Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

FACULTY OF FINE ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS
FACULTY COUNCIL
January 20, 2016
436, CFAC
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Chair: Denise Roy

Attendees:
Robert Andruchow  Paul Johnston  Rey Rosales
Ray Baril       Michael MacDonald  Chris Ryan
Craig Brenan    Iain Macpherson  Dawn Sadoway
Carole Charette Darci Mallon  Kent Sangster
Rose Clancy     Lucille Mazo  Leslie Sharpe
Melissa Cuerrier Kyle Muzyka  Tom Van Seters
Eric Doucet     Kathy Neiman  Jennifer Spencer
Allan Gilliland Dianne Nicholls  Scott Spidell
Rose Ginther    Sony Raj  Jocelyn Wedman
Brian Gorman    Bill Richards  Wayne Williams
Jim Guedo       Chandelier Rimmer
Jim Head        Peter Roccia

Ex-officio members:
John Corlett  Mike Sekulic
Debbie McGugan  Dianne Westwood

Guests:
Timothy Anderson  Goldwin McEwan  Kim Warkentine
Kathleen Byrne  Joyce Nethercote  Marlene Wurfel
Neill Fitzpatrick  Gerry Potter
David Garfinkle  Ken Ristau
Roberta Laurie  Iris Rohr

Regrets:
Marcel Hamel  Bruce Montcombroux  Doreen Piehl
Nichole Magneson  Constanza Pacher  Annette Wierstra

Minutes: Christine Valentine

1. Approval of the agenda

   Lucille Mazo will provide a report on the Town Hall with Communication students under item 3.2.

   MOTION to approve the January 20, 2016 Faculty Council agenda, as amended.

   FFAFCFC-01-01-20-2016
   Moved by Rose Ginther, seconded by Rose Clancy.

   MOTION CARRIED

2. Approval of November 25, 2015 Faculty Council minutes

   MOTION to approve the November 25, 2015 minutes.

   FFAFCFC-02-01-20-2016
   Moved by Eric Doucet, seconded by Darci Mallon.

   MOTION CARRIED
Denise thanked everyone that has been a part of this process, particularly members of the Ad Hoc Review and Executive committees. Lucille Mazo was also recognized for her hard work in representing the needs of Communication faculty.

Denise acknowledged that this has been a difficult process that has caused anxiety and emotion for many faculty, and regrets that it has come to this kind of decision. She expressed her wishes that she wants what is best for both the Communication department and the rest of the faculty, but acknowledged that these two interests seem to be in conflict. Regardless of the results of the vote, Denise expressed that she is committed to working toward solutions and in the event that Communication remains in this faculty, to seriously address some of the issues identified as part of this process.

3.1 Ad Hoc Review Committee minutes

There was no discussion.

3.2 Communication presentations

Lucille Mazo presented an update on the Town Hall meeting that was held with 35-40 students comprised of a mix of Journalism and Professional Communication majors. The responses represent the combined feedback to questions asked in classrooms and at the Town Hall.

1. If the program was to be included in Arts and Science, what benefits do you see as a student?
   - More diverse selection of minors like English and wider variety of classes to choose from
   - More recognition for the program
   - Courses may transfer easier to other institutions
   - Increased interaction with English majors
   - Potential increases for funding
   - Better understanding of what the degree is within the department
   - Potential for more resources, services, space, and shared staff
   - Cheaper tuition

2. If the program was to be included in Arts and Science, what risks do you see as a student?
   - Limited access to design courses
   - Too much course work for majors and minors
   - Concern that credits would not transfer and being forced to take more redundant courses
   - Loss of distinct identity in being grouped in with arts students
   - Loss of specialization in communications and being required to take more courses less pertaining to communications
   - More competition for getting into classes and larger class sizes
   - Changes to requirements and class schedule
   - Potential loss of tight knit of instructor-student relationships
3. Is there any type of school/faculty format that would be beneficial to the program?
   - Better facilities, like a newsroom
   - A stand-alone school of communication that would allow the program more room to grow, provide better options, an honours stream with more variety and depth, similar to the School of Business

3.3 Consideration of the Department of Communication request

The following questions and observations arose regarding the results of the Town Hall with students:

- Why would tuition be cheaper if the BCS moved to Arts and Science?
  - Tuition is not set by the faculty. A Bachelor of Communication Studies is more expensive than a Bachelor of Arts and would remain so in whichever faculty it was housed

- What information was presented at the Town Hall meeting regarding the risks/benefits of moving to Arts and Science?
  - Background information about how we got to this point was provided in a non-biased way so that students were free to ask questions and voice their concerns
  - Students were asked to respond to four questions anonymously

- The core argument Communication presented for wanting to leave FFAC was based on cognate disciplines, particularly because of the benefits of better peer-review. This does not have a direct impact to students; was this cognate discipline argument provided to students?
  - Yes, cognate disciplines were mentioned. Students identified similar programs like English, so students were discussing cognate disciplines even if they did not know the definition

- Were students asked if they would want to stay in FFAC?
  - Students did not say a lot about staying

- Communication students were astute in stating that they are afraid of losing their program’s uniqueness and this is one of the potential negative aspects of moving to Arts and Science

- How much investigation has Communication done with the interests of non-Communication students?
  - It would be highly inappropriate for Communication to canvas non-Communication students

- One student member commented that the separation of the programs on different campuses is unfortunate because it would be an asset to be able to collaborate on projects. With the move downtown, would a relationship with Communication be viable?
  - Communication responded that they do not have to be in the same faculty to collaborate

