

AFC Minutes of December 8, 2020 held by Zoom

PRESENT: A. Abdou; J. Allan; S. Asselin; K. DeForest; R. Dwivedula; R. Elliott; J. Forsythe; R. Gasse; A. Hanemaayer; P. Harms; D. Hétu; R. Hinthier; R. Kramer; M. Malainey; A. Marshall; M. Massi; A. McCulloch; K. McKenzie; L. McLachlan; S. Medd; K. Noll; S. Petrella; B. Rose; K. Saunders; L. Wood; F. Zehtab-Jadid; C. Skyhar; D. Eberts; T. Gill; C. Dupuis; L. Jardine; L. Murray (recorder); L. Robson (Chair).

GUEST: J-T Godin, Music

ABSENT: R. Baker; C. Boulton; D. Combet; J. Dolecki; D. Klonowski; D. Lakevold; H. Liu; L. MacKay; M. Malazdrewicz; C. Mason; C. Mattes; V. Maud; H. Murphy; D. Ramsey; K. Spice; B. Strang; D. Taylor; E. Varley; H. Venema; K. Wong; L. Xu.

REGRETS: K. Bessant; J. Naylor

ON LEAVE: B. Ashton; S. Grills; E. Holland; L. Mayer; E. Mihelakis; D. Racine; W. Robles; C. Schneider; D. Smid; D. Winter; H. Zhuang.

1.0 Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: (Petrella/Medd) – THAT The Agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED.

2.0 Approval of the Minutes

MOTION: (Gasse/Saunders) THAT the Minutes Of the AFC of November 3rd, 2020 be approved with a correction from 'code orange' to 'code red.'

CARRIED.

3.0 Chair's Report

We should know in the next couple of weeks what has been approved in the staffing plan, including sessional courses, for 2021-22. As part of the budget request, the Dean requested graduate teaching assistantships for MRD as well as a request for funds to replace several classroom computers and projectors. Many are 8-10 years old. The hope is that when instructors return to the classrooms the a/v will be updated.

We can no longer use carry forward funds for non-capital purchases. Previously we had asked to use that money to support research. The Dean requested using the Arts carryforward for maintenance upgrades to some classrooms – 001 CH, 022 CH (removal of sink and closet) and Mck 003 and we've received approval for this. Though McKenzie 003 is not in an Arts building, we teach in it all the time and will paint it at the very least. Lisa Murray's office will have new linoleum flooring as the carpet is starting to buckle.

November 1st registration numbers indicate that we are down 2.1% compared to that point last year in the overall head count; credit hours down 4.2% from last year. If we include in this

year's enrolment data the Health Studies students who started in the summer then we are down 3.6 % in credit hours. First time domestic students are down 12.3%, or 5.7% when factoring in HS students. Overall, domestic enrolment is down 4.8%, Indigenous enrolment is up 5.4% and headcount is up 6.7%. In Arts, we are down 5.5% in credit hours.

From Senate – everything we put forward for calendar changes have gone through. Dr. Meir Serfaty was voted unanimously to receive the status of Professor Emeritus. The joining of Drama and English and Creative Writing was approved, and we now have a Department of English, Drama and Creative Writing.

The Strategic Plan Committee for BU hasn't worked often in recent months due to Covid priorities. Dr. Robson has just joined the committee. The President is working on about eight discussion papers that he will circulate and will visit Faculty Councils in the new year to receive feedback.

A faculty information session was held this fall for student recruitment. A second one is being organized, likely for January. Political Science will be represented, and Dr. Kelly Saunders will speak about Law School; we are looking for an additional department to speak to students about their area. It's a great recruitment tool for your area. If interested, please contact the Dean's Office.

Lindsay McLachlan, who spoke at the last recruitment session, found that it was poorly attended and wondered if the sessions could be targeting more to specific groups of students and their interests. The students at her session happened to be interested in the areas represented so it did go well. The Dean will speak with Courtney about this possibility and noted that the international open house session she attended was more targeted.

