DATE: August 5, 2011
TO: J. Taylor, Dean, Faculty of Arts
FROM: L. Wilson, Faculty of Arts Academic Regulations Policy Committee
SUBJECT: Report of the Faculty of Arts Academic Regulations Policy Committee

Preamble

The above Committee met on April 27, 2011. The terms of reference of the Committee stipulate that it shall recommend to Faculty Council, through the Arts Executive Committee, with respect to undergraduate regulations relating to admission, General, Integrated Studies, Advanced and Honours degree programs, examinations, grading system, required performance levels, and all requirements for receiving degrees.

The Committee considered the following matters:

1. Reconsideration of a Blended Entry System of Admission to the Faculty of Arts.

PREAMBLE

The final report of the committee to review University 1 (March, 2010) recommended that those Faculties/Schools wishing to do so be permitted to admit students directly from high school (as some professional schools currently do). However, current practices of admitting students to Faculties/Schools from University 1 should also remain as an option for students. The operation of both modes of admission constitutes a blended entry system. At its September, 2010 meeting, the Senate Committee on Admissions (SCADM) considered and recommended a universal template for the direct entry component of this blended entry strategy (see Attachment 1). At that meeting it was clear that Faculties/Schools could opt in or out of blended entry and that it was at the discretion of Faculties/Schools to propose the required high school courses and the percentage mark required on the high school courses presented for admission. At its October meeting, Senate approved SCADM’s recommendation of the following universal template.
1. Direct entry from high school will be based on the following criteria:
   a. Average of 85% or higher in final grades in three Grade 12 S or U courses, including:
      i. One credit in English (or another language);
      ii. One course related to the discipline that is a normal prerequisite for registration in University 1 courses currently required for Faculty admission or for later registration in the degree program (e.g., biology for Kinesiology & Recreation Management; one of chemistry, physics or biology for Science);
      iii. A third course
2. A minimum of 60% must be presented in each of the three courses used for direct admission.
3. Applicants must also meet the general University requirements which include Manitoba high school graduation, with a minimum of five full credits at the Grade 12 level, in courses designated S, U, or G (General).

On December 16, 2010 the Arts Academic Regulations Policy Committee (ARPC) met to consider a proposal for a blended entry system of admission. On February 3, 2011, the Arts Faculty Council approved the following blended entry system of admission that had been recommended by the ARP Committee that maintained the current course distribution requirements for admission to U1.

- Manitoba high school graduation, with five full credits at the Grade 12 level, in courses designated S (Specialized), G (General), or U (Dual Credit – University), with a minimum average of 85% over three Grade 12 S or U credits
- One of the three courses included in the minimum average of 85% must be Grade 12 S or U English, with a minimum grade of 70%

Note: It is strongly recommended that prospective students complete either applied mathematics or pre-calculus in high school in order to facilitate their fulfilling the University’s ‘M’ requirement for graduation.

**OBSERVATIONS**

The Senate Committee on Admissions (SCADM) was required to consider the Arts proposal for a blended entry system of admission because it did not conform to the template approved by Senate.

While SCADM was sympathetic to the Arts proposal for a 70% average on Grade 12 English, they were unwilling to deviate from the template approved by Senate that allowed for a 60% average in Grade 12 English. Rather than have SCADM defeat the Arts’ proposal, L. M. Wilson made a decision to withdraw it and bring it back to the Faculty of Arts Academic Regulations Policy Committee for reconsideration.

Data provided by the admissions office shows that having a 60% average of Grade 12 English versus 70% would have little effect on the number of students being admitted to Arts. In fact the data show five more students would be eligible for admission with the 60% average in Grade 12 English and of the five students their average on their best three subjects including English was 85% to 89%. SCADM ultimately agreed to review the entry average for English which may result in a change to the template in the future.
On April 27, 2011 the ARP Committee agreed to move forward with a blended entry system of admission in keeping with the University’s template with respect to the averages required on the high school subjects.

