

Minutes of the Arts Faculty Council meeting
Held on January 13, 2015 in room 104 CH

PRESENT: J. Allan; K. Bessant; D. Brown; K. DeForest; R. Gasse; H. Gillander; S. Grills; S. Gouthro; P. Harms; R. Hinthner; E. Holland; R. Kramer; D. Lakevold; L. MacKay; R. Major; M. Malainey; M. Malazdrewicz; C. Mattes; L. Mayer; S. Medd; J. Naylor; C. Navid; S. Petrella; M. Pollex; D. Racine; D. Ramsey; L. Robson; B. Rose; K. Saunders; M. Serfaty; D. Smid; E. Varley; K. Wong; K. Lemky (Geog.); C. Kazakoff-Lane (library); B. David; G. McNeely (Sessionals); L. Murray (recorder); S. Robinson (Chair); D. Tryphonopoulos.

REGRETS: B. Ashton.

1.0 Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: (Medd/Racine) – THAT the Agenda be approved with the addition of Item 5.3 Elections and item 7.0 Other Business/Announcements moved to the beginning of the meeting.

CARRIED.

2.0 Approval of the Minutes

MOTION: (Gasse/Mayer) – THAT the Minutes of the meeting of December 9, 2014 be approved.

CARRIED.

7.0 Other Business/Announcements

Dr. Robinson introduced Dr. Tryphonopoulos to the members. Dr. Tryphonopoulos said he is happy to see so many people at AFC and looks forward to working with everyone over the next few years. Feels BU is in a good place. He reminded members of six things he spoke about at his interview. He is committed to teaching, research and scholarship. Interested in talking to committees and individuals to discover what they do and how they do it. He knows there is good research happening in the faculty. He also knows that some of it does not get fully recognized. He believes in interdisciplinary work and is interested to see what potential there is for future work with graduate studies and other possibilities in this faculty. He believes that in working with masters and doctoral students you are challenged every day by those students – students that may be smarter or more current than even their supervisor and this can drive one to do better work. He understands the faculty are doing a lot already, and wondering how they could possibly do more, and more at the graduate level; but these are things to discuss. Enrolment management: Dr. Tryphonopoulos has been speaking with Steve Robinson over the last several months and has heard that enrolment in Arts is down 9%. But Arts is still the largest faculty and we need to make the stakeholders around BU aware of that. St. Thomas University, on the grounds of UNB, has seen their enrolment drop by about 10% per year over the last several years. Our situation is not unique. This is happening across the country. Dr. Tryphonopoulos believes in program reviews and quality assurance: Interested in each faculty member and what stage in her/his career each is at and how he can aid you in doing your work and doing so in a collegial environment. When positions are not all being replaced, when there are financial pressures, things can be difficult. He intends to be as transparent as possible. He will not likely be able to say yes to many things until he spends more time gathering information. He looks forward to collegiality in dealing with all difficult issues. He is not interested in slashing programs and doesn't feel that is what this administration here wants to do either.

Dr. Tryphonopoulos wishes to speak to each faculty member in the next while. He wants to know how we think he can help improve the state of, and continue the good work of, this faculty. He sees a lot of potential here.

3.0 Recognition

Dr. Robinsons invited the sharing of achievements of colleagues. Dr. Brown mentioned that he has a colleague who is successfully transitioning from Acting Dean to Associate Dean. (Applause for Dr. Robinson). Dr. MacKay noted that Dr. Rhonda Hinthier is organizing a conference on the history of civilian internment in Canada. It will take place 17-19 June in Winnipeg. She just completed a SSHRC application to help offset some of our participants' travel costs. Dr. Hinthier thanked the faculty and the university in general for being so welcoming in her first year and a bit.

Dr. Tryphonopoulos informed members that Dr. Jonathan Alan just presented at the MLA conference which is the largest of its kind.

4.0 Chair's Report

Dr. Robinson reported that just as Demetres noted that he would like us to promote ourselves and our work, BU is also interested in just this. Dr. Andrew Egan, the AVP of Research, is putting together a webpage reporting on work for the past year on promotion and recognition. Dr. Egan would like to hear from everyone (about publications in particular) so that he can add items to his report. The Dean invites you to look at your past year and if you have published anything please send the details to Lisa Murray. The Dean's Office will collect and forward the information.

It was reported at the last AFC that one Sociology vacancy has been approved to fill and now the second position in Sociology has been approved. At the last meeting we also had a inquiry about administrative positions. It's a bit complicated to report so a detailed report will be made at the next AFC.

