
Apologies from: Imogen Coe, Man-Wah Wong

6.1 Minutes of the Meeting of February 9, 2010
Motion by Paul Delaney to approve the minutes, seconded by Amir Asif.

6.2 Matters Arising
Nothing brought forward.

The Chair requested a moment of silence in honour of Professor Michael Pollard. Jochen Rudolph was asked to communicate the condolences of this Council to the family.

6.3 Inquiries & Communications
-- February Senate Synopsis
For information only.

6.4 Dean's Remarks
Regarding current faculty searches, the Dean reported that the Hiring Committee for the fMRI position has concluded its deliberations, and that approval by the Provost for the recommendation is being sought. As part of an inter-Faculty initiative with Health, an ad for a Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Neuroscience has gone out. Work on the application for an NSERC IRC in Atmospheric Remote Sounding has been concluded and a site visit by an NSERC panel is scheduled for later this month. An application for an NSERC IRC in Space-Time Imaging will be submitted later this spring.

FSE had its first enrolment planning meeting with representatives of VP Academic and VP Students. The Dean has expressed concern about a five-year forecast with no growth in student head counts in science and engineering, citing the important role that the Faculty has to play in making the University more comprehensive. The issue of enrolment and budget planning will be pursued further at an upcoming meeting on budget planning in early April.

The Faculty and its Departments are making particular efforts to convert offers of admission to good students to our programs into acceptances, beyond the traditional calling campaigns and presentations at the Spring Gala.

Construction for the Life Sciences Building continues to be behind schedule, because of delays in obtaining permits from the City. It is hoped that the current delay will be reduced to about 3 weeks by mid April.

There were no questions to the Dean.

6.5 Associate Dean’s and Bethune Master Remarks

Michael De Robertis’, Associate Dean, Research & Faculty Affairs (as read by Peter Cribb)
The NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award competition successfully concluded in late February, adjudicated by FSE's Research and Awards Committee. A total of 97 students applied for 47 USRAs this year, a ratio of just over two-to-one. Usually not every successful student accepts the award, and so we also keep a reversion list of a few students. Letters have been mailed to all students informing them of the disposition of their application.

The Faculty of Science and Engineering's Computing Plan and Academic Equipment Fund were submitted on Friday 19 February and defended on Wednesday 3 March. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the extensive process, including FSE's Committee on Teaching and Learning. A particular note of thanks goes to Ulya Yigit who co-defended the Faculty's Computing Plan and who so capably assisted with the Plan's construction. FSE's request this year is significantly larger than normal because we are asking for the first of three installments for equipment intended for the undergraduate student "mega-labs" on the second floor of the Life Sciences Building.
Peter Cribb, Associate Dean, Student Affairs
We continue to monitor through Google Analytics the web traffic to the SPARK site. As of March 7 there have been about 360 unique visitors who spent on average just over 4 minutes on the site, visiting on average 5 pages. The total number of visits is roughly 750 and total page views 3,670. Roughly 130 students have registered with the site and 80+ odd have downloaded the application package. This represents considerable success in attracting potential students to explore science research at York.

Spiros Pagiatakis, Associate Dean Engineering, reported that over the last couple of years, there has been discussion on creating a Canadian Engineering Education Association and the guiding principle of this organization is to enhance the competence and relevance from Canadian Engineering Schools to continuous improvement in Engineering Education and Design Education. York University’s Engineering Program has taken quick steps to join this initiative and we are now one of the founding members of this Association. This Assoc. works with funding from the member organizations and the first conference of the Canadian Engineering Education Association is being held June 7-9, 2010 at Queens University. The Association is now accepting papers and abstracts related to engineering education across the country. This is a great initiative for us to show the quality of our Engineering program. York’s School of Engineering is working towards two new Engineering degree programs. The first is Software Engineering, which will be presented in the near future. The second is Power System Engineering which is funded by the private sector – specifically Hydro One – and we are in the process of obtaining support from other private companies.

Based on the numbers we are hearing at the moment, it appears that the School of Engineering will experience a growth in enrollment for a second year.

