

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
REPORT NUMBER 125 OF THE COMMITTEE ON
ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS

October 25, 2006

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that met on Wednesday, October 25, 2006 at 4:10 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, with the following present:

Professor Andrea Sass-Kortsak
(In the Chair)
Professor Edith Hillan, Vice-Provost,
Academic
Professor Derek Allen
Professor Gage Averill
Professor Ragnar Buchweitz
Mr. Ryan Mathew Campbell
Mr. Tim Corson
Professor Dickson Eyoh
Ms Linda B. Gardner
Ms Bonnie Goldberg
Mr. Billeh Hamud
Dr. Chris Koenig-Woodyard
Professor Lesley Ann Lavack
Professor Louise Lemieux-Charles
Mr. Matto Mildenberger

Professor Sioban Nelson
Professor Cheryl Regehr
Professor J.J. Berry Smith
Miss Maureen Somerville
Professor John Wedge
Ms Johanna L. Weststar

Non-Voting Assessors:

Dr. Tim McTiernan, Assistant Vice-President,
Research
Ms Karel Swift, University Registrar

Secretariat:

Mr. Neil Dobbs
Mr. Henry Mulhall

Regrets:

Professor Luc De Nil
Professor David Farrar
Dr. Wajahat Khan

Professor Douglas McDougall
Professor Janet Paterson

In Attendance:

Professor Susan Howson, Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Education and Teaching, Faculty
of Arts and Science
Ms Helen Lasthiotakis, Director, Policy and Planning, Office of the Vice-President
and Provost and Acting Assistant Provost
Dr. Glen A. Loney, Assistant Dean and Faculty Registrar, Faculty of Arts and Science

ALL ITEMS ARE REPORTED TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD FOR INFORMATION.

1. Report of the Previous Meeting

Report 124 (September 20, 2006) was approved.

2. Faculty of Arts and Science: Language Citation

The Chair thanked members for attending this one-item meeting. The Faculty of Arts and Science was very eager to have approval for its proposal for a language citation in order to award it to students who completed the requirements in the current academic year.

Professor Hillan said that 2006-07 was the year of languages in the Faculty of Arts and Science at the University of Toronto. The objective of making available a language citation on student transcripts was to encourage the intensive study of languages at an advanced level. The citation would be awarded to students who completed a minimum of two full courses or equivalent in a language other than English beyond the introductory level university course with a minimum grade of B- in each of those courses. The citation was intended for students who did not necessarily wish to pursue a major or minor program in the language. Students would be able both to earn certification of a major or minor program in the language and the language citation. The requirements for the citation were different from those for the major or minor programs in two ways. First, the courses that would meet the requirements for the citation were exclusively language courses. Major and minor programs usually also included courses in literature and culture. Second, the citation required a high grade in each of the two required courses. The citation would be available for students who completed courses in any language offered at the advanced level at the University, either ancient or modern. The proposal had been approved by the Council of the Faculty of Arts and Science on October 3, 2006. Subject to approval by the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, the citation would be available to students in Arts and Science and to students in other divisions if their councils approved it.

Invited to comment, Professor Howson thanked the Committee for meeting solely to consider this proposal. It was very important to obtain approval at this time to enable the Departments to take the actions necessary to enable qualified students to receive the citation at the end of the current academic year. She was very pleased with the form of the motion, which would permit other divisions to approve the proposed citation for their students. That would allow the language citation to be a tri-campus initiative, as it had been envisaged from the beginning. Both the University of Toronto at Mississauga and the University of Toronto at Scarborough had been represented on the committee that had developed the proposal, and they were expected to make the citation available to their students. In subsequent discussion, she added that the University had agreed to provide budget support through the Academic Initiatives Fund that would enable the offering of further language courses. She stressed that the citation would be very useful for students who did not wish to complete a major or minor but who did wish to have evidence of working knowledge of a language. Such evidence would be useful in making application

2. Faculty of Arts and Science: Language Citation (Cont'd)

for graduate study in disciplines where proficiency in a second language would be very useful. It would also be very helpful in seeking employment in many fields in an increasingly globalized world. The idea for the citation had arisen from the work of a task force on languages in the Faculty of Arts and Science composed primarily of faculty members in the language disciplines. That task force had noted that such citations were available at other universities.

