MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA ACADEMIC
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE of Erindale College Council meeting held on Wednesday,
January 12, 2011 at 2:10 p.m. in DV3130CC, William G. Davis Building.

Present: Nick Woolridge (in the Chair), D. Crocker, D. Saini, A. Mullin, U. Krull, A.
Wensley, D. McMillen, A. Lange, S. Kamenetsky, A. Rosenbloom, S. Radovic, X. Shi, T.
Bowen, J. Cruz, A. Madhavji, G. Yuen, M. Galvez, J. McCurdy-Myers

Regrets: G. Anderson, M. Mavrinac, A. Bendlin, L. Florence, S. Bernstein

Guests: G. Cassar, F. Gure, S. Metso, S. Kirschner

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (December 1, 2010)

The minutes were approved as they stand.

2. Reports of Committees and Officers

   a) Update from the Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management – Diane Crocker

      i. Credit/No Credit Policy Proposal

      The Credit/No Credit Policy is attached hereto as Appendix A.

      Ms. Crocker provided her presentation in written form rather than visual to ensure the
      appropriate wording was provided. The document she has provided includes the text as it
      will appear in the calendar. She directed members to the second item in the policy as that is
      the item that is being proposed today. The first item (an option for certain types of courses
      to be graded on a Credit/No Credit basis) already exists as a policy for students and faculty.

      Ms. Crocker began by explaining that the proposed Credit/No Credit option policy and the
      copy under consideration is not new. The copy was taken from the St. George calendar
      where the policy exists in the Faculty of Arts and Science. It has been successfully in practice
      since 2008 on the St. George campus and just began in the summer 2010 on the
      Scarborough campus. The purpose of this policy is to allow students to explore areas outside
      of their program without danger of affecting their GPA.

      The policy is being brought forward for implementation in September 2011. It will be
      restricted to 1.0 course in a 20 credit degree and is available for elective courses and
      distribution requirements however it cannot be used to fulfill program requirements. It is
      only available to UTM students for UTM courses. It will not be available to non-degree
      students or visiting students. The decision must be made by the last date to enroll in the
      relevant courses and once a student elects this option the decision is not reversible. The
      course designated as Credit/No Credit will not be reflected in the student’s GPA. Ms.
      Crocker pointed out that the one difference between our policy and the other campuses is
that the course pass will be 50% at UTM rather than 60% as is the case on the other campuses.

It was duly moved and seconded,
THAT the Academic Affairs Committee approve the Credit/No Credit Policy and recommend it to Erindale College Council for approval. (D. Crocker/A. Lange)

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

A member asked how common the policy was across Ontario universities. Ms. Crocker noted that it is not that common, however she noted that neither are the policies on late withdrawal nor the requirements for extensive course distribution.

A member noted that she is supportive of this policy and also that the policy has strong student support as evidenced by the report submitted by UTMSU.

A member questioned how well the faculty was consulted about this policy and how we ensure that the students that opt for this choice will not take a place in a course away from students for which the course is a program requirement. Ms. Crocker noted that students choosing this option do not get special access to courses and will enroll as per the usual process. She further noted that the student’s choice to enroll using this option will not be disclosed to the instructor. As well, the data from the St. George and Scarborough campuses has shown that in practice there is notable variation in course selection which alleviated the concern that the option would be used by students for only the most challenging courses. To the issue of consultation with faculty, she pointed out that there is a Tri-Campus Deans and Registrars Committee that focuses on this type of issue. From a UTM perspective Ms. Crocker called on Professor Mullin who advised that it has been discussed within the Dean’s office with the intention to circulate it to the department chairs if it is approved by the Committee and before it goes to Council for approval.

A member voiced concern with setting up a standard that is lower than the other campuses. He noted that he can clearly see why the other two campuses have set the pass mark at 60% and he is concerned that if the limit is set at 50% it encourages students to take a route that is not academically strong. He also argued that 60% is the threshold for transfer credits so there is a strong rationale. He asked what happens if a student wants to use the course for a program requirement. Ms. Crocker noted that although the decision is not reversible, the grades will be on record and it will be up to the department’s discretion if they want to allow the student into the program however she added that in all likelihood the student would still need to do additional courses to meet program requirements.

A member thanked the committee for developing the policy proposal. She advised that she spoke with the Vice Dean Undergraduate at the Scarborough campus and he mentioned that they are running into some issues with the 60% threshold and in terms of students switching majors they deal with it pretty efficiently on a case by case basis. There has also been very positive feedback on the policy.

A member provided his support to set the pass mark at 60% to communicate the university’s high standards. He suggested a friendly amendment to the proposed policy raising the pass to 60%.

The Chair extended speaking rights to a guest from UTMSU. He reported that UTMSU fully supports the policy and believes it will provide students with an opportunity to explore areas
of study with which they would not otherwise feel comfortable. He feels that placing the pass threshold at 60% would be confusing. He addressed the point about the 60% level placed on transfer credits as relevant because that grade is external to UTM however this policy applies to UTM courses so the standard and pass mark should be consistent.

