Faculty of Arts and Science Council

Minutes of Meeting #10, December 17, 2013

1.0 The chair, Craig Monk, called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2.0 MOVED THAT the Agenda be approved as circulated (Bob Irwin/David McFadyen). CARRIED

3.0 MOVED THAT the Minutes of the 9th Council meeting of September 30, 2013 be approved as circulated (Jillian Skeffington/Karen Buro). CARRIED

4.0 Dean’s Report

- Craig Monk acknowledged the passing on November 15, 2013 of Lawrence Peta, an esteemed and long-time colleague in the Department of Psychology.
- Two new Assistant Professors have been hired, Sarah Shulist in Anthropology and Leah Flaherty in Biological Sciences; both will join the University effective January 1, 2014.
- Under the new policy for adjunct appointments, Policy C5035, Dr. Anna Pienkowski, of Bangor University, will join MacEwan University as an adjunct colleague in the Department of Physical Sciences.
- The Office of the Dean received 13 written requests for recruitment from department chairs in the Faculty. Permission has been granted by the Provost to hire six faculty members, one each in Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Earth and Planetary Sciences, English, Psychology, and Sociology. An academic staff appointment committee has been established for each search, with the respective department chairs offering their guidance with respect to staffing the committees.
- Four chair searches are now underway in Biological Sciences, Computer Science, Humanities, and Physical Sciences. Faculty members interested in serving as department chair and incumbent chairs interested in serving a second term should make their interest known by early January. A chair selection committee will be appointed to carry out the process of chair selection. The chair of Psychology is seeking a second term, and that process is underway, as well.
- In the Faculty of Arts and Science, seven applications for sabbatical leave were received, with six being granted; the seventh is still under adjudication.
- Eight faculty members are eligible for transfer from probationary to continuing status. Seven of those will have hearings in the new year; one eligible member is on a leave of absence.
- In October 2013, the Faculty of Arts and Science forwarded to the University Rank and Title Committee bipartite standards from the Department of Humanities and both bipartite and tripartite standards from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.
• With respect to faculty absence from classes, discussions with the chairs suggest that absences of up to a week for scholarly reasons can be managed, provided that classes are covered. Should absences greater than a week be contemplated, more formal measures for class coverage will need to be put in place, particularly if there are medical or personal emergency complications. It was noted that faculty are generally conscientious about ensuring that their absences are covered and student instruction is not compromised.

• The Faculty of Arts and Science has successfully negotiated agreements with other MacEwan Faculties so that more certificate and diploma programs are able to ladder into the baccalaureate programs. This will give students broader options to continue studying at MacEwan University. Over time, the agreements will be reviewed as the certificate and diploma programs incorporate different programming.

• Faculty feedback from the strategic planning presentation at the ninth Council meeting was greatly appreciated. The feedback was presented to Academic Governance Council, and the planning process will continue.

• Two external reviewers were invited to MacEwan University earlier in the term to assist with the review of the institution’s international operations. A preliminary draft report has been submitted and an update is expected early in 2014.

• There seems to be a greater desire to engage continuing faculty members in discussions about e-delivery of courses, more particularly with respect to course design, content and management. Virtual courses may at some point become part of regular workload, and fundamental concepts should be addressed before that time. Those who are interested in e-delivery are encouraged to contact Lynn Feist, the Coordinator for Distance and Distributed Education.

• The Dean’s Office recently received a request to align the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre with the Research Council. A resource centre cannot be governed as a research centre; notwithstanding, the Dean's Office has agreed to strike an ad hoc committee to review the mandate and terms of reference of the URDC with a view to bringing the committee’s recommendations to the next Council meeting in February 2014. Earlier in the fall, the URDC hosted visiting academics from MacEwan University’s partner institutions in Ukraine, and the working agreement with the University of Alberta vis-à-vis the URDC will be renewed in the near future.

• Across the institution, regular program reviews are continuing, and the Bachelor of Science review is well underway within the Faculty of Arts and Science. A site visit with an external assessor for Engineering has been arranged for May 2014, and completion of the review is projected for the summer of 2014.

