

Minutes of the AFC meeting of February 2, 2021
Held by Zoom

PRESENT: B. Ashton; S. Asselin; R. Baker; K. Bessant; C. Boulton; D. Combet; K. deForest; R. Dwivedula; R. Elliott; R. Gasse; S. Grills; A. Hanemaayer; P. Harms; R. Hinthner; R. Kramer; L. MacKay; M. Malainey; M. Malazdrewicz; A. Marshall; M. Massi; V. Maud; L. Mayer; K. McKenzie; S. Medd; H. Murphy; J. Naylor; K. Noll; S. Petrella; D. Ramsey; L. Robson; B. Rose; K. Saunders; B. Strang; D. Taylor; K. Wong; L. Wood; F. Zehtab-Jadid; D. Eberts (Science); C. Kazakoff-Lane (Library); T. Gill (Student Services); C. Dupuis Co-op); L. Jardine; L. Murray (recorder); L. Robson (Chair).

ABSENT: A. Abdou; J. Allan; J. Dolecki; J. Forsythe; D. Klonowski; D. Lakevold; H. Liu; C. Mattes; L. McLachlan; K. Spice; E. Varley; H. Venema.

REGRETS: D. Hétu; L. Xu.

ON LEAVE: E. Holland; C. Mason; A. McCulloch; E. Mihelakis; D. Racine; W. Robles; C. Schneider; D. Smid; D. Winter; H. Zhuang.

1.0 Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: (MacKay/Petrella) – THAT the Agenda be approved.

CARRIED.

2.0 Approval of the Minutes

Minutes: (Marshall/Gasse) – THAT the minutes of the December 8, 2020 AFC be approved.

CARRIED.

3.0 Chair's Report

Enrolment: January 15th enrolment as compared to January 15th last year shows that the overall headcount is down 1.7% and credit hours are down 2.8%. If you roll in the Health Studies students from the summer, we are down 2.2% in overall credit hours. We are basically hovering around a 2% decrease. Domestic non-Indigenous students are down 3.5% but for those who self-identify as Indigenous the headcount is up 6.8% and International student headcount is about the same. Arts credit hours are down about 4% in credit hours from this time last year.

Hiring: We have been approved for three faculty searches and they are underway. Ads are out for two Tenure-track positions in Native Studies and one term position in History. These ads are up on the HR website so please feel free to share far and wide. We hope to hire by the end of April.

Budget: You may recall that we were invited by the government to submit a request for transition funding back in September. We were cut by 1% and then had to send in a request to get that 1% back. The government responded by providing almost 3 times what we requested, which is about 1.15 million in transition funding. This cannot be used for operating expenses but we can save it as surplus. The good news is that we were given \$30,000 to fund our request to replace computers and projectors in the classrooms. We hope to change out all or most classroom a/v equipment. Because we cannot use this money for operating expenses, we are unable to fund all the sessionals. The bad news is that about mid-

December, the Deans were asked to cut 20% from next year's staffing plans. In Arts that worked out to 14 courses. The hope is that as the budget details for next year arise, we hope to be able to bring these courses back. You should know that in order to fund these needed courses (sabbatical courses, service courses, regular program needs), since we have no fat in our budget, she has withheld half the University Writing courses. We hope to put these courses back on the books as we know there is an impact on everyone when these skills are not being taught.

Bookstore: At the last PAC meeting, the Dean again brought up the issues with the bookstore and suggested that we cannot continue. It was confirmed that Follett's contract expires March 31, 2023. Happily, her suggestion for a review now was met with immediate acceptance. There will be a review in terms of financial success and customer satisfaction. The Dean will keep AFC apprised of this.

Student Recruitment Sessions: In the Fall we held one recruitment session, organized by the Recruitment Office, to speak to interested potential students and parents. Our January session was cancelled due to low enrolment. Recruitment is looking at alternatives and learning how to recruit on line. If you have other thoughts please bring them forward.

February is the **Indigenous Excellence Month** at BU and there will be a variety of celebrations. If you are interested in participating in any way, Michelle Bessette is the point person.

SSHRC Town Hall Meeting with Ted Hewitt is scheduled for next Tuesday, February 9th. He wants to give you information on what is new at SSHRC and to get some feedback, particularly about how Covid has affected your research.

