

AWARDS & HONOURS COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 14, 2015

Minutes of the AWARDS & HONOURS COMMITTEE, held in OL 340, Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, B.C., commencing at 1:30 PM.

| HEADING | ITEM / DISCUSSION | ACTION |
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ATTENDANCE

Present: Marjorie Budnikas (Chair), Gordon Down, Tom Dickinson, Wayne Hendry, Jim Hu, Gordon Rudolph (by Skype), Martha White

Regrets: Christopher Seguin, Michelle Davies, Roopam Plawn

Guests:

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| CALL TO ORDER | <i>The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:37.</i> |
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| ADOPTION OF AGENDA | <i>The agenda was adopted as distributed. (MW/TD)</i> |
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| ADOPTION OF MINUTES | <i>The minutes of 20 OCT 2014 were adopted as distributed. (MW/GD)</i> |
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| BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES | <p><u>Amendments to Policy ED 9-0 & ED 9-1</u></p> <p>Marjorie highlighted that at the request of the Provost, the policies had been reviewed and approved at APPC subsequent to their Awards & Honours approval. As they both went through multiple revisions, significant subsequent changes occurred (per emails to the committee at the time).</p> |
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Gordon noted there had been concern expressed from at least one Senator regarding the course load requirement. The following explanation was provided:

TRU assists students with funding their education via many means. There are hundreds of bursaries and awards – bursaries assist with financial need, while awards recognize varied accomplishments or assist with expenses, and academically are open to most students. Scholarships are a smaller subset of awards that focus very specifically on rewarding the academic excellence of full-time students as measured by GPA.

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In the same way that individual course grades are assigned solely on performance and regardless of individual effort or life situation, scholarships only measure the outcome. On the basis that higher grades are easier to obtain with a lighter course load (all else being equal), scholarships require at least an 80% course load in order to better compare closely competing GPAs. While the word "scholarship" is sometimes used in higher ed. for any money that assists a student with their studies, in the narrower definition of an award recognizing meritorious or exemplary academic performance, an 80% or 100% course load requirement is almost universally required across North American higher education.

NEW BUSINESS

Adjudication of TRU 2015 Lieutenant-Governor's Medal

Four nominations were received. Three were eligible and were asked for supporting biographic information. The responses from the two replies were presented to the committee.

On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED that as the 2014-15 candidate who best satisfied the medal criteria, Alison McClean be awarded the 2015 Lieutenant Governor's Medal. (MW/TD)

Adjudication of the 2015 Governor General's Medals & TRU Baccalaureate Medals

Students applied to graduate in 20 degree programs. Of those, the Awards Office determined there were medal eligible graduates in 18 degrees. 17 candidates were presented to the appropriate Deans, with the Dean approving candidates in 14 degrees, while in three there was considered to be an insufficient pool [in an email vote of Awards & Honours subsequent to the meeting, one degree, B.Tech., was deemed to have an insufficient pool, and was therefore not presented to the Dean.] The committee also deemed two degrees to have an insufficient pool to award a medal.

The committee discussed concerns that there was an inconsistent application of the "insufficient pool" clause (ED 9-1, Reg. I.5.) from year to year and from dean to dean. Gordon noted that the intent of this clause was to ensure that a medal *was* awarded to a meritorious graduate even if they were the only medal eligible graduate that year, but that a medal *not* be awarded even if there were (for example) 10 medal eligible

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graduates but none were considered meritorious. Furthermore, the minimum GPA to be considered meritorious varies significantly from degree to degree, though generally not from year to year.

Gordon proposed researching a proposed solution that would be based on requiring the top eligible candidate to be a minimum number of deviations above the mean based on that degree's pool over a multi-year span. It was noted this would be a policy interpretation, and therefore not require going back to Senate. The committee asked the Awards Office to research this option with the assistance of IPA and others, and report back at a Fall meeting.

Gordon

The committee also discussed whether there ought not be some latitude allowed each dean to weigh the rigour of a particular degree stream such as an honours degree against minute differences in medal GPAs, and deem which candidate had attained the highest level of academic excellence in the adjudication period. The committee asked the Awards Office to explore options and implications of this option.

Gordon

On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED that the attached twelve 2015 TRU Baccalaureate medalists and the three Governor General's medalists be approved and recommended to the Chair of Senate for final approval. (MW/JH)

Motion to add to the "Interpretations & Applications of ED 9-1" document. TABLED

OTHER BUSINESS **TABLED**

NEXT MEETING **TBD.**

ADJOURNMENT **The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM.**