



Faculty of Science

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**FACULTY OF SCIENCE
FACULTY COUNCIL OF SCIENCE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF NOVEMBER 18, 2020**

A meeting of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Science was held on Wednesday, November 18, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. using Webex.

FSC 2794

Present

Biochemistry

M. Berry, R. Bertolo, V. Booth, J. Brunton, M. Codner, H. Fifield, S. Harding, S. Hayes, D. Hunt, S. Mayengbam, M. Mulligan, J. Park, F. Shahidi

Biology

D. Bignell, J. Burke, T. Chapman, S. Dufour

Chemistry

C. Bottaro, R. Collins, M. Katz, C. McCarthy, S. Pansare, B. Power, A. Sheppard

Computer Science

Y. Chen, M. Emshey, O. Meruvia Pastor, V. Prado da Fonseca

Earth Sciences

G. Dunning, A. Langille, G. Layne, A. Malcolm, M. Miskell, S. Piercey

Mathematics & Statistics

D. Harvey, R. Haynes, JC Loredano-Osti, S. Mantyka, D. Pike, T. Stuckless, S. Sullivan

Ocean Sciences

G. Fletcher

Physics & Physical Oceanography

D. Coombs, C. Deacon, M. Evstigneev, M. Morrow, J. Munroe, J. Pittman, K. Poduska

Psychology

M. Courage, D. Hallett, A. Swift-Gallant, C. Thorpe

Dean of Science Office

D. Bennett, J. Blundell, S. Bungay, K. Foss, T. Fridgen, A. Highsted, G. Jackson, G. Kenny, T. Mackenzie, V. MacNab, R. Newhook

Graduate Students

A. Alfosool, G. Diaz Cruz, T. Youssef

Engineering and Applied Science:

X. Duan

Grenfell campus:

S. Barkanova

Medicine:

R. Russell

FSC 2795 **Regrets:**
B. Snook

FSC 2796 **Adoption of Minutes**
Moved: Minutes of the meeting of September 16, 2020, meeting be adopted (Berry/Sullivan). **Carried.**

FSC 2797 **Business Arising:** None

FSC 2798 **Correspondence:** None

FSC 2799 **Reports of Standing Committees:**

A. Undergraduate Studies Committee:

Presented by Shannon Sullivan, Chair, Undergraduate Studies Committee

- a.** Department of Biochemistry, proposal for new course, BIOC 1600, Food, Drugs, and Your Body (Sullivan/Berry) **Carried.**
- b.** Department of Biochemistry, proposal for Special Topics Course, BIOC 4232, Enzymes and Receptors, approved by the committee and presented for information only.
- c.** Department of Chemistry, proposal to amend course, CHEM 1010, Introductory Chemistry I (Sullivan/Pansare) **Carried.**
- d.** Department of Chemistry, proposal for new course, CHEM 4310, Surface and Interface Science (Sullivan/Pansare) **Carried.**
- e.** Department of Chemistry, proposal for new course, CHEM 4431, Heterocyclic Chemistry (Sullivan/Pansare) **Carried.**
- f.** Department of Chemistry, proposed calendar change to add new Special Topics course number blocks (Sullivan/Mantyka) **Carried.**

B. Graduate Studies Committee:

- a.** Department of Biology, Request for Approval of a Graduate Course, BIOL 6052, Plant Pathology (Layne/Chapman) **Carried.**
- b.** Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Special Topics course, MATH 6215, Deep Learning and Deep Reinforcement Learning, approved by the committee and presented for information only.

- c. School of Graduate Studies calendar changes proposal revising the 'Pass (with conditions)' category. Faculty of Science Faculty Council supports these changes. (Layne/Bottaro)

C. **Nominating Committee:** No business.

D. **Library Committee:** No business.

FSC 2800

Report of the Dean

Presented by Travis Fridgen, Acting Dean

1. **Minister Visit to Ocean Sciences**

Andrew Parsons, Minister of Industry, Energy, and Technology is currently visiting the Department of Ocean Sciences in preparation for a nearly \$1.6 M announcement of Industry, Energy, and Technology provincial matching funding, and almost half of that is going to researchers in the Faculty of Science and specifically to Primary applicants Chris Kozak of Chemistry, Scott Harding of Biochemistry, and Kurt Gamperl of Ocean Sciences.

