

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
REPORT NUMBER 114 OF THE COMMITTEE ON
ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS

March 9, 2005

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a meeting on Wednesday, March 9, 2005 at 4:10 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, at which the following were present:

Professor J. J. Berry Smith (In the Chair)
Professor Cheryl Regehr, Vice-Chair
Professor Edith Hillan, Vice-Provost,
Academic
Professor David Farrar, Deputy Provost and
Vice-Provost, Students
Professor Rona Abramovitch
Professor Stewart Aitchison
Professor Derek Allen
Professor Mary Chipman
Ms Maple Chong
Dr. Inez N. Elliston

Professor Wayne K. Hindmarsh
Professor Ronald H. Kluger
Ms Vera Melnyk
Mr. Stefan A. Neata
Professor John Scherk
Miss Maureen Somerville

Ms. Karel Swift, University Registrar

Secretariat:

Mr. Neil Dobbs
Mr. Andrew Drummond, Secretary

Regrets:

Ms Janice Bayani
Professor David Clandfield
Ms Leigh Honeywell
Professor Barbara Sherwood Lollar
Professor Robert Reisz

Professor Pamela Catton
Professor Luc De Nil
Mr. Senai Iman
Mr. Raza M. Mirza
Professor Dennis Thiessen

In Attendance:

Professor Gage Averill, Dean, Faculty of Music
Professor Lorna MacDonald, Professor and Lois Marshall Chair in Voice Studies, Faculty of Music
Professor Susan Pfeiffer, Dean, School of Graduate Studies
Professor Cameron Stowe, Associate Professor, Piano/Performance, Faculty of Music

ALL ITEMS ARE REPORTED FOR INFORMATION.

1. Report of the Previous Meeting

It was noted that Professor John Scherk had been in attendance at the February 2, 2005 meeting, and that the report should be amended to reflect his presence. Report 113 was approved, as amended.

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2. Business Arising from the Report of the Previous Meeting

There was no business arising.

3. School of Graduate Studies: Addition of the Voice Pedagogy option to the Mus.M. program, field of Performance

The Chair welcomed Professor Gage Averill, Dean, Faculty of Music, and Professor Lorna Macdonald, Professor and Lois Marshall Chair in Voice Studies, Faculty of Music, to the meeting.

Professor Hillan informed the committee that the proposed program combined core performance courses with a scientific approach to voice teaching, thus meeting demand for graduate students seeking to study both voice performance and pedagogy.

During discussion, a member asked why the Faculty had consulted so extensively with medical professionals and hospital units. Professor Averill responded that voice pedagogy continued to be based largely on nineteenth-century techniques, and generally had not adequately taken advantage of the enormous advances made available by scientific approaches to speech and language pathology and other medical sciences that affected voice study. Another member asked why experts in pedagogy had apparently not been consulted. Professor Averill responded that, in fact, the consultation in developing the program had included music educators at OISE/UT. Professor MacDonald added that one course was already jointly offered between the Faculty and OISE/UT, and that the two entities would continue to pursue collaborative efforts.

On motion duly moved and seconded,

YOUR COMMITTEE APPROVED

THAT the School of Graduate Studies proposal for the addition of the Voice Pedagogy option to the Mus.M. program, field of Performance be approved, effective September 2005.

4. School of Graduate Studies: Addition of the Collaborative Piano option to the Mus.M. Program, field of Performance

Professor Hillan informed the Committee that the Faculty of Music's undergraduate programs included high-quality studies in collaborative piano, but the Faculty did not offer a structured curriculum for graduate-level pianists. She added for the record that the term 'Collaborative Piano' was commonly used in Music programs throughout North America, and that use of that term should not be confused with 'collaborative programs', which had a different status within the University's administrative classifications.

Professor Averill remained present. Professor Cameron Stowe, Associate Professor, Piano/Performance, Faculty of Music, was also present. There was no discussion.

On motion duly moved and seconded,

YOUR COMMITTEE APPROVED

THAT the School of Graduate Studies proposal for the addition of the Collaborative Piano option to the Mus.M. program, field of Performance be approved, effective September 2005

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5. School of Graduate Studies: Proposal from the Department of Anthropology to change admission requirements in the Ph.D. program

The Chair welcomed Professor Susan Pfeiffer, Dean, School of Graduate Studies, to the meeting. Professor Hillan briefly summarized the proposal from the Department of Anthropology to increase admission requirements from a B+ to an A-, indicating that many departments had chosen to increase requirements in a similar fashion.

Members then engaged in a lengthy discussion about the general trend among many divisions to increase the admission averages for graduate programs. The Chair informed the Committee that, even though the discussion was not strictly germane to the proposal at hand, it was nonetheless an important discussion for the Committee.

A member commented that he did not understand why departments attempted to be more restrictive in admitting students when they did not have to be. He felt that increasing admission grades might restrict the possibility of good students, and that the variation on what a B+ average meant from different disciplines meant that greater interpretive efforts should be brought to bear on graduate admissions, rather than simply shutting out large numbers of students from contention.

Professor Pfeiffer informed the Committee that the University-wide admission requirements to PhD programs remained a B+, but that individual units had the authority to request changes. To date, she reported, half the PhD programs had requested an increase, most commonly in the humanities disciplines. She asked the Committee if it had any advice on whether there should be a shift to institutional policies, given the large number of changes requested to date. She then informed the Committee that one of the results of the guaranteed funding plan for graduate students had been much closer enrolment management and the same number of positions for an enormously expanded applicant pool within the graduate school. She said that many divisions had determined that restricted enrolment meant that saying a B+ student was eligible was simply incorrect, and that 'truth in advertising' should be maintained. She further noted for the Committee that the number of graduate applications had steadily risen, from approximately 12,000 in 2000-01 to approximately 18,000 in 2004-05.