Strategic Plan: The committee is revived and meeting and has developed roughly 15 short discussion papers that will be disseminated in the near future. The President wants to come to an AFC to discuss these papers at some point. Your feedback will be vital. We could meet as a Faculty prior to the President's visit or just wait and discuss with him.

The Fieldwork Policy from last year that was rather troubled is now the responsibility of the Senate Research Committee to develop. This will come back to AFC for feedback.

Research Funds: In the Fall the Dean mentioned that, in contrast to years past, there would be few funds from the Dean's Office to supplement your PDA. Because we can no longer use carryforward for anything but capital expenses, we no longer have the same amount. We do however, have a small amount of money in the PDA pool – the leftover pda from years past – that will be available to you. We will send out an email soon about how to apply.

Discussion: Concerns were raised about Finance overseeing the Bookstore Review. Members felt that they need to be distanced from any review of the current situation, past the financial matters. Students should also be involved in any review of the bookstore.

MOTION: (Naylor/Hanemaayer) -- THAT the Faculty of Arts recommends a Senate review of the Bookstore's operations regarding textbook supplies.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Members suggested using the Carry Forward funds to address the many issues of room 001 CH, or to partially fund the new ERP so that money might be freed up elsewhere. The Dean thought that may be possible but does not know what the thinking of PEC is. Room 001 CH will be renovated with new lighting, soundproofing, and a few other things prior to March 31st. We won't be closing off the awkward side space as we are just so short on larger classroom spaces.

Steve Asselin questioned who is making the decision as to whether we will be online or in class in the Fall and when this decision might be made. The Dean noted that officially we haven't even declared that

we are online for Spring and Summer. These decisions need to be approved through Senate and she hopes to see this happen soon. Regular session hasn't been decided and will be guided by external forces. She doesn't see how we would be completely in the classroom in the fall. This topic will be discussed further under item 4.1.

Lynn MacKay expressed her dislike of the pass/fail option. She believes that Education students who can convert Cs and Ds to passes are not prepared adequately to teach these subject areas. She also noted that students who violated the academic integrity policy were able to convert to an F mark which doesn't fully provide a penalty. She also has concerns about a blended method next year for foreign students and really wants BU to think this through.

Trent Gill noted that the Arts/Education students are required to have a 2.5 gpa in their Arts degree to continue to their last year. If they are taking the pass/fail option, their gpa will be determined by the courses they do have grades for. There are some safe guards in place for student who may try to abuse this option.

Lorraine Mayer reported that she had a student request that her lectures be recorded because she could not attend due to work and sought advice as to how to respond. Dr. Robson noted that it is completely up to the instructor. Certainly it would be acceptable to deny such a request unless you are willing to record all of your lectures. Dr. MacKay responded that some of her students are located in Nigeria or Northern Manitoba with questionable wifi. She has sympathy for these students and records her lectures.

Kelly Saunders commented that professional schools may or may not accept pass/fail grades. Law Schools and Medical schools are denying a 'pass' as an acceptable grade. She is not sure that this is clear to students and that perhaps BU hasn't considered these consequences of the pass/fail option.

Scott Grills mentioned that most universities seem to be stating that they will be on line again. He's concerned about our competitive disadvantage if we don't get decisions made quickly. Other universities' rationales for these decisions hinge on things such as the need to travel to attend university in the age of Covid, the need for vaccines, social justice issues with opening up, and excluding students who are necessarily isolated. Blended delivery creates a systemic and structural barrier against students. We need to get to a firmer distance delivery model for September. To not have an answer about Spring and Summer at this point, when students are making decisions now about where they will be then, is problematic.

Lynn MacKay noted that the Library Criterion Connection (a set of films) cannot be shown on Zoom or Teams and she's very frustrated by this. Would like BU to deal with these issues. Ariane Hanemaayer mentioned that if we are going to be online this fall, we might reconsider what and how we teach including slot times/lengths.

Carman Kazakoff-Lane sympathizes about the streaming licenses and that this requires the need to authenticate people. Our course management system does this but Zoom does not. She will take this back to the library. On another note, her son at another institution ordered an ebook. She wonders if BU should consider these types of alternates to the BU Bookstore.