• Following from earlier an earlier recommendation that the duties of both the Arts Curriculum Committee and the Science Curriculum Committee be rolled into the new Program and Curriculum Committee, revisions to the latter’s terms of reference will be provided before the committee elections. It is hoped that the Program Committee will be less burdened with master course syllabi and will be able to focus on other important duties devolving from the Arts and Science Curriculum Committees.
With respect to budgetary matters, the provincial government gave back to MacEwan University $2.6 million in operating funds that had been cut in the spring. The President reports that, while he expects no further cuts in the near future, the next provincial budget in March 2014 will make the situation clearer. For the 2013–2014 fiscal year, the Faculty of Arts and Science is operating on a $32 million budget, with less than a 1% surplus for the first quarter. As a result of careful management, the Faculty of Arts and Science was able to purchase some technology that had been put on hold, and some student support initiatives have been reinstated. Negotiations continue with respect to the sale of South Campus, and provisions are being made in the academic schedule to move students downtown by the start of Fall Term 2014. In anticipation of that move, space utilization at Alberta College and City Centre Campus has been audited. The Dean’s Office will reorganize some of its space, as will Program Services. Utilization of departmental student space will become more transparent and inclusive to non-departmental clubs, reading groups and other activities, while still retaining key privileges for majors and significant users.

5.0 Marketing and Communications – presentation

- Aimee Hill, Michelle Wolstenholme, Tyler Butler, and Ken Schwanke provided information on the reorganization the Faculty’s Marketing Department and its incorporation into the Office of Communications and Marketing. The advertising budget was significantly reduced in response to the provincial cutbacks, and it is hoped that redeployment of marketing and communications functions into two separate streams will help overcome this deficit.
- The marketing plan should be provided to the Provost, Deans, and Chairs in the spring. Enrolment and the academic plan at MacEwan University will take priority; advertising at the program level will be improved, and meeting additional needs will be addressed in consultation with the Schools and Faculties. The Office of Communications and Marketing will position itself to act as a conduit for all areas of the university, and it will move to increasingly web-based communications, with less emphasis on print media. Making it widely known that we are MacEwan University will take time but it will be successful. Preserving brand integrity and projecting the university pillars in all our communications will assist this process.
- With respect to the Faculty of Arts and Science, Communications and Marketing will work to do the same types of things that had been done before, but perhaps not to the same extent. Retention of the several Speaker Series will be paramount. Staff will develop ways to improve contact with the departments and faculty.
- Greater use will be made of social media, web presence, and news coverage where they can be effective, and the Office will work to improve communication with respect to faculty research. Communications and Marketing needs more lead time, because they serve MacEwan as a whole.
• Faculty members posed a number of questions and provided comments with respect to marketing and communications initiatives.

6.0 Terms of Reference – Department Council – Biological Sciences

• MOVED that the Terms of Reference for the Department Council for Biological Sciences be approved as distributed (David McFadyen/Ben Garstad). CARRIED

7.0 Proposal to amend residency requirements for BSc

• Jonathan Withey spoke to the proposed amendment to the residency requirement for the Bachelor of Science program, explaining that the amendment was intended to establish a more effective residency requirement for the Bachelor of Science program and more specific residency statements for 300- and 400-level courses. He sought general approval from the Faculty of Arts and Science Council to bring the proposal forward. By a show of hands, that approval was granted.

8.0 Faculty budget 2013 – 2014

• As mentioned in the Dean’s Report, following the restoration of a portion of the budget cut last spring, no further cuts are anticipated for the rest of 2013 – 2014 and 2014 – 2015. The Dean’s Office has no direct way of increasing revenue, yet additional costs such as scholarships and increments are borne by the Faculty of Arts and Science. Some technology cuts were reversed, as were some line items for student support initiatives. The budget is extremely limited, and new funding should not be expected.

9.0 South Campus relocation update

• There is increased urgency to move on the sale of South Campus, and therefore ensuring that space is available for the students who will move here in the fall of 2014 is a priority. As explained in the Dean’s Report, student and administrative space on both the Alberta College and City Centre campuses has been examined with an expectation of some degree of reallocation. Within the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Dean’s Office and Program Services will relinquish some space, and it has been noticed that some public space appears to be underutilized. “Departmental neighbourhoods” are asked to expand the focus of their student space, to keep an open schedule of the use of such space, and to make it available to other special interest groups. In response to a question about the possibility of scheduling classes closer to their departments in order to utilize space more effectively and demonstrate a greater departmental student presence, it was noted that the scheduling software may not permit such a move at this time; however, the notion is valid and could be pursued.
10.0 Anthropology Honours Program

- The Anthropology Honours Program has been approved by AGC. It is anticipated that communication of similar information will take place through means other than Council meetings in the future.

11.0 Adjournment

MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned (Lynne Honey/Ben Garstad). CARRIED

12.0 Question Period

An off-the-record question period was available for interested faculty members.