A member informed the Committee that he had been applying to graduate schools in the United States recently, and that his experience had been positive. He informed the Committee that many schools did not have minimum admission averages, but rather, they would provide useful statistics on how many students applied, and what proportion of students with individual grade point averages were admitted. This form of information, he reasoned, was more illustrative than an institution-wide minimum. He further noted that students seemed to feel that grades were viewed as a sole determinant of entry, and that other elements of admission should be used also.

In response, Professor Pfeiffer noted that graduate programs did consider a breadth of factors in admitting new students, but that admission to many programs was so competitive that it might be unfair to applicants to pretend that even good letters of reference (for example) could be sufficient to gain admission over other, excellent applicants. She further noted that undergraduate grades remained the single best predictor of graduate school outcomes.

A member noted that a number of overseas universities seemed to recognize the difference between the main thrust of a PhD program, which was research-based, and that of an undergraduate program, which was a broader, more introductory learning experience. He wondered why an institutionally-mandated minimum entry average was even necessary if competitiveness was assured.

A member noted that if the University of Toronto felt that an institutional standard was sufficiently important to publish, it should be consistent. A member noted in response that it would be hard to argue against the expertise of individual departments in setting admission averages.

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5. School of Graduate Studies: Proposal from the Department of Anthropology to change admission requirements in the Ph.D. program (cont'd.)

Professor Pfeiffer thanked members for their comments, and noted two points for clarification: first, flexibility in admissions decisions was always possible; secondly, most PhD programs' admission requirements used an average in graduate courses, not undergraduate, and admitting students with a B+ average from Masters-level work might not be appropriate.

The Chair urged members to discuss the matter at hand. Members questioned why the change was being proposed at this point, and how many students with a B+ average had been admitted to the Anthropology program. Professor Pfeiffer did not know the answers, but informed the Committee that she felt it was very unlikely that any student had been.

The Chair noted that for the Committee to refuse a proposed change of this ilk would be difficult, given the large number of precedents (every one of which had been approved). He suggested that Professor Pfeiffer and Professor Hillan strike a group to examine the issue of graduate admissions, so that the Committee would not be faced with similar issues every time a department wished to raise its graduate admission requirements. Professor Pfeiffer and Professor Hillan agreed to examine the possibilities of doing so.

During discussion, it was clarified that the Committee should not defer consideration of the proposal from the Department of Anthropology, that proper rationales for change should continue to be provided to the Committee when changes were proposed, and that the transcript 'translated' grades from other institutions into that of the University of Toronto.

A member noted that there seemed to be a tension between the declaration of a minimum entry grade and the desire to ensure that students who did not meet that grade but who would be excellent students should not be excluded simply on the basis of grades. She urged Professor Pfeiffer to develop a proposal that would make it clear to students that multiple pathways, flexibility, and exceptions were possible.

On motion duly moved and seconded,

YOUR COMMITTEE APPROVED

THAT the Department of Anthropology admission requirements for the Ph.D. program be changed from a B+ to an A- in the last full year of study for both regular and 'direct-entry' applicants, effective September 2006.

6. School of Graduate Studies: Proposal to increase the minimum admission requirement for the M.Sc. and Ph.D. in the Nutritional Sciences program

Professor Hillan informed the Committee that the proposal before members, like the previous one, was designed to increase the minimum entry average for graduate programs in Nutritional Sciences.

During discussion, a member noted that the documentation provided from the Department of Nutritional Sciences included reference to 'strong potential as a researcher' but was not included in the motion. After discussion, the Chair and Professor Hillan concluded that the Committee's change was to the minimum admission requirement, but not to the accompanying Calendar copy. The Secretary noted that the transmittal letter would make clear that the Committee expected the text 'or strong potential as a researcher' should continue to be included as outlined in the initial proposal from the Department of Nutritional Sciences.

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6. School of Graduate Studies: Proposal to increase the minimum admission requirement for the M.Sc. and Ph.D. in the Nutritional Sciences program (cont'd.)

On motion duly moved and seconded,

YOUR COMMITTEE APPROVED

THAT the minimum admission requirement for the M.Sc. and Ph.D. in the Nutritional Sciences program be increased to an A-, for inclusion in the School of Graduate Studies calendar on a permanent basis, effective January, 2006.

7. Items for Information

- (a) School of Graduate Studies: Course work-only M.Ed. option within the Sociology and Equity Studies in Education Program
- (b) School of Graduate Studies: Cessation of Admission and Closure of M.Ed./M.A./Ed.D/Ph.D Program in Teacher Development
- (c) School of Graduate Studies: Master of Teaching Program Restructuring

The above-noted items were presented for information. There was no discussion.

8. Reports of the Administrative Assessors

Professor Hillan reported that a subcommittee of the Academic Appeals Committee had been struck in order to review the divisional guidelines for academic appeals. Noting that the last time such an exercise had been undertaken was in 1975, she felt it was timely to examine the issue. The subcommittee was chaired by Professor Bonnie Goldberg and was broadly representative of Governing Council's constituencies. The subcommittee would be consulting broadly, a town hall was planned, and the subcommittee welcomed submissions from interested parties. Any proposed changes in the policy would begin their governance route at the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for April 13, 2005.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Secretary

Chair

March 29, 2005