Among the broader topics that arose in questions and discussion were the following.

(a) Award of the citation in special circumstances. Professor Howson and Dr. Loney responded to a number of questions about the eligibility for the citation in special circumstances. Provided that a department had established courses to recognize language proficiency, it would be possible to recognize comparable courses completed elsewhere. So long as students were given transfer credits for those courses towards their degrees, they could also be recognized for the language citation. The relevant department would be asked to determine whether the course elsewhere would be appropriate for purposes of the citation. Courses completed in French in Quebec and in various languages in non-English-speaking countries would be included amongst those considered. Courses completed in a year's study-abroad program would certainly fall within that category. In fact, the Academic Initiatives Fund grant did provide for a small fund to enable some students to pursue language study at other institutions; that opportunity would be particularly useful for students who required language instruction to pursue doctoral studies. The citation would not be available to students who completed courses elsewhere in languages not offered at the University of Toronto. The list of languages offered at the University was, however, a long one and might well be expanded with the benefit of the funding from the Academic Initiatives Fund. It was not intended that the citation would be offered retroactively; it would be available only to students who were currently enrolled. Students who had graduated and who wished to return to the University to complete languages courses could qualify for the citation.

A member asked about acceptance of courses completed in a foreign language in a university elsewhere in subjects other than language study, e.g. engineering courses. Ms Swift replied that courses completed by University of Toronto students elsewhere were considered for degree and program credit in the appropriate discipline. Canadian universities did not complete assessments for other credit based on learning experiences; they certified only the completion of course work. She did not think it would be appropriate to open the discussion on the matter by considering such things as certification of language skills acquired while taking engineering courses in a foreign language.

2. Faculty of Arts and Science: Language Citation (Cont'd)

(b) Adequacy of the citation requirements. Two members asked whether the completion of two courses after the introductory level course would in fact make a student sufficiently capable in a language for the University to justify the proposed citation. Professor Howson replied that the Faculty of Arts and Science had concluded that the completion of three years of study in a language with high grades in the advanced courses would lead to sufficient proficiency for the citation. A member stated her support; based on her personal experience, she thought it would be appropriate to cite proficiency in a language for students who had completed three years of university study in it.

(c) Precedent for citation of other intellectual skills. A member observed that while the citation was said not to be a program, it could in fact be seen as a new kind of program with lesser requirements. In addition, the establishment of the language citation might well establish a precedent for certification of other intellectual skills. Would the Faculty of Arts and Science wish at some stage to provide a citation for mathematical skills, which were also of great importance to graduate study and employment in many fields? Another member thought that such certification would be productive and well worth considering also for statistical skills. The member who raised the concern said that he would not find the precedent a dangerous or inappropriate one, but he did wish to be assured that the Faculty of Arts and Science was aware of the potential of the citation becoming a new, fourth program type.

Several members supported the idea of certification of language and potentially other skills. In an increasingly competitive world, such citations might well prove helpful to students. The point was, however, well taken that the University should, if this proposal was approved, be prepared for other requests to approve citations.

In the course of discussion, Dr. Loney noted that the University did currently provide certain special certifications, usually pertaining to particular experiences, for example completion of the Professional Experience Year program. The member who had raised the matter replied that such certifications did not establish a precedent for a citation based on the completion of degree courses.