- Can you provide more clarification around student’s perception that they would receive improved access to resources in Arts and Science?
  - There was no perception that this would be the case
The following summarizes the remainder of the discussion

- It was noted that Communication could have difficulty maintaining department status in Arts and Science
- The IAP report makes two specific points about the possible effects of Communication leaving: that FFAC would be viable as a faculty, and that the faculty "might benefit from greater cohesiveness and the opportunity to rebrand with a more specialized focus on Fine Arts, Performing Arts, and Design" (p. 3)
  - Ken Ristau clarified that the IAP report makes no determination on viability. The report only indicates that "there is no a priori reason that the Faculty could not remain viable" (p. 3).
- Is there further information as to whether a move to Arts and Science would provide the department with better resources?
  - The IAP report states that "other benefits and advantages might accrue, in resource allocation, student advising, faculty development, and program development and review, through closer academic alignment between the department and its Faculty" (p. 3)
    - Ken Ristau responded that the question about resources is beyond the scope of the IAP report and that it would be up to the dean and his staff's discretion to decide what to do with respect to resource allocation. As it pertains to the report, the advantage of better academic alignment is noted but Ken also noted that the report points out other ways to go about addressing resource allocation and the problems that Communication has identified
  - The Communication program currently teaches Journalism without a newsroom, recording studio, or communication lab and requested minimum basic facilities
  - Access to cameras is difficult because they have to be checked out of the library and Communication would prefer to control their own equipment as is the case in other journalism programs
    - Other faculty members noted that every other department has to request their equipment from the library
    - One faculty member mentioned that when there was a clear need for equipment that was rooted in curriculum, it was generally resourced well. Also, in the new building, the plan was that programs would be able to share studios and editing equipment
- The Provost indicated that, in thinking about how to vote, the resource issue should be taken off the table because it is not related to this decision. Arts and Science will do not gain any additional resources by undergoing this structural change, nor is there any guarantee that Communication would be any
better off in that faculty

- Why would the physical spaces Communication needs be better provided in the existing space as opposed to the new Centre for Arts and Culture?
  - In terms of physicality, building 7 provides stability for students to study and do their work
  - Building 7 is closer in proximity to other arts and science courses offered in buildings 6 and 7
  - Facilities they currently have work for what they offer, but they need a newsroom and a greenscreen
    - The new building will have a greenscreen and photo studios. What is the rationale for not joining us in the new building?
    - Communication responded that they only had two rooms in the new building. They would rather building resources slowly to build the environment they need where they are currently situated
    - Another option might be to use some of the space on the 5th floor in the new building
  - Centre for Arts and Culture does not incorporate ‘Communication’ in the name, though it was noted that we are the Faculty of Fine Arts and Communications
  - It was expressed that it was disheartening to hear of faculty wanting to leave because ultimately the students would miss out on all the great resources in the Centre for Arts and Culture

- One faculty member expressed that she does not accept the argument and rationale for the Department of Communication’s request to leave FFAC based primarily on cognate disciplines. In the discussion today, the real reason seems to be space and resources, which can be worked out. Moving to Arts and Science is not the best decision for students

- Another faculty member commented that he had worked alongside many Communication faculty on committees over the years and hoped to do so in the future

- What are the risks to this faculty if Communication leaves?
  - Other universities have small faculties that are stand-alone faculties because they do not fit in anywhere else, e.g. law faculties. There is no certainty about structure, and there is no guarantee that Communication would remain a department if they leave. There are risks to everyone
  - The Provost stated that the motion is not a motion that has any weight of authority behind it because the final decision will be made by the board. He suggested that we should consider what strengthens the academic capacity of MacEwan University

- Communication joining Arts and Science is based on reflective thinking about the past instead of the future. We want to see Communication and the rest of the faculty work
together to create a new kind of faculty and new ways for our disciplines to interact

- One Communication faculty member stated that the contribution Journalism can make to MacEwan has been overlooked and that they can put a public face on the university if they are given the right facilities
- One sessional faculty noted that there are also risks to staying in this faculty because Communication is having trouble feeling like this fit is working
- Though the PROW degree contained more creative courses, the BCS degree is more professional and Communication feels it better aligns with Arts and Science
- It was felt by Communication that by voting ‘yes’, it would be honouring their request to leave the faculty because they are not happy where they are

**MOTION** that, as per its request, the Department of Communication leaves FFAC.

**FFACFC-03-01-20-2016**
Moved by Allan Gilliland, seconded by Bill Richards.

The ballots were counted by Dianne Westwood and Christine Valentine. The results were 28 opposed, 7 in support of motion.

**MOTION DEFEATED**

Brian Gorman, Iain Macpherson, Lucille Mazo, Kyle Muzyka, Sony Raj and Peter Roccia requested that it be noted in the minutes that they voted in favour of the motion.

**MOTION** to destroy the ballots by January 22, 2016.

**FFACFC-04-01-20-2016**
Moved by Jennifer Spencer, seconded by Melissa Cuerrier.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3.4 Next steps**

Denise noted that this request from Communication will be treated as a legitimate request and will follow the normal governance channels. This process will also include conversations with Arts and Science and also the Provost who will be key in determining a final recommendation for the Board. Though it is not a decision for the Faculty Council whether Communication remains, the relationships between faculty members is important.

The Provost agreed that the Department of Communication could submit a minority report copied to him and submitted to Faculty Council for information.

**4. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.