



SENATE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday 22 February 2021 3:31-4:52 p.m. via Zoom

Attendees

Senators

M. Aronson
E. Bhangu
J. Burnham
J. Gilbert
S. Gopalakrishnan
P. Harrison
C. Krebs
K. Lo (Chair)

C.W. Marshall

A. Pratap Singh
R. Spencer (Vice-Chair)
H. Zerriffi
J. Zheng

Ex Officio

M. Quayle
K. Ross

Regrets

S. Matsui
K. Smith

Senate Staff

C. Eaton
J. Iverson

Call to Order

The meeting of the Senate Academic Policy Committee (the “Committee”) was called to order at 3:01 p.m. on 22 February 2021 by K. Lo, Chair.

Agenda

The Committee adopted the agenda by general consent.

Meeting Minutes

The Committee approved the 25 January 2021 meeting minutes by general consent.

Business Arising from the Minutes

None to report.

Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies > Minimum Funding for Ph.D. Students

THAT THE Senate Academic Policy Committee approve revisions to the Minimum Funding for Ph.D. Students Calendar entry set out in the proposal.

Moved: C. Krebs
Seconded: J. Burnham

The proposal removes the specific minimum funding amount from the Academic Calendar and empowers the Graduate Council to set the amount following annual review of the policy. The intent is to increase funding year-over-year.

Various members mentioned the importance of stating the minimum somewhere if not the Calendar (for students’ information, for faculty grant applications, etc.). The proposed Calendar revision refers to the Faculty’s website; multiple members suggested hyperlinking that piece.

With that amendment, the Committee voted on the motion on the floor.

Carried.

**Policy V-310:
External Reviews
of Academic Units**

K. Lo explained the draft policy before the Committee is for discussion and early input; it will come back to the Committee for approval.

M. Quayle said there are two documents: one is the policy and the other is the guidelines accompanying the policy. The intent is to clarify, simplify and update the external review process to be more proactive (and less backward-looking), as per the Degree Quality Assessment Board's (DQAB) suggestions.

Members offered the following comments:

- P. Harrison noted apparent inconsistencies within and between the documents. Additionally, suggestions and guidance from the DQAB review are not clearly evident in the proposal.
- J. Gilbert suggested it would be helpful for professional programs if the policy and procedures indicate where requirements vary for accredited programs. M. Quayle said the reviews should be concurrent to find efficiencies.
- M. Aronson asked if aligning with a quality assurance (QA) plan would be counter-productive to forward-looking self-studies. M. Quayle said QA could be proactive (how we measure now, and how we plan to measure in the future).
- J. Zheng said a timeline for review should be included in the policy. K. Lo noted the proposal states every 5-7 years with a maximum of 8. C. Eaton said in the current system reviews are tied to the appointment of a unit head, which is typically 5 years.
- H. Zerriffi echoed comments about finding efficiencies and noted the inconsistent use of research unit throughout the documents (teaching in some places, research in others). H. Zerriffi also noted the report length is reduced but the scope of review is increased. C. Krebs suggested the scope be tied to accountability, which should relate to the unit's and University's strategic plan.
- C. Eaton agreed "academic unit" needs to be clarified. Criteria is 1. teaching responsibilities; or 2. have associated faculty or students. Language on how to review research units is also needed.
- S. Gopalakrishnan noted a lack of engagement with alumni, which is important for understanding programs post-graduation. Also suggested mentorship continue post-tenure.
- J. Burnham said reviews are an opportunity to ask units to engage with the IAP, ISP, Climate Emergency, etc. The ways units will respond is not uniform, and this provides the space to reflect on these initiatives.
- C.W. Marshall suggested language regarding the status of reviews after completed. It should be clear that reviews are available for faculty and meant to be improvement-oriented.

- R. Spencer asked whether the Provost's Office considered the balance of complete transparency and no transparency and what impact that might have on reviewers. M. Quayle said it is a balance of learning/improving and inviting powerful critique. M. Aronson agreed and added unit's want the truth in the reports. Against sharing reviews broadly.
- C. Krebs said public institutions need to be accountable to the public. Students require the information too, especially for those considering graduate studies. The summary reported to Senate is not enough, and a full report may be too much. It is not about individuals; it is about the unit and institution. H. Zerriffi said there are some obvious redactions, but there are ways to make something "meaty" available to the public. That should be included in the guidelines. J. Burnham supported increased transparency in the process.
- C. Eaton said the majority of reviews are non-controversial. If the unit as an entity and the people in the unit are uncoupled that may be a way forward. Some people raise things that they want to be addressed in a public fashion; this forum is required.
- J. Zheng requested a sample review the next time the Committee discusses the policy and asked about the resource impact on a unit under review. C. Eaton said the self-study is the most laborious part of the process. M. Quayle said the intention is to support units with data and templates.
- J. Gilbert mentioned the downstream effect of these reviews, particularly on junior faculty. Assurance should be given that some positive changes come from reviews.
- P. Harrison said there should be a requirement for a meaningful response (Dean for department, Provost for Faculty). K. Lo noted the recommendations from past reviews are often the starting point for new reviews.

Policy J-XXX:
Academic Freedom

The Committee did not have time to discuss the item in detail. P. Harrison requested feedback on differentiating academic freedom from the process for booking rooms, the concept that the University itself has certain rights and privileges, and the definition of member.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 29 March 2021 3:30-5 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.