(d) Difference between the proposed citation and a minor program. Arising from discussion of the suggestion that the citation would be, in effect, a new type of program, a member asked how the citation requirement would differ from a minor program. Professor Howson and Dr. Loney replied that completion of a specialist program or a combination of major and minor programs was a degree requirement. The achievement of the citation would not serve to meet degree requirements; it was something optional over and above the degree requirements. Achievement of the citation would require the completion of the two advanced courses with very high grades, whereas there were no grade requirements for programs. A minor program required the completion of four courses, including an advanced level course (at the 300 or 400 level).

2. Faculty of Arts and Science: Language Citation (Cont'd)

(e) Benefit of the citation beyond other information on the student record. A member asked what the citation added to a student's record. Dr. Loney replied that many language departments offered literature courses in translation, and it was sometimes difficult for the reader of the transcript to know whether completion of such courses could be taken to signify language skills. The citation would make clear the acquisition of such skills.

(f) Utility of the citation for completing external requirements. In response to questions, Professor Howson said that the citation might well be accepted by graduate departments as meeting their language requirements for the PhD. That decision would be made by each department. The objective, however, was not to provide certification for that purpose but to encourage the acquisition of language skill for various purposes including the completion of advanced research. Similarly, decisions to recognize the citation for meeting language requirements in other institutions would be made by those institutions.

(g) Nature of the citation. In response to questions, Professor Howson, Dr. Loney and Ms Swift said that the citation would be recorded on the transcript in notes appearing for the academic session in which the requirements were completed. It was anticipated that the record would be brief, using words such as "completed the requirements of the language citation in French." The precise implementation details had not been determined, with the Faculty awaiting approval of the proposal to work them out. As with the requirements of specialist, major and minor programs, the reader of the transcript who wished more detail about the citation requirements would be expected to seek them in the Faculty's calendar.

(h) General support for the proposal. Two members said that the citation would be helpful to the University's students in their efforts to seek admission to graduate programs or to seek employment. The proposed citation should therefore be seen as beneficial and approved. It would also encourage students to take further courses in a language to achieve certification, and that too should be seen as beneficial.

2. Faculty of Arts and Science: Language Citation (Cont'd)

On the recommendation of the Council of the Faculty of Arts and Science,

YOUR COMMITTEE RESOLVED

THAT, with effect for the 2006-07 session, the certification of completion of the requirements of a language citation be approved for students in the Faculty of Arts and Science who have completed at least two full courses or equivalent in that language beyond the introductory University-level course with a minimum grade of at least B- in each course; and

THAT comparable certification be approved for students in any other division of the University upon approval of such certification by the Council of that division.

3. Reports of the Administrative Assessors

School of Graduate Studies: Master of Public Policy - Proposal

Professor Hillan recalled that the Committee had at its previous meeting considered the proposal for a new Master of Public Policy degree program. The Committee had been assured that inauguration of the program would be contingent on governance approval of the establishment of a new School of Public Policy and Governance. A proposal to establish such a school had been considered by the Planning and Budget Committee at its meeting of October 17, 2006 and endorsed. It would be considered by the Academic Board at its next meeting.

4. Other Business

Procedure for Proposals from Members

In the course of the meeting, a member asked how he might propose to add to the agenda of a future meeting a proposal that the Committee recommend that a Faculty amend its admissions policy. Invited to reply, the Secretary said that normally, committees of the Governing Council were limited to accepting, rejecting or referring back proposals brought to them by their assessors and, in the case of this Committee, brought by the Faculty councils. The 1988 review of governance did provide for procedures for individual members to propose additions to the agendas of committees such as the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs. Those procedures were outlined in the "Frequently Asked Questions" document that had been distributed to the

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4. Other Business (Cont'd)

Procedure for Proposals from Members (Cont'd)

Committee for the first meeting of the academic year. However, where proposals concerned a specific Faculty, the procedures placed the authority to initiate changes clearly with the council of the Faculty, and they limited the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs to accepting, rejecting or referring back those proposals.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair reminded members that the next regular meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 6, 2006 at 4:10 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Secretary

Chair

November 14, 2006