1. Minutes of the previous meeting (November 22, 2011)

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. Reports of Committees and Officers

a) Proposals from the Office of the Registrar, Ms. Diane Crocker, Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management - *For Approval*

   I. Credit/No-Credit Policy

Ms. Crocker presented the proposal that outlined the changes to the Credit/No-Credit Policy. She noted that the policy was introduced last year. Effective beginning the 2011-12 Fall-Winter Session, degree students at University of Toronto, Mississauga may select up to 1.0 full-course equivalents 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. She reported that the three campuses have found that students find this option very helpful in reducing the risk of venturing into unfamiliar subject areas. However, it is recommended that students be given more time to thoughtfully consider the Credit/No Credit option by allowing them to opt-in by the last day of classes in a particular course, the same day they face the LWD deadline. This will save some students from losing credit in a successfully completed course, when they may have otherwise used the LWD option for a low mark, which is not representative of their other scholastic accomplishments. Furthermore, when the deadline for CR/NCR is set early in the term, they could be sacrificing a good mark on their transcript.

The first proposed change in the Credit/No Credit policy is to move the deadline to declare from the last day to enroll to the last day of classes so that students know how they are doing in the course before having to finalize their decision.

The second proposed change to the policy is to increase the Credit/No Credit option to 2.0 FCE (from 1.0) beginning in summer 2012, which is consistent with the planned changes in the Faculty of Arts and Science. Ms. Crocker explained that when the Faculty of Arts and Science first introduced their Credit/No Credit Policy, four years ago, they limited the option to 1.0 FCEs, with the intention of monitoring the implementation of the policy and then moving to a maximum of 2.0 FCEs. The Faculty of Arts and Science Registrar has advised that they are bringing forward to their Faculty Council a recommendation to increase the maximum to 2.0 FCE in the Credit/No Credit option in summer 2012.

Ms. Crocker reported that 479 UTM students took advantage of the Credit/No Credit policy in the 2011-12 academic year. In the fall term alone, of the 107 students using this
option in 68 different fall half credit courses, 101 received credit, 4 received NCR, and two students have outstanding SDF scheduled to be written during reading week. In the winter term, 350 students have exercised the option over 119 courses.

She emphasized that students were taking advantage of this policy and using it to explore unfamiliar subject areas.

It was duly moved and seconded,
THAT
The Academic Affairs Committee approve the Credit/No-Credit Policy as described in the attached proposal, dated February 16, 2012. (D. Crocker/K. Hannah-Moffat)

The Chair opened the floor to discussion.

The Dean spoke in support of the motion and stated that one of the university’s goals is to improve its graduation rate and allowing an expanded credit/no credit option is a small step in the direction of accomplishing that goal.

A member spoke against the change in the date moving to the last day of classes and argued that students could use this option strategically to get credit for a course when they discover that they are not ready to write the final exam in that course.

Ms. Crocker explained that the date change was a result of trying to reduce the LWD policy as much as possible.

The Vice-Dean Undergraduate noted that students would still need to achieve a 50% in the course to receive the credit and added that data from the other campuses is similar to that of UTM, showing that the majority of students do well in these courses.

A member spoke against the proposed change in the date to enroll and noted again that it could be used strategically as an insurance policy. Another member suggested that a solution to this might be changing the selection date to somewhere in the middle, so it falls between the last day to enroll in the course and the last day of classes.

Ms. Crocker explained that in the past students had to select credit/no credit by the last day to enroll in classes and as such had no idea as to how they were doing in their courses before being forced to make that decision. She added that there was no logical midway point when students would have enough information to make the request. She further noted that this policy encourages students to explore topics of interest that they might not have done otherwise and that those students who are strategically using the policy as described before are very small in number. She explained that the goal is to help students graduate and not continually drop courses using LWD, which is financially onerous.

A student in attendance spoke in favour of the motion and noted that the policy gives students the courage to explore unfamiliar fields, encouraging educational curiosity. He noted that this policy was common across the campuses and noted that in order to be consistent UTM should follow the lead of the Faculty of Arts and Science and UTSc. He further noted that this policy affects a small percentage of students and will allow students a more effective alternative to LWD.

The Vice-Dean Undergraduate suggested monitoring the proposed changes for a year.
A member remarked that there should be more consultation on important policies such as this and spoke in favour of the earlier suggestion of changing the date to enroll in the policy to the midpoint of the last date to drop a course.

Ms. Crocker responded that in some cases students would only have 5% of their mark before being asked to make the decision of whether or not to choose the credit/no credit option. She further noted that this change would be complicated to administer.

Another member spoke in favour of making the change to the last day to drop without academic penalty, because most students would have the a good idea of their mark by that time.

A motion was made to defer the discussion on the proposal until the March 27 meeting of the Committee. (D. McMillen/S. Kamenetsky)

The Chair opened the floor to discussion.

Ms. Crocker spoke against the delay and noted that if it were deferred to the end of March, it could not be implemented for the next academic year.

A member spoke in favour of postponement citing the importance of thorough consultation with faculty on an important policy change such as this.

An amendment to the above motion was made to postpone discussion of the first part of the proposal dealing with the deadline to declare the credit/no credit option to the next meeting, while continuing the consideration of the rest of the proposal at the current meeting. (A. Mullin/K. Hannah-Moffat)

The Chair opened the floor to discussion.

Several members spoke against the amendment, expressing their wish of dealing with the issues together. The motion was defeated.

The motion to postpone consideration of the entire proposal was put to a vote. The motion was defeated.

A motion was made to change the deadline to declare for the credit/no credit option from the last day of classes to the last day to drop without academic penalty. (D. Saini/S. Stefanovic)

The Chair opened the floor to discussion.