Student Services – Some programs in Arts are under-enrolled or non-enrolled (Canadian Studies and IDS in particular). Though these have a zero cost to run, there is a cost to keep advising and the programs accurate and up-to-date. They are wondering if it might be wise to eliminate them. This will come forward to a future AFC.

Student Services retention initiative: Deans have been asked to identify high fail-rate or low performance courses over a number of years. So that SS can then work on having supports available to students in these courses. Understanding why the low performance exists is one matter and Student Services may not be the answer in each case. However, if they can be of assistance, then this seems like a good use of resources. This too will be coming to Arts in the coming months. Dr. Naylor noted that IDS was to lead to a Global Studies program. The Dean thanked him for the reminder.

Dr. MacKay suggested that a large part of the retention problem is that many of our students cannot write essays and that Student Services support in this area is weak. Students can only provide an editing service but do not teach the skills required. The Writing Centre is something we all need. Dr. Robinson replied that Student Services has been denied replacements in this area in the last several years. Dr. Allan noted that the University Writing courses always have waitlists. Perhaps we can offer this important service if Student Services can't. Dr. Mayer also noted that student advising is related to failure. At times, first year students are being advised to take 3rd year courses. Faculty have to re-advise students. Surely this contributes to student failure. Dr. Ramsey expressed his concern around a list of high-failure courses. Prof. Gillander noted that she understands that the advisors already have such a list in mind because of the high fail rates. These courses don't go unnoticed. Dr. Major suggested that writing and study skills need to be addressed properly at the high school level.

5.0 New Business

5.1 External and Internal Communications

The Arts Review and Planning Committee has concerns about our ability to get our stories told on campus and in the community. Stories seem to die and important issues are not disseminated. We are looking for input from AFC. Members shared various stories of particular events, notices, research, publications, etc., not being publicized but see that 'fluff' stories get out to the public. A show of hands indicated that several members have experienced communication troubles. Dr. MacKay questioned whether other faculties have a dissemination policy. She also noted that the Communications Officer is under the President and doesn't have the power to do things without higher approval.

MOTION: (MacKay/Naylor) -- THAT Arts Review and Planning discuss further and report back to AFC.

CARRIED.

Dr. Varley communicated that Review and Planning is concerned that this is a problem that needs to be made known. Dr. Naylor suggested that areas who can communicate directly with their alumni and others have an advantage over Arts and this could relate back to drops in our enrolment. Dr. Tryphonopoulos stated that this is a serious matter and is happy to work with Review and Planning to resolve the issue.

5.2 Academic Dishonesty

Prof. Gillander expressed her hope that we can start to look at a university-wide approach to dealing with this issue. She was approached by a student who reported that on an exam several students around him were cheating. The student went on to describe several other instances over his years at BU and asked that we do something about this. He feels it is unfair to those students who earn their degree. He also commented that professors don't always watch the class keenly.

Last year we were also tipped off that a BU grad was doing the work and exams for another student -- a student he/she was dating. This was happening in more than one course. Dr. Gillander would like a policy around the proctoring of exams, requirement of id, restriction of what's allowed in the room, etc. Dr. Gasse suggested this matter should be brought to CAP. It was also noted that the current Academic Dishonesty policy is not widely used and weekly enforced. Arts seems to be the only faculty listing AD cases on the campus-wide database.

MOTION: (Gasse/Gillander) – THAT AFC recommend to CAP that a University wide policy on academic misconduct be formulated and implemented.

CARRIED.

5.3 Elections

Senate Bylaws Review Committee – Prof. Steve Gouthro

Arts Nominations Committee – Dr. Lisa Robson

6.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

6.1 Academic Plan Update

Concern was raised about the short deadline. The Dean noted that this was briefly discussed this morning by administrators and he will ask other deans and see if this can be postponed to the May Senate. There was discussion about the difficulties of interpreting questions, that resources are needed to properly answer some questions, etc. The Dean reminded members that this exercise is attempting to provide something we don't currently have. Decisions are being made all the time IN THE ABSENCE of an academic plan. There is nothing in place for the faculty of arts at the moment. There is no solid ground

or record of statements made and then people question cutbacks, changes, etc. People feel decisions are arbitrary. This is an attempt to get something in writing

Mackay: Vote of thanks to Steve for working as the Acting-Dean of Arts. Applause from members.

MOTION: (Mackay/Racine) – THAT the meeting adjourn.
Adjourned at 1:55 p.m.