



General Faculties Council
Academic Program Subcommittee
Approved Minutes

Monday, October 21, 2024, 2:00 p.m.
Meeting #76

A167/Zoom

Voting Members

Wendy Benoit, Co-Chair
Cari Gulbrandsen
Donna Slater
Leanne Wu
Jessie Dinh

Non-Voting Members

Christine Johns
Denis Onen

Resource Personnel & Observers

Elizabeth Pando Burciaga, Program Innovation Partner

University Secretary

Courtney McVie

Meeting Secretary

Michelle Speta

Scribe

Vanessa Kozielec

Regrets

Getachew Assefa, Academic Co-Chair
Samantha Thrift
Qiao Sun
Amy Dambrowitz

Guests

Corey Flynn, Associate Professor (Teaching) and Director, Neuroscience Program, Faculty of Science
– present for Item 3
Mindi Summers, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Programs & Student Affairs, Faculty of Science
– present for Item 3

Secretary's Note: In accordance with the General Faculties Council (GFC) Bylaws Section 8.2, the motion box and "Carried" denotation serves as the entry in the minutes that the Chair of the meeting declared the motion carried.

The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. Meeting Opening

1.1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved/Seconded

That the Agenda for the October 21, 2024 Academic Program Subcommittee be approved.

Carried

1.2. Traditional Land Acknowledgement

The Co-Chair provided the Traditional Land Acknowledgement.

1.3. Remarks of the Co-Chair

The Co-Chair included the following in her opening remarks:

- Welcome to all returning members to the Committee and to new members Donna Slater (Cumming School of Medicine) and Denis Onen (TUCFA Representative).
- Getachew Assefa has been appointed as the new Academic Co-Chair of the Committee by the GFC Executive Committee.

2. Committee Orientation

Courtney McVie, University Secretary, provided a Committee orientation presentation which included:

- An overview of University's bicameral (shared) governance structure, with a focus on the General Faculties Council standing committee and subcommittee structure and operations.
- An overview of the Committee's meeting schedule, membership, roles, responsibilities, and delegated authorities.
- Review of the expectations of the Committee members and reminder that decisions are to be made in consideration of the best interests of the institution.
- Review of the membership and the role and responsibilities of the Subcommittee, as set out in its Terms of Reference.
- Review of the expectations of the Subcommittee members.
- The supports provided to the Committee by the Secretariat and links to educational resources.

There were no questions from the Committee.

3. Recommendation for the Creation of the Clinical Neuroscience and Physiological Behavioural Neuroscience Concentrations for the Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Neuroscience

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Corey Flynn, Associate Professor (Teaching) and Director, Neuroscience Program, Faculty of Science, and Mindi Summers, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Programs & Student Affairs, Faculty of Science, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters provided an overview of the Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Neuroscience, which is a small (30-35 students), highly competitive program with a tightly prescribed curriculum pathway and direct enrolment into the Honours stream. The two concentrations are being proposed concurrently with changes to the BSc, which include giving students more flexibility in their courses and allowing direct enrolment in the Major.
- The rationale for creating two new concentrations in Neuroscience is to promote depth of understanding in specified topics. The Clinical Neuroscience concentration is designed for students who are interested in

pursuing a medical degree, and the Physiological Behavioural concentration would target students who are interested in graduate studies and research.

- In response to questions, it was explained that:
 - The limited number of spaces in each of the two concentrations are due to the strict enrolment caps for the required Psychology courses. Students admitted to a concentration would get be guaranteed seats in the courses, but non-concentrators would also be permitted to enrol if space is available.
 - The intention behind the proposed lottery-based approach for admission to the concentrations was to avoid the creation of “in groups” and “out groups,” or the perception of tiers, within the small, cohort-style program.
 - The Major program was initially created for students who are not able to complete an Honours thesis due to early acceptance to medical school, but now it will be leveraged to give students more flexibility within the program. This change will also allow for the possibility of future program expansion.
 - For students outside of the Indigenous Admissions Process or the Equitable and Inclusive admissions pathway, acceptance to the BSc is based solely on grade point average (GPA). Applicants are ranked based on high school grades and subsets of courses that are most related to neuroscience.
 - All of the concentration courses are already part of the Neuroscience program, therefore no change to faculty member workload is expected.
 - The curriculum review for the Neuroscience program began in July 2024, the changes to the BSc are proposed to be effective for the 2025-2026 Academic Calendar, and the concentrations are proposed for Fall 2025 launch.
- The Committee’s discussion included:
 - The elite perception of the Neuroscience program could become further exacerbated with the addition of concentrations that could appear to be two additional restrictive tiers. Avoiding this perception will require clear communication with students about the benefits of these concentrations.
 - Focusing on depth in a specific field over breadth could have unintended consequences for students in their future careers.
- It was noted that the implementation of the two concentrations is dependent upon approval of the proposed changes to the BSc, which are under the purview of the Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee (CCS).
- The Committee requested an amendment to remove references to the proposed random selection process for admission to the concentration. Should the proponents wish to pursue a lottery-based admission process, a separate proposal to the CCS would be required.

Moved/Seconded

That the Academic Program Subcommittee recommend that the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the creation of the Clinical Neuroscience Concentration for the Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience, effective for the Fall 2025 term, as set out in the document provided to the Committee, with the requested amendment.

Carried

Moved/Seconded

That the Academic Program Subcommittee recommend that the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the creation of the Physiological Behavioural Neuroscience Concentration for the Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience, effective for the Fall 2025 term, as set out in the document provided to the Committee, with the requested amendment.

Carried**4. Program Approvals Status Report**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda for information only. Questions can be directed to the Program Innovation Hub.

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 3:17 p.m.

Michelle Speta
Associate Secretary