RECOMMENDATION

It was unanimously RECOMMENDED that

The Faculty of Arts adopt the Senate approved template regarding the 85% average on the grades for three (3) Grade 12 S or U courses, but maintain the current course distribution requirements for admission to U1.

- Manitoba high school graduation, with five full credits at the Grade 12 level, in courses designated S (Specialized, G (General), or U (Dual Credit-University), with a minimum average of 85% over three Grade 12 S or U credits
- One of the three courses included in the minimum average of 85% must be Grade 12 S or U English, with a minimum grade of 60%.

n. b. There would also be a strong recommendation for prospective students to have completed either applied mathematics or pre-calculus in high school in order to facilitate their fulfilling the University’s ‘M’ requirement for graduation. Mathematics would not be required for direct entry, just as it is not now required for entry to U1.

2. Revision to the Faculty of Arts Grades Review Process

PREAMBLE

In December 2010, the Academic Regulations Policy (ARP) Committee was asked to review the Faculty of Arts Regulations for Evaluation of Undergraduate Student Course Work, Part D; General, 5, with respect to the role of the final grade review committee.

In keeping with University policy on Examination Regulations, Item 2.3 Grades, 2.3.1 Final Grades, Multi Sectioned courses and Faculty of Arts Regulations for Evaluation of Undergraduate Student Course Work, departments are required, subject to the faculty/school regulations, to establish a procedure for the review and approval of final grades prior to submission to the Registrar.

The Academic Regulations Appeals Committee (ARAC) had requested the ARP Committee review existing faculty policy governing a final grade review process due to a recent grade appeal by a student. Due to anomalies in the grade distribution, the Department Head changed (lowered) the student’s grade. The student’s appeal was upheld resulting in the student’s grade being raised to the grade the student expected as per the course outline. In considering the student’s appeal to the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee, the Committee solicited opinions of the Office of Student Advocacy and the University Secretary’s Office. Both offices believed the course outline to be a tacit contract between the instructor and the student and as such, an explicit mark-to-grade conversion table in a course outline established expectations that final grades will conform to that metric.
OBSERVATION

The ARP Committee members generally agreed with the notion that the course outline was a tacit contract between the instructor and student, with some suggesting a standardization of a grading range with a marks-to-grade conversion. The final grades review should be a teachable moment and only in exceptional cases should there be a collegial recommendation to change the grades where anomalies exist.

The ARP Committee requested the Dean’s Office develop a proposal regarding the final grades review process. In addition the Dean’s Office agreed to collect data from departments on their marks-to-grading practices. [The survey results were distributed to Department Heads and Program Coordinators on June 14, 2011].

RECOMMENDATION

It was unanimously RECOMMENDED that

Part D. General, 5, of the Faculty of Arts Regulations for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Student Course Work be changed as follows: [additions noted in bold print and strikeouts indicate deletions]

5 Each Department Council shall strike a standing committee, to be called the Final Grades Review Committee, consisting, at the discretion of the Department Council, of either the Head alone or the Head ex officio and one or more other faculty members of the Department, the number to be determined by the Department Council, elected by the Department Council, that shall have the power to both review and approve all proposed final grades connected with undergraduate courses offered by the Department before they are sent to Student Records submitted to the Registrar’s Office or the Dean's Office. Such power shall include reviewing and approving the proposed changing of already posted procedural final grades as well as reviewing and approving the proposed changing of erroneous final grades already posted, but shall not include review or approving the changing of final grades as decided by the Appeals Committee of the Department Council. (See #6 below.) The Final Grades Review Committee must review and approve all proposed final grades (including procedural final grades) connected with any multi-sectioned undergraduate course having different examiners for at least some of the sections. At the discretion of the Department Council, proposed final grades connected with other undergraduate courses offered by the Department may be required to be reviewed and approved by the Final Grades Review Committee. If the Final Grades Review Committee believes that proposed final grades should be changed, it must, if possible, discuss the matter with the examiner. The Committee may change an examiner's proposed final grades if the examiner consents providing the respective course outline does not contain an explicit mark-to-grade conversion table. Should the course outline contain a mark-to-grade conversion table the grades cannot be changed as the course outline is considered to be a tacit contract between the student and instructor. An examiner's proposed final grades may be changed at the department level without the examiner's consent by the Department Council at a duly called meeting. Such changes may be made by the Department Council only if an examiner's proposed final grades are deemed to be contrary to current regulations of the Senate, the Faculty Council or the Department Council or clearly improper or in error and providing the respective course outline does not contain an explicit mark-to-grade conversion table. Should the course outline contain a mark-to-grade conversion table the grades cannot be changed as the course outline is considered to be a tacit contract between the student and instructor. For purposes of changing an examiner's final grades without the
examiner's consent, the Head of the Department shall be empowered to call meetings of the Department Council on twenty-four hours' notice. Compatible with current Senate and Faculty Council regulations on the academic evaluation of student course work, the Department Council may lay down additional regulations to govern the work of the Final Grades Review Committee.

