

General Faculties Council (GFC) Snapshot – November 18, 2010

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Reports from Senior Administration

- The Quality Council recently conducted their site visit for the midwifery degree
- Negotiations continue with Advanced Education around funding the Bachelor of Education degree
- Open House on November 13th had approximately 1733 attendees, up from 1350 the previous year. Over 300 students completed online student profiles, which will allow the university to send them targeted communications. 425 people participated in tours of the campus.
- The organizers of Open House tried to respond to the feedback given by councillors at the previous GFC meeting by making the changes that they could make with the time available, such as giving larger spaces to faculties. There are plans to create an open house taskforce to further debrief the event. There would be faculty representation on the taskforce, and the group would be happy to speak to any interested parties.
- The current list of what could be considered an editorial change in the curriculum submission process was brought forward for information purposes. One item has been added to the list – the removal of non-academic admission requirements (interview, reference letter, etc.). The current list is posted in Lotus Notes. A councillor asked why a reduction in course hours is listed as a possible editorial change, when such a change could have a substantive impact on curriculum. The Chair of APPC reminded councillors that the initiator of any curriculum change gets to make the call if the change is editorial in nature, or if it should go through the full process. If the initiator deems the change to be editorial, the application still must go through several levels where numerous parties must also agree that the change is editorial for the application to advance.

Decision Items

- All the curriculum submissions on the agenda from the Faculties of Arts, and Science and Technology were approved.
- A proposal to implement a 30 credit University Entrance (UE) option for Fall 2011 was approved after substantial discussion. This option will be made available to approximately 300 students in its first year, with plans to expand enrolment to 350 FLE in 2012-13 and 400 FLE in 2013-14. University Entrance students will be required to take four foundational level GNED courses, and strongly encouraged to take the UGST 1000 (Effective Learning in the Undergraduate Context). The students will be based in the Faculty of Teaching and Learning, and have increased access to advising. This option is intended to provide better support for degree bound Open Studies

students - those who enrol in Open Studies with the plan of applying for a degree program after improving their GPA or upgrading. It was reported that the existing model is not meeting student's needs as attrition rates are high and students are not getting into their degree programs of choice. The remaining open studies students will now be based in Continuing Education. The need for appropriate supports and programming for these students, particularly advising, was highlighted in the discussion of the motion. Councillors wanted to ensure UE students are choosing appropriate courses and are aware of the potential transferability of GNED and UGST courses to other institutions should they not be accepted into degree programs at MRU. Councillors were told that UE students are not guaranteed a spot in the degree program of their choice, but if they have achieved the previous year's competitive GPA for a degree and meet all other entrance requirements, they would get in. There was considerable discussion on how this might play out. It was stated that the ability to use the previous year's competitive GPA for these students is not tied to the completion of the full 30 credits in the University Entrance option, but further clarification of this point is required. Councillors were told that there is no time limit for UE students to complete the 30 credits in this option, and there are no plans to have UE students pay different fees than degree students. The impact on the Faculty of Teaching and Learning in terms of GNED offerings and advising loads was discussed, and it is expected that more sections of foundational GNED courses will be required to accommodate UE students. The cost estimates in the UE proposal use the E3 step in calculations of the cost of delivering additional GNED sections, but councillors were told that this does not necessarily mean that part time faculty will be teaching all of the additional sections. The need to monitor success rates for the option once it is implemented was also raised.

- In the course of the discussion on the University Entrance option, a question was raised whether GNED foundation courses would be made available to applied degree students as well. Councillors were told that there was no plan to do so. The intention is that these degrees will eventually be phased out and be replaced by Baccalaureate degrees.

Report from Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure Committee

The Chair of APTC indicated that the committee is currently waiting to receive detailed tenure and promotion criteria documents from faculty councils. A councillor asked about a comment on peer evaluations that appeared in the committee's minutes. The Chair reminded councillors that discussions captured in the minutes do not reflect an official position of the committee – only decisions items do.

Questions from the Floor

A councillor asked if there will be a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the new scheduling software to determine if the aims of implementing such a system have been achieved in practice. The Acting Associate Vice-President, Enrolment Services indicated that concerns could be directed to herself or the Provost & VP, Academic – there is currently not a plan for a follow-up process in place.