The School of Engineering is hosting the “Iron Ring Ceremony” at Atkinson College at 6:00 pm and will consist of York’s graduating students from this year as well as faculty members from other Engineering Schools in the GTA.

The York Chapter of Engineers without Borders is organizing the event “Pie the Professor” on March 16th at 1:00 p.m. in Vari Hall.

John Amanatides, Bethune Master
No remarks.

6.6 Reports from Science Representatives on Senate Committees

George Tourlakis and Amir Asif both sit on the ASCP, successor of Senate CCAS. There have been very few proposals coming forward. One was sent back because it did not have a sufficient number of credits at the 4th year level; the committee was unanimous that this was unacceptable in the context of University Undergraduate Degree Level expectations.

No Questions.

6.7 Reports of Committees

Consent Agenda
Science Curriculum Committee (Part II, Course Changes)
No comments.

For Action
-- Science Curriculum Committee (Parts I, III, IV of attachment 6.7.1)

   Motion to Accept by Peter Cribb; Seconded by John Amanatides

2) Change in Degree Requirements in the Biology Honours Major Program (BSc) (Page 12) Unanimously accepted.
   Motion to Accept by Peter Cribb; Seconded by John Amanatides

3) Change in Degree Requirements in the Biology Honours Program Page 14) Unanimously accepted.
   Motion to Accept by Peter Cribb; Seconded by John Amanatides

4) Proposed New Degree Program in Environmental Biology (Page 16) Unanimously accepted.
   Motion to Accept by Peter Cribb; Seconded by Tanya Noel.

Complete New Course Proposal is available at http://www.science.yorku.ca/Faculty/Faculty-Council/new-course-proposals.html

6.8 Other Business
-- Vice President Academic & Provost, Patrick Monahan: White Paper
Patrick Monahan, accompanied by Marla Chodak, spoke about the draft of the White Paper which was published on February 8th. The White Paper – a product of extensive consultations - builds on directions that have been articulated in many planning documents in the past. He stated that it does not break a lot of new ground, but rather articulates overarching themes. He thanked Dean Tholen who has played an important role in the discussions and development of the White Paper. He also wanted to recognize Dean Tholen’s contributions this year, especially at the dean’s table and for strong advancement of the spectrums of the Faculty of Science and Engineering.

Patrick Monahan explained that the overarching goal in the White Paper is the enhancement of quality. He stated that it is increasingly more focused on the contribution that research can make to the development of a knowledge society. It is obvious that Science and Engineering, as well as Technology Studies, are generally seen as increasingly important by Government and funding agencies which is particularly important to this Faculty.

He stated that one of the related objectives is greater comprehensiveness and that implies recognized strength across the fullest range of knowledge and human endeavours. We have a strong Faculty of Science and Engineering.

It has been an ambition of this University to have a greater balance between our traditional strengths (Social Science) with our emerging and growing strengths in fields of Science, Technology, Medicine, Health and Engineering. The Faculty of Science and Engineering has a key role to play in achieving the vision of greater comprehensiveness. In the White Paper increasing enrolment in Engineering is discussed as a key goal – but more generally in broadening our science offerings; the range of our offerings; and the ability to attract students with funding in the Science fields. He also stated that the White Paper is intended only to provide a framework, and that it will not provide all of the answers. The White Paper is pitched at a fairly broad and general level looking 5 – 10 years into the future. It is intended to give us a sense of our overall direction and trajectory.

Patrick Monahan stated that he was here to gather feedback on the White Paper as they are still in the consulting stages and will be revising the White Paper in line with the comments they receive. In early April there will be a revised version that will hopefully receive endorsement by Senate.

The floor was opened for questions, comments, suggestions, advice or discussion on ways that the paper can be improved and any items that should or should not be removed from the paper. Some of the suggestions put forward are as follows:

Peter Cribb - the White Paper should strengthen the wording in a way as to refer more to the fundamental sciences – rather than just applied sciences and engineering.

George Tourlakis - suggested some sentences in the White Paper should be added which would show how the more comprehensive university would be supported given the fiscal constraints. He also suggested that the University has had an imbalance in the favour of the liberal arts as opposed to science and engineering, for far too long.