4.0 New Business

4.1 Music Arts Program – JT Godin

The Dean welcomed Dr. J-T Godin to the meeting. Dr. Godin explained that he is proposing the move of the Music (Arts) degrees to the School of Music's Department of Music Research. The program isn't very functional, and advising is difficult for the Dean of Arts and often requires the involvement of the Dean of Music or Dr. Godin. It's also difficult to recruit into the program, and changes to the program are cumbersome. Currently, Music is in the process of reviewing how they offer their full slate of courses. Though they are not looking to change the structure of the Music (Arts) degrees, there will be changes in B.Mus that will impact this degree. Dr. Robson confirmed that advising does require her to work with the Dean of Music. Trent Gill spoke in favour of the move.

There was much discussion about how to proceed. Dr. Robson, seeing no resistance, suggested seeking a volunteer who might be interested in working with Music Research. There were no volunteers. A couple of members of Arts Review and Planning suggested that Music send a proposal to them, for review and feedback to AFC and Music Research. There was no further

discussion and so Dr. Robson asked Dr. Godin to provide a proposal to AFC Review and Planning.

4.2 Senate Elections

MOTION: (Marshall/Saunders) -- THAT the following members be elected to the AFC Advisory Committees for the Senate Awards:

**Senate Teaching Award – Reinhold Kramer, Scott Grills, and Hanna Liu
Research, Emma Varley, Kevin McKenzie and Lorraine Mayer**

CARRIED.

4.3 Discussion of Senate Awards Committees

While the AFC Executive was discussing these awards, they considered how they might proceed in coming years to ensure we have a nominee for each of these awards every year. In years past, there has been a complete lack of nominations from the campus, resulting in no award being given. One of the suggestions was that perhaps we could have one committee to serve both awards, and that part of the responsibility of these members is to encourage nominations. The intent is not to push through someone or present any conflict of interest, but rather to approach Chairs or others who may be in a position to put forth a nomination. Dr. Allan said that these awards cause a tremendous amount of work for the nominee while teaching, etc. and also noted that if you don't win, you're not even congratulated on being nominated. Dr. Hanemaayer nominated Dr. Mason last year for the Teaching Award and it was a lot of work; Dr. Hanemaayer did the bulk of the work in this case. She emphasized how important these awards should be. Cultivating a culture of celebration is valuable and for her it was one of the highlights of her year. She is happy to provide any guidance to others contemplating a nomination as she has just recently been through it. Dr. Robson clarified that the V-Ps office informed us that the nominee, not the nominator, is responsible for putting the package together. The policy is also currently under review however, and we aren't sure just what will change. Prof. Lisa Wood reminded members that she, Dr. Hanemaayer and Dr. Eftihia Mihelakis spoke about how they would be willing to work on the matter. She did bring it to the Status of Women Review Committee to see what kinds of supports may be needed, to nominate women as an advocacy idea, etc. They are looking at what supports might be useful, etc. Dr. Allan expressed his confusion on how these awards are adjudicated. Dr. Hanemaayer noted that there is very clear criteria noted for the teaching award at least, and she addressed each point in Dr. Mason's application. Dr. Robson noted that we will keep this on the agenda and perhaps after seeing the new policy, we'll have opportunity for a more informed discussion

4.4 Online Teaching Discussion

Dr. Robson stated that she hoped this session would elicit comments on what is working/not working, and encouraged member to bring their concerns and insights forward. She reminded faculty that if you have students living in another country, or in a more oppressed or troubled part of the world such as China, it is important for students in these areas to be able to use pseudonyms on screen in case they are being monitored. They may also need to keep their cameras off. Furthermore, if you are discussing topics in your class that might be contentious or

incendiary, please give as much notice to these students as you can so that if they need time to turn off their computers for their own safety, they can.

The open discussion is summarized below.