3 Consideration of Revised Terms of Reference for the Academic Regulations Policy Committee

PREAMBLE

The Committee was requested to consider proposed terms of reference that had revised to conform to a template developed by the Deans' Office for all committees in the Faculty of Arts.

RECOMMENDATION

It was unanimously RECOMMENDED that the Terms of Reference for the Academic Regulations Policy Committee be changed as presented.

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I would request that this report and attachments be transmitted to the next meeting of Arts Executive in September 2011. I would be pleased to present the report at that meeting upon your invitation.
Academic Regulations Policy Committee
Faculty of Arts
Terms of Reference

AUTHORITY:

Established by Arts Faculty Council as a standing committee of Faculty Council

PURPOSE:

The committee shall, through the Arts Executive Committee, recommend to Faculty Council with respect to undergraduate regulations relating to admissions, General, Advanced, and Honors, and Integrated Studies degree programs, examinations, grading systems, required performance levels, and all requirements for receiving degrees.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1. The committee shall keep a critical eye on the observance of these undergraduate regulations and on all decisions of the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee

3. The committee shall report at least once annually to Faculty Council.

4. Secretary to the committee shall be the Administrative Assistant to the Dean's Executive Assistant - Academic

COMPOSITION:

1. Dean of Arts (or designate) - ex officio

2. Six (6) faculty members elected by Faculty Council, three to be elected each year

3. Two (2) Arts undergraduate students nominated by the Senior Stick with one year terms

4. Dean of Arts, St. Boniface College or delegate - ex officio

5. Chair of the Course and Program Approvals Committee - ex officio

6. Director of Summer Session and Credit Extension Programs - ex officio

7. Chair of the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee - ex officio

Established and approved by Faculty Council (November 2, 1982)
Revisions approved by Faculty Council May 1985

1 All ex officio members of standing committees have voting rights unless otherwise stipulated
EXCERPTS FROM:

STANDING COMMITTEES OF ARTS FACULTY COUNCIL

Terms of Reference

Approved by Arts Faculty Council November 2, 1982
Revised by Arts Faculty Council May 5, 1998

1. Academic Regulations Policy Committee

The Academic Regulations Policy Committee shall, through the Arts Executive Committee, recommend to Faculty Council with respect to undergraduate regulations relating to admissions, General, Advanced, and Honours degree programs, examinations, grading systems, required performance levels, and all requirements for receiving degrees.

The Committee shall keep a critical eye on the observance of these undergraduate regulations and on the decisions of the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee.

There shall be six (6) members elected by Faculty Council for two year terms, four to be elected each year, and two student members nominated by the Senior Stick, each to serve for one year. Members may serve more than one term. In addition the Committee shall include as ex officio members:

Chair of the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee;
Chair of the Course and Program Approvals Committee for Undergraduates;
Director of Summer Session and Credit Extension Programs;
Dean of St. Boniface College or delegate.

GENERAL

1. All ex officio members have voting rights unless otherwise indicated.

2. The Dean of Arts or delegate is an ex officio member of every standing committee.