A member asked what the passing grade is for current credit/no credit courses. Ms. Crocker said they are of a sort (such as experiential courses) that do not have a grade. The member commented that it is her understanding that the other campuses place the passing mark at 60% in order to encourage students to not just aim for a passing mark. She continued that she understood the rationale however felt there is a disconnect when the graded pass is 50%.

Ms. Crocker advised that she sees it may cause appeal issues if a student is prevented from graduating because they received a no credit for a mark between 50 and 59% and as Chair of Committee on Standing it would be difficult to argue logically to uphold that decision. She noted that she believes the other two campuses are beginning to draw the same conclusion.

A member asked if making courses ineligible for this option could be up to the department’s discretion. Ms. Crocker noted that this is a very complex process and it would not be administratively possible. She also noted that restricting the areas open to exploration would lose the intent of the policy. She added that students will still need to meet all the prerequisites to be eligible to take the course.

It was duly moved and seconded,
THAT the motion be postponed to the next scheduled meeting. (Metso/Kamenetsky)

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

A member asked if postponing would affect the implementation time. Ms. Crocker answered that postponing the motion would mean that the policy would not come into effect in September 2011.

A member commented against postponing by noting that the final approval at Council will not occur for several weeks which will leave ample time for faculty to discuss the policy, and since all faculty are members of the Council they can vote at the Council meeting.

Ms. Crocker offered to attend any faculty meetings to explain the policy.

The motion to postpone was put to a vote. The motion was lost.

It was duly moved and seconded,
THAT the motion be amended to change the pass from 50% to 60%. (Saini/Radovic)

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

There being no questions.

The motion to amend was put to a vote. The motion was lost.

The original motion was put to a vote. The motion carried.
ii. SDF Policy Change

The SDF Policy change is attached hereto as Appendix B.

Ms. Crocker explained that under the current policy if a student misses an exam they must petition to write a deferred exam. Until the student has written the deferred exam the student’s mark for the course has the notation SDF. If for some reason the student does not write the deferred exam they must petition for a second deferral. If they are successful in deferring a second time, they must wait to write the exam the next time the course is offered. At present the SDF notation is removed and they receive a partial grade for that course which usually will reflect a failing grade until the deferred portion of the course work has been graded and the amended grade approved. Ms. Crocker believes the current policy is punitive given that the student has been granted permission to defer. The incomplete grade can affect a student’s GPA, change their academic status, place a student on suspension or probation, hinder enrolment and application to graduate or professional school.

She advised members that what is being proposed is for the SDF to remain on the transcript until the deferred exam is written.

It was duly moved and seconded, THAT the Academic Affairs Committee approve the SDF policy change and recommend it to Erindale College Council for approval. (D. Crocker/A. Mullin)

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

A member asked if the new policy may hide a status such as suspension. Ms. Crocker agreed that there may be instances where a student may be protected from suspension because the SDF remains on the transcript.

A member spoke in favour of the motion because the current policy means that students’ transcripts are misleading when the grade is incomplete which may jeopardize future opportunities.

The motion was put to a vote. The motion carried.

iii. First Year Science Courses – minimum high school prerequisite grade requirements – For Information

Ms. Crocker presented the rationale behind the minimum high school grade requirement of 70% for Math, Chemistry, Biology and Physics. These minimum requirements will ensure that those that are accepted in the courses will be more prepared to succeed. All the departments involved were consulted and supported the initiative. The only concern voiced by the departments focused on prerequisite checking and the Registrar’s Office will assist in the process. This requirement will be put in place in 2011.

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

A member noted that most in his department thought the minimum should be higher. He understood the rationale for a minimum standard but voiced concern that the minimum requirement should not become so high that it blocks admission to the general public.
A member noted that high school marks do not always reflect success. Ms. Crocker noted that students can petition for admission. She also mentioned that frequently students will repeat courses in high school to get their marks up and in this case, that effort would definitely be taken into consideration.

A member asked if students coming from high school have enough information about the system to know they can petition if they do not meet the minimum requirement. Ms. Crocker noted that the information is available to students when they attend group advising, as well the information is in the first year student’s handbook, and the Registrar’s Office provides several information sessions where the rules and regulations are explained.

iv. Move to Earlier Registration for Returning Students – For Information

Ms. Crocker presented the new timeframe for enrolment. At present the enrolment timeframe is compressed into a two week timeframe in July. This placed high demands on academic advising and frontline advising in a very short period of time. In some instances it meant that some students could not enroll in courses that were requirements to graduate and interrupted student summer employment and vacation plans. The new timeframe reduces the strain on the computer based registration system, allows students access to the courses they need and provides students with more timely and effective academic guidance. Another benefit will be the ability to proactively work with the Dean’s Office to ensure course enrolment numbers meet the enrolment demands for the course. It will also take the pressure off departments for prerequisite checking. She further noted that first year courses will not be available to returning students until after the first year students have registered for them.

