

Minutes of the Special AFC meeting of March 10, 2020
Held in room 104 CH

PRESENT: A. Abdou; J. Allan; B. Ashton; R. Baker; K. Bessant; C. Boulton; K. DeForest; J. Dolecki; R. Dwivedula; R. Elliott; R. Gasse; S. Grills; P. Harms; R. Hinther; E. Holland; L. MacKay; M. Malainey; C. Mattes; V. Maud; L. Mayer; A. McCulloch; E. Mihelakis; J. Naylor; K. Noll; S. Petrella; D. Ramsey; W. Robles; B. Rose; K. Saunders; D. Smid; D. Taylor; M. Torabi; D. Winter; G. McNeely; L. Robson (Chair); L. Murray (recorder).

ABSENT: H. Gillander; D. Klonowski; M. Malazdrewicz; A. Marshall; K. McKenzie; C. Schneider; K. Spice; B. Strang; H. Venema; D. Wilson; K. Wong; L. Wood; L. Xu; F. Zehtab-Jadid; H Zhuang.

REGRETS: S. Asselin; J. Forsythe; P. Harms; S. Medd.

Announcements: The Dean informed faculty that a new fieldwork policy document has been drafted to address any work that happens off the BU campus. We need to do a risk assessment for each activity. We will circulate the document to all, requesting feedback be sent to Lisa Murray. AFC could also invite Scott Lamont to AFC on April 7 and offer our concerns at that time. Dr. Grills questioned if a copy would be available for external agencies as well. Dr. Robson noted that feedback is requested PRIOR to April 15.

There have been changes made to some Board of Governors committees. There is now a Finance Committee, an Audit and Risk Committee, and a Budget Advisory Committee. This last committee consists of three Deans from the five faculties, and for faculties without dean representation, then members from those faculties. Academic Deans this year are from Science, Health Studies and Music, and so Arts needs to elect our rep. The Dean's Office will email all and ask that you send indications of interest to Dr. Winter, Nominations Coordinator. The committee assists in developing and recommending the budget. Term is one year. There is no timeline but budget meetings will begin very soon. The Board Budget Committee no longer exists. Prof. Dolecki stated that he's not in favour of new committee composition. Dr. Grills feels there is a procedural issue: other units are electing their reps by and from their unions. Why not by and from BUFA? Faculty reps will be elected by and represent a subset of BUFA.

MOTION: (Naylor/Dolecki) – THAT AFC ask the President to come speak to AFC and justify the membership composition of the Budget Advisory Committee. AFC is concerned that BUFA has been inappropriately excluded from the process and AFC will not elect our representative until such time as our concerns are addressed.

**CARRIED.
3 abstentions**

Budget town hall consultations will occur March 12, 11:00 – 12:30, HSB 45 and March 17, 212 CH, 4:30 – 5:30 both with zoom links.

The Vice-President (Academic and Provost) Search Committee is being struck. Composition is two deans (HS and Music) and faculty reps from all other faculties. We need one Arts Rep by March 24. There will be a significant time commitment. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact Dr. Winter. Board has also changed the committee composition of this committee. Dr. Allan read out the new composition.

At the March 9th PAC, the Covid-19 virus was discussed. Faculty members are asked to think ahead just in case we receive direction that we are unable to congregate. What might your final exam look like? Take home? Moodle? Redistribution of marks? We need to get out in front of this issue. BU's Critical Incident team has been activated in case the situation develops on campus. Updates will be provided to the campus through our Communications Office. Members questioned what happens if Covid-19 impacts sabbatical plans, travel plans, etc.

Program Innovation

The Dean communicated the background to the program innovation discussion. The grievance coming out of Languages is just one part of a larger issue. How do we make the Faculty of Arts function better for ourselves and for our students? Her concerns are: 1. Function, especially with 3-person departments – it's difficult to move majors through degrees and we've needed regularly to use degree waivers or substitutions, offer last minute topics courses, etc. Leaves present challenges to smaller departments; 2. Pedagogy can be an issue in small departments. With a limited number of majors and minors, the upper-level course enrolments are often quite low, making for a less than optimal pedagogical experience for both faculty and students. 3. Equity is a real concern since there is significant disparity among faculty members regarding teaching workload. We have a 15-credit hour teaching load generally across the faculty, but student loads vary between 30-40 and 250-275/faculty member per year. This is not fair or equitable. Chairs also carry highly varying degrees of work. The Dean emphasized that she just wants to bring these issues to light and talk about them with a discussion focussing on academics. We are looking for ways to improve ourselves, to protect our areas of knowledge and expertise, and to evolve for the students' benefit. Merging or amalgamation is just one option. Just one. The Dean asked members to think about how we have constructed our degree streams and to consider the silo structure we currently use. Perhaps we could be more interdisciplinary, such as French suggesting that it would accept as credit toward its major a course from History on the French Revolution. Could other relevant disciplines be embraced into your major or minor? Could larger departments bring in courses from smaller departments? Perhaps we could consider creating new degree streams, for example "Social and Political Thought."

Dr. Petrella brought forward a motion noting that these topics can instill much apprehension and fear. She believes we should not be fearful; we should have a proactive vision.

MOTION: (Petrella/Smid) -- THAT an *ad hoc* committee be struck in the Faculty of Arts to engage in a visioning process for program innovation, with the mandate to provide creative ideas while at the same time continue to protect potentially vulnerable departments.

It was suggested that the matter be referred to Review and Planning. Dr. Robson and some other members voiced their concern that this was a big task to foist on that committee. Dr. Petrella clarified that she was hoping to engender greater amounts of participation without excluding those members interested in the issues. Members presented a variety of ideas on how to populate the committee and the issues to be discussed. When asked about a timeline, Dr. Robson stated that she felt the matter is a long-term issue to be considered over the next year or longer, with the goal of providing AFC with some creative options to consider. Generally, members felt wide representation from Departments was important. Consulting with students and Student Services was suggested, as well as researching not just our own situation, but gathering imaginings from other universities.

Members went on to suggest that solutions, rather than problems, should be discussed; that a survey of faculty members' issues might be useful; that topics should include growth, use of certificates and diplomas; and to provide multiple pathways forward. Dr. Robson suggested an email vote on the motion to create an ad hoc committee, and that AFC discuss the composition and mandate of this committee (should the motion pass) at the next AFC.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:34 p.m.