the report, and that these had been well addressed in the oral presentation of the review to the committee.

Q. A question was raised as to the lack of Ph.D. faculty.

A. C. Alexopoulos responded that new hires all have a Ph.D.

Q. A question was raised about the reasons for the student gender imbalance and the steps that are being taken to address this imbalance.

A. C. Alexopoulos responded that physics is being dropped as a prerequisite, allowing chemistry and biology to serve as the science prerequisite. Faculty are being sent to speak to high school students to encourage women to join the program. The program will be working with the Women in Engineering group. D. Northwood noted that the gender imbalance is not specific to Ryerson, and that it is routinely found in programs of this type.

The motion was passed.

**b) Research Ethics Board (Report #F-2001-1)**

R. Rinkoff reported that the report was for information only. The main purpose of the committee is the review of research protocols, with timely and constructive feedback to researchers. The committee interprets the Federal Tri-Council Policy Statement to assure that Ryerson complies with federal policy. Members were encouraged to review the four documents outlined in the report.

The committee will be dealing with the issues of student research assignments for publication and renewal of projects that were originally approved under other guidelines.

**c) Awards and Ceremonials Committee (Report #F-2001-1)**

C. Lajeunesse requested that D. Schulman present the report, which was for information only. The first graduate students will be receiving their degrees in Spatial Analysis at the October 19 convocation. The wording of the document they will be receiving has been revised, and the new wording will be used in future undergraduate degrees as well. The numbers of graduates in each category was reviewed.

**d) Nominating Committee (Report #F-2001-1)**

K. Penny submitted complete lists of all of the members of Academic Council and all of the standing committees. Members to be nominated were designated with an asterisk before their name. There were the following changes noted.

- Marie Dowler is nominated as AC member from Arts.
- Knud Jensen has withdrawn his nomination for the PPAC.
- The nomination of the Composition Committee is withheld pending outcome of motion 8.1, as substituted for the original motion.
- Jane Monro is to be noted as chair of the Appeals Committee.
- The IT, IP and FCS committees are on temporary hold.

D. Schulman was thanked for her efforts in obtaining the nominations.

K. Penny moved and D. Martin seconded that the nominations be accepted as presented.

**The motion was passed.**

It was noted that Leslie Young Lewis has resigned from the University and would need to be replaced on the Admissions Committee.

**e) GPA Review Committee (Report #F-2001-1)**

A correction to Item 7 was distributed. The report was submitted for discussion only.

E. Aspevig presented background information. D. Mock began the process of the GPA review and committee membership has changed over time. All members were thanked. The report is being presented for discussion purposes and a final policy will be presented for approval at the next Academic Council meeting.

P. Jensen was called upon to present the report. She explained that the committee had looked at models from other universities and found that there was no one set of standards common to all. Ryerson's use of the

Conditional standing is unique, and it should be better utilized as an early warning system.

Grading in Engineering provides the greatest challenge to the current grading system. Other Engineering schools utilize an acceptable minimum grade of 65% as a C-, but at Ryerson a C- is a 63%. Several possible grading schemes are presented, and the committee recommends that Departments be able to apply for a variance from the GPA policy through the Academic Standards Committee.

## **Discussion**

Q. Concern was expressed about the Registrar's control of the assignment of an INP grade to a course, as described in Recommendation 3. A question was raised as to how the determination of this assignment would be made.

A. K. Alnwick responded that the intent of this grade was always to designate the first semester of year long courses, and that the grade was incorrectly being used in lieu of INC. The recommendation simply restores clarity.

Q. The committee was asked to reconsider the two time limit for repeating a course, as outlined in Recommendation 5.

A. P. Jensen responded that tighter restrictions were originally proposed, and that in the past there were no criteria for repeating a course. In fact, if the course in question is a required course, the student would already be under suspension, and if it were an elective, another elective could be taken. Students would be advised to reconsider their program of study.

Q. The committee was asked to consider the length of time to graduate for 5 year co-op programs.

A. P. Jensen responded that that was an oversight and it would be considered.

Q. A question was raised as to what types of variance to the GPA policy Academic Council would consider under Recommendation 1. Would Engineering and Applied Science be permitted to be the only Faculty with a numerical grading system?

A. P. Jensen responded that dual grading systems would be possible, where numerical grades were converted automatically to letter grades, and vice versa. The biggest problem with this approach would be the numerical definition of an "F". There would be no limitation on what a Faculty could present as a variance to Standards Committee.

Q. Concern was expressed about the time limit for the completion of an INC grade. What would be done if a student had an INP for the first semester, and although making satisfactory progress, was forced to withdraw in the second half of the course? What would become of the first semester grade?

A. This problem would require intervention, which is done in many other scenarios.

Q. The committee was asked to consider how the residency requirement outlined in Recommendation 13 would be impacted by the 1991 report of the Distance Education Committee, which the committee was asked to reference in the report.

Q. A question was raised as to why the department or school rather than the Registrar's office was required to contact students with Conditional standings. It was felt that there was a time element involved especially after the Winter term.

A. Many departments already do this using a template using a report from faculty or administrative reports to define the parameters and they do not find it very difficult. The Registrar will continue to inform students of their Probation or Suspended status. It was felt that there needed to be a connection between the department and the student regarding Conditional standing as the way in which each department handles this is different.

Q. Option 2 in Recommendation 1 seems to be the grading option preferred by Engineering and Applied Science. There seems to be an unused GPA point at 0.33. Was any consideration given to the use of this additional point? Perhaps this would allow splitting the range into marginal failures.

A. An alternative model was considered consolidating C grades, and other models. It was not an issue of marginally failing grades that generated Engineering's interest in this grading option. It was more about precision in grading and weighting.

