

Business Arising from the Senate Minutes of November 22, 2011.

On November 22 the Senate approved the following motion associated with the Academic Plan:

- d) that the Senate endorse a continuous cycle of Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring by:**
- (i) striking each fall a task force of students, staff, and faculty who, using the consultation process established by the 2010-2011 APTF, shall consider a new planning issue or set of issues to be recommended by the task force of the previous year. As a starting point for the 2011-2012 academic year the 2010-2011 APTF recommends that consideration be given to the issues of (1) virtualization and online learning, and (2) faculty renewal.**

During discussion of the membership of the proposed next APTF (Academic Planning Task Force), the normal Senate nominating process was deemed by some to lack transparency and an election process was suggested as a more robust alternative.

In addition, an amendment that proposed asking the Senate Operations Review Committee (SORC) to advise on the composition (numbers of members in the categories specified: staff, faculty and student) and other normal aspects of committee mandates, failed. As a result, the only guidance is that given above.

I am writing to alert Senate to practical challenges that I see in the prescriptions of this motion.

1. **Impractically short timeline.** I remind Senators that its motion passed in November 2010 with a reporting deadline for the APTF of April 2011 drew extensive criticism from the community as an impossibly short timeline to achieve the vast task of developing the Academic Plan. Inevitably, the deadline was extended and the final report delivered in November 2011.
2. **Time required to elect members.** Compounds challenge of #1.
3. **No guidance on membership composition.** Normally, the SORC would propose a balanced composition with numbers of members in each category. The motion above implies, although does not clearly state, that the APTF members would serve for one-year terms
4. **Administrative support.** Since this motion arose from the floor of Senate, no provision has been made in Secretariat staffing or budget this year to accommodate this demand. Similar to every other unit in the University, workload and resources have to be juggled and balanced. There is no redundancy in the staff complement to cover the unexpected. This resource issue must be understood and taken into consideration when task forces are created.

Therefore, I am asking the Senate to reconsider the proposal in its motion and to provide more detail.

The motion requires clarification. It calls for a task force to be struck "each fall," yet refers to issues to be considered "for the 2011-12 academic year". This language seems to propose that an APTF be struck for 2011-2012 in January 2012 and then consider fully the two large and important issues cited while conducting a full consultative process. The time between now and April would allow barely two months, given Reading Week, prior commitments of potential members, etc. This is a grossly insufficient amount of time to do justice to the task.

The following items require clarification before next steps can occur:

1. The number of positions to be filled and the balance between constituencies.
2. The mode of selection.
3. The timeline –Identify a reasonable timeline that would allow those interested in serving to plan for work over the summer and into the fall term whereas at present the motion’s implied timeline curtails the choice of volunteers to serve because of current winter term commitments.
4. Expectations about support for consultation and research reporting process so that the necessary resources can be allocated if available.

MEMBERSHIP (Based on the APTF 2011) One-year terms	Some other model?
3 faculty 1 undergraduate 1 graduate 1 staff 1 dean 1 chair appointed by the Principal Majority must be senators	
SCOPE OF WORK	
(1) virtualization and online learning, and (2) faculty renewal.	
TIMELINE	
February: Nomination and Election by Senate	Membership in place by March/April
Spring/summer - work begins (may not be feasible for some members due to prior commitments)	
Fall	Fall: Work begins; consultation
January 2013: Report to Senate	Winter: Conclusions and writing
	March 2013 Report to Senate

I recommend that the Senate take the time and thought required to ensure that this important work receives the care and attention it deserves.

Georgina Moore, University Secretary

January 17, 2012