For this year, the revised dates will be:

- fourth-year students will enroll on April 5;
- third-year students will enroll on May 2;
- second-year students will enroll on June 13; and
- first-year students will enroll on July 6.

Ms. Crocker explained that the biggest challenge with the move to earlier registration for returning students will be communicating it to students. She provided members with an outline of the communication initiatives that will be undertaken.

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

A member voiced concern that the registration time is before students know if they have passed prerequisite courses and therefore will not know if they are able to enroll in higher year courses. Ms. Crocker noted that this was the reasoning behind starting with the fourth year students in April and that there will be regular advising sessions with students before they enroll in fourth year courses. It also ensures that the advising takes place early enough for those students to enroll in summer courses should they need them in order to graduate. This is the first year for this initiative and it will be revised as warranted.

Many members spoke in strong support of this initiative especially as it relates to advising students at the department level and ensuring prerequisite checking is done in a timely manner.
A member noted that the Registrar must work closely with departments concerning subject post enrolment dates and to ensure they are synchronized with the enrolment dates. He also noted that there are some very competitive fourth year courses, such as thesis or internship courses, where entrance depends on grades which will mean that admission to these courses will not be settled until the grades are received. Ms. Crocker advised that the Registrar's Office will work closely with the departments that have this type of course offering to generate lists of outstanding students as well as urge instructors to get their grades in on time to alleviate this issue.

A member asked when higher level students could enroll in first year courses. Ms. Crocker advised that enrolment in first year courses will open up to higher level students two weeks after first year enrolment on July 6th. She also noted that year of study will be determined as of the end of April based on what a student has completed at that point with an assumption that they will successfully complete the courses they are enrolled in. She made it clear that this is a change and the year of study will not include courses completed in the coming summer.

3. New Business:

There was no new business.

The next meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, February 16, 2011.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

[Signatures]

Chair

Secretary
Credit / No Credit Courses:
There are two kinds of credit / no credit courses. The first already exists in the UTM calendar. The second is being proposed for introduction at UTM effective beginning Fall/Winter 2011 Session

1. Courses in which all students are graded on a credit/no credit basis
   In some courses, such as certain visual and performing arts courses, it may be more appropriate to grade students on a Credit/No Credit (CR/NCR) basis rather than assign specific letter grades. The grade of “No credit” is a failing grade. Where students earn a grade of “Credit” in a course, the course is not included in the grade point average; where students earn a grade of “No Credit” the course is included as an “F” (value zero) in the grade point average.

2. Courses in which students have opted to be graded on a credit/no credit basis
   Students may select up to 1.0 full credit of their degree credits to be assessed on a Credit / No Credit basis. Students must choose this mode of assessment no later than the last day to enroll in the relevant course. Once the deadline has passed, students may not under any circumstances reverse this decision.

   To achieve a status of CR (Credit), a student must achieve a final mark of at least 50%. Marks below that will be assessed as NCR (No Credit). Courses with a final status of CR will count as degree credits but will have no effect on the student’s GPA. They may count as Breadth Requirements and degree credits, but cannot be used to satisfy program requirements. Courses with a final status of NCR will not count as degree credits, will not count as failures, and will not be included in the GPA calculation. Students may exercise this option on a total of 1.0 full credit within the total number of credits required for a degree. The choice is not restricted as to year or level of course.

   This option is available only for UTM students taking UTM courses. This option is not available to UTM non-degree students. This option is not available to visiting students on a letter of permission or to students from other faculties / divisions of the University of Toronto.
Recommended language for the 2011-2012 Academic Calendar:

**SDF (standing deferred) Notation**

When a student successfully petitions for a deferred examination or extension of time for term work in a given course, an "SDF" notation is assigned in place of the original grade on a student's transcript. Courses with the notation SDF are not included in grade point average calculation. If the student does not write the deferred examination or hand in the term work by the deadline, the "SDF" notation will be replaced by the original grade with a grade of "0" for the final examination/missing term work in the calculation of the final grade. If a student successfully petitions for a further deferral/extension however, the SDF notation will remain on record until the deferred exam/term work has been graded and the amended grade has been approved.

**SDF AND Cumulative GPA less than 1.50:**

Students who finish the Fall-Winter session or the Summer session with a cumulative GPA of less than 1.50 and who have been granted deferred standing in a course, are advised to enrol in a maximum of 5.0 further courses (Fall/Winter) minus the weight of the course in which they have been granted a further deferral. Students on academic probation (less than 1.50 CGPA) are advised NOT to enroll in summer session courses.

Students who must write a deferred examination in a course that serves as a prerequisite for subsequent courses may enrol in those courses at the discretion of the department, and provided that the term mark in the prerequisite (deferred) course is at least 60%. Failure to pass the prerequisite course or to meet other departmental grade standards may result in cancellation of enrolment in the subsequent courses.