I am also aware that the Faculty did extremely well in the latest round of CFI funding, which was announced just this morning.

2. **Bonne Bay Marine Station**

As of January 1, 2021, the operations of the Bonne Bay Marine Station will be transferred to Grenfell Campus. The Faculty of Science will remain a prioritized user of the facility in both our teaching and research activities, and we will also be part of the user group committee.

3. **The (Petri) Dish**

Volume 1, Issue 1 of The (Petri) Dish, The New Faculty of Science Newsletter, was published in November. I would like to congratulate Kelly Foss for a wonderful job. If you have any ideas or stories for this short monthly newsletter, please send them to Kelly (kfoss@mun.ca).

4. **Gradual Return to Campus**

For the last few months non-academic staff have been able to access campus by making a special request. On November 10th the University announced the next phase of the gradual return to campus for non-academic employees. Beginning November 23rd, staff are being asked to return to campus a minimum of two days per week in order to expand services for graduate and undergraduate students, as well as faculty. The staff in the Faculty of Science have been going above and beyond to provide administrative services, teaching, and advising for our students, and they should be commended. Messages received by the University indicate that students are struggling without direct contact with us and that they would greatly benefit from some face-to-face interactions as soon as that becomes possible. This does not mean there will be free-for-all access to staff by students. The return of staff to campus will lead to a gradual increase in on-campus student services over the winter semester. I believe that this is an important first step in opening campus more fully to students, including having in-person classes, which could occur as early as the spring semester. This step will also help the University evaluate further

expansion of our return to campus which is anticipated to occur in January. Finally, this incremental next step is expected to alleviate mental health concerns, anxiety, and equity issues.

I fully understand that this gradual transition may require some accommodations in the short term. Heads and Admins will work with staff through this transition.

FSC 2801 Question Period

There was discussion about the procedure around dropping courses. Currently, if a student drops a course, the instructor has to sign off on the request, as does the Head of the department of the major. This can cause some problems, as the course being dropped may be outside the department of the major, and the Head can be overriding the decision of the instructor in another department. All Heads should consult with the instructor and take any arguments made by the instructor into account when deciding whether or not to sign off on the drop request.

The Acting Dean was informed that Heads of departments moving to the Core Science Facility in September 2021 have not been consulted on the plans for the move and are not permitted to know the plans. The Acting Dean will ask Facilities Management for details on the move. As of today's date, the information on the move schedule is that it will begin in February but it could be delayed by up to six weeks.

It was noted that in the November 9 Gazette that the university will embark on a new campus master plan and that a firm has been hired to design this plan. What is the Faculty of Science contribution to this plan and what is the request from the Faculty of Science for this round of planning? The Acting Dean was not aware that consultations were underway. The Acting Dean will inquire about these consultations as his advocacy for new space for the Departments of Mathematics and Statistics and Psychology has been ongoing and consistent, and another opportunity to do that would be welcome.

There was significant discussion about the plan for the return to campus of all non-academic staff for a minimum of two days a week beginning on November 23. Many concerns about this plan were expressed, such as maintaining two offices – one on-campus and one at home; keeping six feet of distance is not possible in standard campus offices; will general offices be open for business as usual; provide information on the expanded services that students are asking for that prompted this limited re-opening; worrisome that COVID-19 cases are increasing across Canada; having more students on campus risks research; many reasons why a partial return to campus won't work for lab instructors, especially because of transfer of equipment back and forth from home to campus and campus to home. The Acting Dean reiterated that the university is following public health recommendations with this move to gradually re-open campus in order to transition to a full opening in the future. Dr. Fridgen's communication to Heads regarding teaching staff returning to campus was that it might be more disruptive to bring them back to campus with only two weeks of classes remaining in the semester. They can certainly return to campus after classes are over. Any staff member can return to campus for the full week, if that works best for them with regard to ergonomic set ups and scheduling.

FSC 2802 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m.