Ms. Crocker argued that students do not have enough information by the last date to drop in order to make this decision. The original proposed deadline of the last day of classes provides students with the information they need to make a well-reasoned decision. The Vice-Dean Undergraduate noted that this option does not apply to program requirement courses, but rather adds to a suite of options for students.

A member spoke in favour of the motion and noted that difficulty in administering the proposed change in date in the policy should be a secondary consideration in making the date change.
The Vice-President and Principal spoke in favour of the amendment, noting that there was a distinct difference between dropping a course and choosing the credit/no credit option and the new deadline of the last date to drop would provide students with ample information to make this decision.

The Registrar spoke against the motion, disagreeing that students would have enough data by the last date to drop by make an informed decision on the matter.

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

The main motion as amended was put to a vote. The main motion was carried.

II. Proposed Limit on Student Courseload

Ms. Crocker noted that the maximum credit load in the Fall-Winter sessions combined is 6.0 credits and in the summer session it is 2.0 credits. This is considered the maximum course load, which is manageable for a student to undertake. Exceptions to this course load may be approved by petition through the Committee on Standing in which exceptional circumstances are warranted. She explained that at this time, there is no regulation that extends this sessional limit to each of the academic terms (e.g., Fall term-September to December, Winter term-January to April). Students are permitted to enroll in a combination of courses that does not exceed the sessional maximum, even if in one term, a student enrolls in an unmanageable course load. For example, a student can enroll in 1 Y course in the fall term and remain in this 1 Y course and enroll in 10 S-term courses in the winter term.

There is concern that students cannot successfully complete these unrealistic, unbalanced course loads. By enrolling in more than 6 courses per academic term, students inevitably drop, fail or petition for exceptions (deferred exams, extensions of time) to manage this overwhelming academic burden, thereby hampering their academic success and stalling their progress towards graduation.

It is proposed that UTM students be limited to a course load of 6 courses per academic term in the Fall/Winter session and 2 courses per academic term in the summer session, effective Summer 2012. The Committee on Standing may approve an exception, by petition, to this limit where circumstances warrant. If approved, the term course load limit would be put into the next edition of the U of T Mississauga Calendar and be effective as of the Summer 2012 academic term.

It was duly moved and seconded,

THAT

The Academic Affairs Committee approve the proposal to set a maximum limit on term course loads, as described in the attached proposal, dated February 15, 2012. (D. Crocker/A. Mullin)

The Chair opened the floor to discussion.

The Dean spoke in support of the motion, noting that it was long overdue and would improve student success and improve access to courses.

The motion was carried.
b) Report from the Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee: Professor Amrita Daniere, Vice-Dean Graduate  

Memorandum from the Vice-Dean Graduate about minor curricular changes in the Master of Biotechnology Program

I. Course De-activation for BTC1901Y, 2001Y, 2002H
II. Course Renaming for BTC1710H, BTC 2000H, BTC 2020

The Vice-Dean Undergraduate referred members to the memorandum from the Vice-Dean Graduate on some minor curriculum changes in the Master of Biotechnology program, which consisted of de-activating three courses to clean up their ROSI record and renaming three courses to reflect their content better. She noted that these changes had already received approval from the School of Continuing Studies.

c) Report from the Dean and Vice-Principal Academic – Professor Amy Mullin

For Information:

Three Campus Graduate Curriculum Committee (3CGC)

The Dean reported that there was a slight change in the governance process for the consideration of doctoral stream programs. In doctoral stream programs, a proposal that was considered by local governance bodies would go for consideration to a group called 3CGC, which is a body of the Faculty of Arts & Science. Professor Mullin reported that this would change so that for UTM’s graduate programs, the extra step of consideration at 3CGC would no longer be needed. Instead, consultation at the very early stages would occur between the three vice-dean graduates and across faculties, before moving through the established local and SGS governance process. The path of campus based Masters programs will continue to go from the Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee (GCS) to AAC, followed by ECC.

2. University of Toronto Fast Track Three-Year Degree

For Information

The Dean referred members to document distributed for information with the call of the meeting. She explained that the context for bringing this matter to the committee’s attention was the desire of the university to respond to the Ministry of Education’s interest in reviving the three-year degree. As described in the attached document, the U of T fast track degree is already a possibility, but what's different in this iteration is that it will be promoted and targeted to highly motivated students. High School students with an average of 90% and above would be eligible to apply to this program, which will be piloted starting in the fall of 2012.

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

In response to member's concern that students in this program would be given preference for and offered both a supervised research and an international experience, the Dean noted that either one or the other would be assigned, but not both.
The Registrar noted that since this option already exists, UTM already has some very good students who take advantage of the fast track option. She noted that first year marks instead of High School marks should be used for admittance into this program. She also added that offering the best and brightest students a fast track option was a mistake; the university should want to have them around longer to contribute to campus life and participate in extra-curricular activities.

A member noted that in his department, the strongest students elect to stay a fifth year to do a thesis and prepare for their GRE test and applications to graduate school. He expressed concern that this proposal would rush students and make them less competitive in this application and preparatory process.

The Dean noted that students would be advised that they have the option of doing the fast track degree.

d) Report of the Vice-Dean Undergraduate – Professor Kelly Hannah-Moffat

The Vice-Dean Undergraduate reported that when the committee was considering curricular changes in the fall, a question arose about whether certain courses counted as a science or social science credit. She reported that this issue was discussed at a Chairs’ meeting and that it was agreed that these decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis when the curriculum discussions were occurring in the fall and would be vetted by Chairs and Associate chairs and the curriculum subcommittees. It was not necessary or appropriate to have a hard and fast rule.

There was no other business. The Chair noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 27, 2012.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.