

Faculty of Engineering

Faculty Council

Meeting 2020.04

15:00 p.m. Oct 08, 2020 online on Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Officers of the Faculty

J. Beauvais, K. Hinzer, L. Peyton, M. Labrosse, D. Taylor, T. Lethbridge, C. D'Amours, N. Baddour, A. Felty, B. Kruczek, C. Rennie

Professors

A. Sowinski, B. Lessard, H. Aoude, J. Infante Sedano, E. Dragomirescu, H. Schriemer, D. Inkpen, JL De Carufel, E. Petriu, GV Jourdan, M. Bouchard, J. Zhao, T. Uchida, A. Weck, I. Catelas, R. St-Gelais, A. Macchi, M. Majeed

Students

Z. Al-Faesly, V. Gabriel, P. Patel, H. Raissadat, S. Knysh, A. Al-Zaidi, V. Jidkov, I. Brine, S. Aman, C. Choueifaty, K. Nizam, R. Zeid, H. Egla

Others including guests and non-members

F. Bouchard, H. Howes, S. Gandolfini, X. Cao

REGRETS

Professors

JP St-Pierre, B. Martin-Perez, M. Noël, B. Dhillon, M. Hasan

Students

S. Aman

ABSENT

Professors

C. Lan, H. Al Osman, J. Yao, N. Zaguia

Students

S. Singh, I. Brine, A. Almero,

20.04.01 Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was approved.

20.04.02 Approval of the Minutes of the May 6 Meeting

The minutes were approved by email.

20.04.03 Report of the Dean

The Dean expressed his appreciation for everybody's work. It has been a tremendous team effort in a stressful time.

The Peer-Connect program is working well.

Research activities are currently in phase 2, with protocols in place to reduce risk during the pandemic. The Dean thanked everybody involved in the return to campus plan. Phase 2 allows up to 67% building occupancy, but we are well below that.

We added about 16 extra courses during the summer. These were fairly successful and were appreciated by students. The number of our students taking courses in other universities was significantly down this year as a result.

To manage numerous issues arising during the pandemic, the Executive had been meeting three times a week until July. But Executive meetings have reduced in frequency since then. This Fall, the Executive is meeting every two weeks, and separate meetings are being held consisting of just the Dean with the chairs or with the vice-deans.

In the Summer, meetings of Engineering Deans Canada were held almost every week. Every Faculty of Engineering is having a similar experience to us.

We have received a moderate number of complaints from students regarding how courses are being run. We are responding to these quickly, regardless of how the messages arrive. Some of the situations being reported by students are improving, but some are still being addressed.

The Dean discussed the study space in our buildings. We had to remove chairs in the STE building since people were not physically distancing. There is still some study space in STE on higher levels. The computer labs in CBY are open.

The Dean knows that workload is much higher than normal for professors and everybody is under a lot of stress. He pointed out that students are trying to do well regardless of the situation.

Cybersecurity

There have been some extremely aggressive attacks, particularly phishing. Screen fatigue can make us more vulnerable.

Other

The Vice-Dean Governance presented a survey he performed of professors between October 1 and 5. Professors indicate that they are considerably more stressed than normal, that teaching is taking much more effort than normal, and that research productivity is significantly down. Two thirds of professors, however, agree that courses must remain fully online next semester.

The Dean would like everybody to provide specific suggestions for how we can do better next semester. One thought is to provide a rapid-response team to help professors.

For comic relief, the Dean suggested people watch the Videoconferencing in Real Life video (produced in 2015) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMOOG7rWTPg>.

20.04.04 Proposal for the School of Engineering Teaching Innovation and Design

The Dean described the proposal for the School, which will create a home for CEED activities in engineering design, growing and future expertise in engineering education, and also interdisciplinary work.

He described some of the rationale: The CEED activities have grown to a large degree. Design courses are currently managed centrally in the Faculty. Those activities don't have a home.

We have challenges with some multidisciplinary programs. For example, we have issues with succession of the leaders of those programs.

We have been talking with our benefactors, who are looking for us to move to the next phase. A task force worked on the proposal this summer; this included many stakeholders, including students. Several other universities have also developed academic units for teaching innovation, multidisciplinary and engineering design. Moves in this direction have increased during the pandemic.

The Vice-Dean of Quality Assurance and Teaching Innovation briefly discussed the teaching innovation aspects of the proposal. The Teaching Innovation Hub has attempted to support the faculty. This proposal will further help in this regard. He mentioned that he didn't think that online delivery will vanish.