Bruce Strang – U of M has a group of about 14 people that work on course development and online development. We don't do that here. Could we have a conversation with U of M and perhaps lease some of their time? We might be able to get access to some of this work and improve our pedagogy for the coming year.

Lisa Wood is currently teaching in a blended model and it does present its own challenges. Students living in MB but not Brandon have issues with getting to the campus. Logistically it is problematic to organize online lectures with group work with in person requirements. The students also have to wrangle these issues. Dr. Robson noted that the current blended classes are discipline-specific and only in Visual Art and Archaeology for the moment. Brock U will do a phased reentry next year so that's another way to do blended. Room capacity and physical distancing may mean that perhaps only classes

smaller than 25 can be placed in our large classrooms. Blended could be many things. She is wondering if folks would rather avoid blended. By a show of hands, several instructors noted their desire not to have blended courses.

Dr. Saunders thought it critical that we think about what the students need and not what is comfortable for us. Students are struggling and if we care about their learning and mental health, we should get back in to the classroom as quick as possible. For some, online works well, but the majority of our students are in Brandon or in Southwestern Manitoba. Doug Ramsey would like a decision early, especially for the Graduate Program as 80% of their students are international. There is no perfect solution so the timelines are important. Lynn MacKay noted that many of her students are in Northern Manitoba or Saskatchewan. Do they move if only half of their classes are on campus? Many things need to be considered. Dr. Robson asked that we keep thinking on this and she agrees that a decision needs to be made sooner than later.

5.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

5.1 Online Teaching Discussion (continued)

We have been doing online teaching for quite some time now. Have you discovered any benefits to this? Are there things you would like to take forward? Dr. Strang noted the participation challenges, but his first year class has been tremendous with the participation in the chat, where they may not have been comfortable speaking out in a large first year class. Dr. Ramsey also has had a good experience in chat and the breakout function. He normally has two field trips but will be using Google Earth this time. Thinking about other ways of doing what we do is good. Lily Jardine mentioned Mentimeter and Kahoot as useful discussion apps. She also noted Google slide/template which allows many people to work on the same document at once. Rick Baker stated that he's never had in his introductory class as many women, international, and Indigenous students providing such an active role in the discussion. Sometimes in person, one individual can monopolize the time and this hasn't happened. They have engaged meaningfully and created a sense of community. Similarly, our conference with Minot State this year resulted in a spontaneous sharing of emails to continue to the relationships and conversations.

6.0 Announcements

Dr. Petrella reported on the wonderful work of the Gender and Women's Studies Collective. They are funded by the Margaret Laurence Endowment Fund which is shared by the three Manitoba Universities. Over the years they experienced a significant surplus. This year, seeing the worsening political climate and knowing that money can disappear, GWS decided to spend the surplus through three initiatives. In November, they created some emergency funding for community organizations – the MLEF Covid Pandemic Relief Grants. They gave \$2000 to five organizations: Migrante Manitoba, WMCA Westman Women's Shelter, Inclusion Westman, Brandon Bear Clan, and MB Harm Reduction Network. They also understood that some of our students were experiencing duress and so another \$10,000 became 20 grants of \$500 to be distributed among the Gender & Women's Major and Minor students and then extended that to other students who were experiencing intersectional pressures. Finally, another \$10,000 was used to create a scholarship bursary. As a bursary, it is meant to support our two spirit LGBTQIA+ students, who experience intersectional pressures. If no student fits that criteria in specific year, then the bursary will go to a GWS student that is an activist in our community, in social justice initiatives. It will be disbursed as a scholarship, if no students in a particular year fit these criteria, and be awarded to a student with the highest GPA in either a Major or Minor in G&WS.

Cora Dupuis: International Women's Day award is opening today. There is a form to fill out which can be found online. She also recapped the Co-op student enrolment and noted that Co-op students are sending out their resumes and looking forward to opportunities.

Dr. Robson congratulated Dr. Ariane Hanemaayer on receiving Tenure. She also congratulated both Ariane and Dr. Hejun Zhuang for being promoted to Associate Professor. The membership joined the congratulations by a show of applause.

7.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.