The  **THIRD**  meeting of the Committee on Academic Policy (CAP) for the Academic Year 2007-08 of the Department of Economics at The University of Western Ontario was held on Wednesday, October 24, 2007 at 11:30 a.m.

Present: Russ Boyer, Jeremy Chambers, Leigh MacDonald, Debra Merrifield, Terry Sicilar, Todd Stinebrickner, Nathan Sussman, Daniel Targa, Alex Wu

Apologies: Yvonne Adams

07-3-1 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

**MOTION:** Moved by Terry Sicilar, SECONDED Daniel Targa

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 10, 2007 BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.**

**Discussion.**

Corrections were suggested to paragraph one in Item 07-2-3 and to the motion in Item 07-2-4. Jeremy Chambers indicated that he would make those changes prior to Department circulation.

**Motion carried.**

07-3-2 MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising.

07-3-3 ECONOMICS GRADE DISTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

Terry Sicilar opened the discussion on grade guidelines by introducing a proposed formula of 50% A’s and B’s and 7.5% F’s for Economics 020, which is in line with the average grade distribution for 020 courses in the Faculty of Social Science.
MOTION: Moved by Terry Sicularr, SECONDED by Leigh MacDonald

THAT THE GRADE GUIDELINES FOR ECONOMICS 020 BE SET AT 50% A’s AND B’s, AND 7.5% F’s.

Discussion.

Leigh MacDonald asked that the proposed formulae not become a target. She advocated that there should be some flexibility in the grade distribution to allow for good classes and poor classes, which vary from year to year. Debra Merrifield noted that multi-section courses would need to continue to have uniformity in their grade distributions. MacDonald agreed and added that it is the responsibility of the Subject Coordinators to oversee the courses in their subject area.

Currently the Coordinators only look over the final and midyear exams in December and April. Sicularr said that in her experience as Chair, she looked at the grade distributions and in cases that deviated substantially from the guidelines she would talk with the Instructor of the course and/or Course Coordinator. Jeremy Chambers thought it would be helpful if Coordinators become involved at an earlier stage. Nathan Sussman stressed that the proposed marks were guidelines only and stated that the middle range of the marking scheme was left vague so as to give marking flexibility to the instructors. An overall average of 70% was acceptable.

Motion carried.

The discussion then turned to the Grade Distributions for the 100 level core courses (Economics 150, 151, 152, 153, 122, and 123). Sicularr suggested that the percentage of A’s and B’s could be set lower than Economics 020 with 40-45% A’s and B’s. After discussion, it was decided by the Committee that the ratio of 50% A’s and B’s and 7.5% F’s would also work for the core 100 level courses. This is still a bit low compared to the average grade distribution in the Faculty.

MOTION: Moved by Terry Sicularr, SECONDED by Leigh MacDonald

THAT THE GRADE GUIDELINES FOR ECONOMICS 150A/B, 151A/B, 152A/B, 153A/B, 122A/B, AND 123A/B BE SET AT 50% A’s AND B’s AND 7.5% F’s.

Motion carried.
The subject of the grade distributions for Economics 141 was discussed. Sussman stated that Economics 141 – Math Econ was a useful screening device to the Honors Program. A good mark in Economics 141 would signal that the student would be able to manage the heavy math content of the Honors Program. The Committee agreed on a ratio of 40% A’s and B’s – 20% C’s – 20% D’s and F’s. Sicular said she would consult on this with Glen Stirling to see if he had any further comments.

MOTION: Moved by Terry Sicular, SECONDED by Leigh MacDonald

THAT THE GRADE GUIDELINES FOR ECONOMICS 141A/B BE SET AT 40% A’s AND B’s, 20% C’s AND 20% D’s AND F’s.

Motion carried.

07-3-4

ECONOMICS 020 TUTORIALS

Terry Sicular opened the discussion on the topic of tutorials in Economics 020.

MOTION: Moved by Terry Sicular, SECONDED by Leigh MacDonald

THAT TUTORIALS IN ECONOMICS 020 BECOME EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2008.

Discussion.

Todd Stinebrickner thought a trial run might be considered. Leigh MacDonald asked the Committee if it were possible to have only one or two sections with tutorials. Jeremy Chambers’ response was that it could lead to an increase number appeals once marks were in. Some students could argue that the course was unfair because they did not have the advantage of small tutorials while other students did. Stinebrickner was curious about how many GTAs would be needed in order to lead tutorials. Nathan Sussman said that there could be some restructuring of class sizes to accommodate the number of GTAs available for tutorials. Alex Wu noted that if tutorials were created, fewer resources would have to be allocated to the Drop-In Centre as most of the problems and questions that students bring to the centre could be dealt with in tutorials. Russ Boyer expressed his concerns about how the Committee and the Department could get a proposal ready in time to make the deadline for Calendar
Copy. Stinebrickner and Boyer expressed their desire to see some data on the issue. Stinebrickner and Sicular agreed to review the supply of GTAs with the demand of tutorial sections and check on the feasibility of launching tutorials in 2008, and report back to CAP the following week.

This discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

07-3-6 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Moved by Alex Wu, and SECONDED by Todd Stinebrickner

THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.