This will be a true home for multidisciplinary programs. The Dean pointed out that the School will assist with knowledge mobilization.

A small nucleus of profs feel they can make a contribution to the School. The Provost is proposing that we hire two faculty members, with engineering education as their focus.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, Faculty Council approved the motion to Approve the new School.

20.04.05 Report of the Vice-Dean Graduate Studies

Changes to M.Eng programs

The Vice Dean proposed changes to five programs. The Masters of Engineering programs are all rationalizing their number of courses. There are also changes relating to projects and internships. A professional development course has been added.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, Faculty Council approved motions Prefixed 2020-Grad-Genie- and suffixed AMN-05, CHG-15, CVG-11, EVG-12, and MCG-04.

Changes to Systems Science

The proposal would change the programs to be called Systems Science and Engineering. The proposal also includes some housekeeping, including adding the professional development workshop and the industry internship project.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, Faculty Council approved 2020-Grad-Genie-SYS-10

Changes to Digital Transformation

This proposal does some clean-up and adds an industry internship.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, Faculty Council approved 2020-Grad-Genie-DTI-14

Faculty Rules for Expected Progress for PhD Students and Enforcement of Satisfactory Progress

Key points in this set of Faculty rules are the following (all of these can be appealed, and there will be some flexibility).

- Failure to complete both the written and oral component of the comprehensive exam by the end of the 6th semester will result in a first failure of the comprehensive exam.
- Failure to complete both the written and oral component of the thesis proposal by the end of the 12th semester will result in a first failure of the thesis proposal.
- Requests to extend the duration of the PhD program beyond the university limit of 18 semesters will not be granted without acknowledgement of unsatisfactory progress in a progress report.

These changes will apply to existing students. Students who are likely to be affected have already been identified.

This should assist supervisors in pushing students forward and will also help give students some leverage to ensure their supervisor helps them get through.

Leaves of absence stop the clock. The Covid situation will also result in extra leniency.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, Faculty Council approved the proposed rules defining good and unsatisfactory progress. This motion does not need to go to Senate.

Other matters

The Vice-Dean also has material in his written report.

The borders have been opened so students can enter Canada.

Registration is good, despite challenging circumstances.

20.04.07 Report of the Vice-Dean Research

We have a new research staff person, Catherine Geci.

There is also a new Engineering Research Development forum in Teams.

The UROP program is still ongoing. This year the university is recommending it to be online.

The Vice-Dean discussed the return to research plan. We are expecting a phase 3, which will roll out when the number of cases stabilizes again. The documents describe how to act in labs, how to distance and so on.

The vice Dean discussed the Canada Research Continuity Fund. Stage 1 covered 100 support personnel not covered by the Tri-Agencies. The current stage is to cover costs incurred due to the pandemic; this could include buying PPE, lost samples, etc. Professors must submit their requests shortly.

We received \$935K from NSERC (Covid-19 supplement) to pay students for research disruption. This has to be spent by March 31st.

The international internships are going to be virtual. The deadline is November 1st.

Graduate students at the end of their scholarships were given an extra term on their scholarships.

CFI results will be coming soon.

The Vice-Dean also submitted a written report.

20.04.08 Report of the Vice-Dean Undergraduate Studies

The Vice-Dean presented enrolment results; there have been some minor changes over the last week. We are still up 11% over the end of the Fall last year. There has been a notable increase in Francophone African students. The percentage of women students has gone up.

There have been some complaints from students. In particular, some professors are asking students to show up outside of class timeslots. The Vice-Dean will communicate to professors about this. It was pointed out that when there are multiple sections it has been normal in the past to set the midterm at a common time. A student member pointed out that more things with less notice are being held outside of class time.

There will not be any in-person service in the undergrad office and mentoring centre after October 16th, since few students are using it. Service will be provided online only.

The Vice-Dean also presented a written report.

20.04.09 Report of the Vice-Dean Quality Assurance and Teaching Innovation.

We continue to provide support through the Teaching Innovation Hub and through the Virtual Life series in Teams.

Marie-Pierre Dionne is our contact with TLSS. She can help with Brightspace and other tools.

20.04.10 Other Business

Next meeting is November 4th.

The meeting ended at 16:35.

Timothy C. Lethbridge

Vice-Dean (Governance)