John Amanatides - the 5-year plan for having enrollment increases seems pretty aggressive, especially given that, if we get numbers anywhere near the target, we are going to run out of physical space.

Nick Cercone - unless there are fundamental changes in the budgets, Faculties can and probably will, manipulate the teaching allotments in order to gain budget. He suggested some fundamental changes in the way we look at things, because we do not want to help the Faculty of Science and Engineering at the expense of other Faculties. How do you separate the budget from enrolment?

S. Mir – the comparison of a degree taken at a College vs. the same degree taken at a University. He feels that the College student would have more practical skills. It was suggested that the University offer Co-op or placement programs facilitated by the University in order to make the students more marketable. Another suggestion was many of the larger Universities have taken steps to revolutionize the learning experience by opening Courseware - whereby lectures are posted online and are available to students.

George Tourlakis - more drastic steps are needed in our goal for a larger Faculty of Science and Engineering. We should also approach things differently than in the past. We have been doing things the same way for 20 years now and we may not have obviously failed, but we are still far from our actual goals.

Nick Cercone - as it stands now, the Faculty has grown by about 40 Faculty Members, which is about 10% vs. 8% in other Faculties, so the other Faculties have room. In terms of recruitment, it means a lot and in terms of the actual budget it also means a lot. Your reputation is not something you can treat lightly and students out there know what the emphasis at York is. They don’t know that Science and Engineering exists – even though there are innovative programs available.
Walter Tholen - there is a section in the draft that speaks to the importance of relative size. When you look at the charts in Chapter 3 it will give you graphs of the distribution of faculty members eligible for Tri-Council Funding and how it compares it with the rest of the country. If you have this configuration, you know immediately that this University has no chance of getting better on certain performance indicators. The fabric of the University predetermines our success, and although he believes this Faculty is doing very, very well, in relative terms for the outside world, it’s not doing that great because we are small in numbers.

Stan Jerzak - over a number of years, the budget will shrink and all areas cannot grow, so it is a fact that some areas will grow while others shrink.

Edward Jones-Imhotep - the perception is different on the outside than it would be from inside. We have to remind ourselves – we are a university – a place of ideas.

George Tourlakis agrees with the analogy of students in one Faculty not necessarily caring about what happens in another Faculty within York. But, if you look at a student who has not yet come to York – they would probably do an evaluation of the grants per capita, etc. This measurement, within the White Paper, shows York at a definite disadvantage.

Ernst Hamm - The reputation of York can only go up from here and decisions cannot be based solely on students that have already made the choice to come to York. Potential students, colleagues at other institutions, funding models all have to be part of the mix as well. Students who decide to come here have already made certain decisions.

There were brief discussions held on each of the points noted above.

Walter Tholen stated that the most courageous statement in the White Paper is setting the benchmarks for entrance GPA requirements and that this is key to academic quality of our students. It also has a good interim planning effect and will hopefully have a natural balancing effect for the University. The question is “What instruments does your office have to ensure implementation of the GPA requirements?”

Patrick Monahan stated that where we will be moving to is a system whereby there will be certain benchmarks both in terms of enrollments and GPA, and the Faculty will need to meet both of these. You will not be able to go below the GPA benchmark, so if you fail to meet that you will suffer financially because that has to be reflected in the resources available to the Faculty. It is possible in part because there is expected to be increased demand in the GTA for post secondary education. Across a range of disciplines, especially the science, health and medicine areas and technology areas, but also in the liberal arts disciplines. So it should not be that difficult - it is within the realm of possibilities. Because of our geographic location, our ‘pool’ of applicants will be growing over the next 5-7 areas. If we, through dedication and purpose, set that as a key goal, it should be achievable.

S. Mir stated that while increasing the higher standards of GPA levels for incoming high school students, we must take into consideration the different ethnic groups and backgrounds. Some people are not as privileged as others and we might want to bridge programs in order to help others achieve.

Patrick Monahan suggested that increasing the GPA standards will not decrease the diversity of the University.

He thanks everyone for their participation and comments.

Ernst Hamm thanked Patrick Monahan for his time.

Moved (G. Tourlakis), seconded (S. Mir) to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.