Q. Was any thought given to circulating the report more widely?

A. E. Aspevig responded that the report has been circulated, and has already been in the works for over three years. There is a need to bring it to closure. He would welcome email input.

Q. Web registration over the Christmas period should be taken into consideration when looking at the timeliness of Conditional status letters.

A. This was noted.

Q. It was noted that the recommendation to do something with students on Conditional standing was a good one, but in large schools it was not possible to meet with each of them individually.

A. The committee had raised this concern, and it was felt that there could be a template letter or a large group seminar.

Q. There was again a question regarding the 4 month requirement for the completion of an INC as many faculty use this to deal with gray areas, and the assumption that allowing a student to sit in the course a year later when it was again offered was not a bad one. Another opinion was expressed that the time limitation was good.

A. K. Alnwick responded that the length of time to finish a course should not be longer than the original learning period.

There was further discussion about the two time limit for repeating a course. It was felt that the standings levels were designed to handle that issue, and the limitations in course repetition were not necessary.

It was stated that in some universities INC automatically become an "F" after the time limit, and that the grade can then be appealed.

E. Aspevig reiterated that most of the issues discussed had been worked on by the committee, and that the report would be submitted for approval as a policy at the November Academic Council meeting. He invited email responses. He thanked P. Jensen for coming back from retirement to present the report.

**f) Ad-Hoc Work Group on Student Religious Observance (#F2001-1)**

E. Aspevig asked K. Alnwick to present the report for discussion and the attached proposed policy. The policy was under development for a long time. It was raised as part of the Course Management policy. This policy replaces Policy number #49 dated May 5, 1987. This policy addresses how religious observance may affect any one of a number of academic responsibilities. Practices at other institutions were investigated, and it was found that there was a wide range of approaches. The report was provided as advice to the Vice President Academic, and there have been further discussions around the report. Steps have been taken to break the material into a policy document and a background document.

The central issue to the proposal is that Ryerson values its diversity and that sincerely held religious beliefs should be addressed in a reasonable manner. The single factor in this new proposal is that it is all-inclusive and puts religious observance on a par with other things at the University. Students and faculty can access information on religious observances on the web.

Students will have the responsibility to discuss the religious observance with the faculty member, and the faculty member has the obligation to work out a reasonable accommodation for that observance. There is a form and instructions, which will be on the web.

K. Alnwick moved and T. Barbiero seconded a motion to approve the Policy on Accommodation of Student Religious Observance Obligations.

**Discussion**

Q. What if it is not known two weeks in advance when a holiday will occur?  
A. This is handled in the policy.

Q. Since different sects might celebrate holidays on different days, who determines the date of a holiday.  
A. The forms are linked to known websites for guidance.

Q. Might faculty be required to make up more than two exams in order to accommodate more than one student?

A. It is the policy of the University that Faculty and students make themselves available during the final exam period. Departments can deal with this issue in a number of ways, including setting an alternate testing date for all students requiring such an alternate date.

Q. The policy was commended for the recognition of the Universities recognition of sincerely held religious beliefs. The policy states that students who are not accommodated by the faculty member should consult with the Chair. This raised the question of what a Chair was supposed to do if a faculty member did not make an accommodation. Should the Chair direct an accommodation? And if the Chair does not make an accommodation, the matter goes to the Office of Harassment and Discrimination. Is the accommodation provided there?

Further, on page 71, item 2, Instructions for Students, there is an item referred to as "During the Term" which does not seem to apply. It seems to apply to a box half way down the form. It was recommended that the policy be returned at the November meeting.

Q. Does the filing of such a form present a contradiction with privacy policy?

A. It will be difficult to deal with religious observance issues if students do not identify their religion. Very few of these forms should reach the Chair's office. If there is a dispute, then the principals of Natural Justice apply. We are identifying a line structure within the institution. The student has recourse. The response of the Chair should be to attempt to resolve the issue, and if not, they could contact the Harassment Office. It will be difficult to see what changes are needed until the policy has been tested.

Q. Other student claims are not taken at face value, such as medical forms, which must be signed by a doctor. Why is it that in this situation there is no such request for external back up?

A. K. Alnwnick felt that that would be a very demeaning process. People who are sick are not sick since birth. There is a mixed student body, and maybe religious leaders are not in Toronto. This is more analogous to the trust of students to submit their own work. (This led to a side discussion about plagiarism of papers and the ability to check them on the web.) We need to trust our students.

Marilynn Booth noted that if ever the community needed to depend on trust it was at this point. The policy is to be reviewed in two years, and she called the vote.

C. Lajeunesse asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to table the issue until the next meeting. No such motion was made.

**The motion was passed unanimously.**

**8. New Business**

**a) Motion to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Council By-Laws**

A substitute motion was distributed to amend the Terms of Reference of the Composition Committee.

C. Lajeunesse reported that the Composition committee discussed the motion and it was clear that the By-Laws and the role of the Composition committee needed to be revised. What is proposed is that there be a Composition and By-Laws Committee, chaired by the President, as before, and including five faculty members of Academic Council, one from each faculty and there be two student members from Academic Council. The recommendations of the Committee would normally come to Academic Council at the January or February meeting, so they could be enacted for the following Academic year.

J. Sandys moved and G. Turcotte seconded the motion to amend the Terms of Reference of the Composition Committee.

**Discussion:**

M. Booth requested that the committee include a member of Continuing Education.

C. Lajeunesse responded that it was not an oversight, and that part of the problem was there was no provision for having non-faculty members on Academic Council. The person would have to be a teaching faculty and a Member of Council.

A friendly amendment was made to include a member of CE on the Composition and By-Laws Committee.

Amendment: There will be six faculty members of Academic Council, one from each Faculty and one appointed by the Dean of Continuing Education.

**The motion was passed.**

There was no other new business.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.