Student Engagement/Participation: Members discussed ways in which to encourage students to engage and/or to keep their monitors on. One instructor is now providing in-class research and reading time to ensure students are prepared. Another has found that creating a fixed order of student screens helps students know when they will be called upon. One instructor has asked students not to turn their monitors on for their own privacy. To confirm attendance, he asks questions in Chat function. The use of virtual backgrounds was suggested, but this requires a certain amount of computer/internet strength. Performing listening and staring at computer screens all day can be exhausting. Creating a more casual atmosphere where students are allowed to move about and to look away helps. Smaller classes may allow for one-on-one meetings so students get to know their instructor, feel comfortable in class, to help create some community. Another instructor built 'habits' into their class. Eg. Thursday night there was always a discussion question that was talked about Friday morning. Repeated, scheduled, tasks helped engagement.

Student Stress: One instructor questioned if students perceive the workload in class to be greater than it actually is. Are they getting overwhelmed more quickly even though the course work is the same as in previous years? One instructor felt they absolutely are. To assist them, she sends an email every Monday with the 'map' for the week. These emails include the Zoom links, the Moodle information, pages assigned, reminders of deadlines, and sometimes preparation videos to watch in advance of the class. Student have been very grateful for the guidance. One member programmed reminders in on Moodle and created a mark calculator where student can see how they are doing in the course. It was noted that the online teaching tips suggested more frequent, but smaller assignments. This seemed to overwhelm students though and some instructors reduced the number of assignments part way through the term and/or gave flexible deadlines. Some students reported having large assignments due the last days of class and this affected their other courses. The Dean reminded members that in Arts, no test/exam worth 10% or more can fall in the last week of class.. Another instructor noted that their Chinese student has to attend class at 3:00 a.m.

Several members felt that recording and posting lectures was very beneficial to, and appreciated by, the students. This allowed students to not only view lectures they missed, but also to review lectures they'd attended. It also allows students in other time-zones more flexibility. Student stress, care-giving needs, shared computer/internet resources, noisy homes, etc. mean that instructors' compassion during term was necessary as there may be very good reasons for class absences. An instructor reported that their daughter and their daughter's friends are really suffering this year and they are strong, third-year, Science students. Some instructors are not at all sympathetic and the students are not doing well. Silence from the students does not mean everything is ok. We need to go the extra mile for them.

Forums for Student Engagement and sharing of work: For discussions and interaction out of class, Piazza can be loaded into Teams. It functions like Moodle but allows the students the ability to post anonymously to their peers, though not anonymously to the instructor. V-box, a

Power point plug-in, can be used to track who participates. The following were suggestions posted in the Chat: Mentimeter, Edpuzzle, FlipGrid, Canvas, Google Jamboard, whiteboards, and polls. Padlet is like a digital bulletin board and it can be private. Vevox for in class polls, Piazza for online discussions if you're not using Moodle. MS Stream, can be set up for students to view videos but they cannot save or download the videos. Instructors were reminded to set privacy settings so that only your 'team' or class have the ability to view the videos.

Faculty Stress: Members expressed their personal stress. Completing fall term and having only two weeks to revamp courses for online delivery seems impossible. Concerns were raised about what was possible and what would be unachievable. Some instructors will also have school-aged children at home in the coming weeks. Members questioned why extending the winter break, as was done at some other universities, didn't happen here. Dr. Robson assured members that Senate had a lengthy discussion, as did PAC. PAC concluded that if this is not how we give folks a break, other ways need to be found. Dr. Robson noted that in all transparency, she did feel that for Arts instructors who have exams and writing to mark, a longer break would have been beneficial. It's an ongoing discussion. It was suggested that if courses are online again next fall that the university should think about larger changes such as having 4 weeks of class, one week off, 4 weeks of class, one off, etc.

Stress Remedies: An instructor communicated that at a recent wellness workshop, suggested strategies were relaxing showers or other breaks, walking, adequate sleep. Disengaging from the monotony of screen time with fresh air, exercise, conversations with others, delving into your own research, were also suggested.

The Dean noted that the meeting had reach its time limit. She thanked members for attending and wished all good luck with the end of term. She also encouraged everyone to take a break when able.