

**Summary Minutes of a Meeting of the
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall
Friday, May 11, 2007, 2:00 pm**

Attendance

MRT Dale in the Chair	M Shirvani
M Allen	J Varsava
	H Hogg, Secretary

Department Representatives

E Bork, Ag, Food & Nutri Sciences	G Tyrrell, Medical Sciences
B Lemire, Biochemistry	P Lacy, Medicine
H McDermid, Biological Sciences	L Penrod, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
B Hayes, Chem & Mat Eng	M Henn, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
J Takats, Chemistry	J Mill, Nursing
N Amaral, Computing Science	B Dussault, Nursing
A Commons, East Asian Studies	R Godbout, Oncology
F Peters, Educational Policy Studies	S Dunn, Pharmacology
Y Tsui, Electric & Comp Engineering	A Schmitter, Philosophy
C Devereaux, English and Film Studies	R Marchand, Physics
M Adria, Extension	A Joyce, Psychiatry
M Cavanagh, Faculté Saint-Jean	D Heth, Psychology
H Madill, Health Promo Studies	D Saunders, Public Health Science
N Keating, Human Ecology	F Landy, Religious Studies
W Renke, Law	W Johnston, Sociology
A Samek, Library & Info Studies	N Krogman, Rural Economy
S Rice, Linguistics	P Schneider, Speech Path & Audiology
P Minev, Math & Stat Sci	

Graduate Student Representatives

J Charchun, GSA President	A Camino, Civil & Enviro Engineering
T Freeman, GSA VP Academic	B Jensen, Earth & Atmos Sciences
J Landry, GSA VP Labor Relations	J Dairo, Economics
C Prado, AFNS	K Cameron, Education Psych
J Marvin, Anthropology	D Woodman, English & Film Studies
V Li, Biological Sciences	D Reid, Music
D MacRitchie, Biological Sciences	M Lamey, Physics
S Oladepo, Chemistry	C Shaoul, Psychology

Ex Officio

A Greenshaw, Office of VP Research	<u>Observer</u>
	M Wilson, University Teaching Services

Guests

O Yonge, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)

GUEST: DR O YONGE, VICE-PROVOST (ACADEMIC PROGRAMS):

O Yonge introduced J Landry (GSA VP Labor Relations) and J Charchun (GSA President) to present Dare to Distinguish: A Graduate Student Perspective, the Graduate Students' Association's 2007-2008 Strategic Plan.

Key recommendations include:

- Sustainable graduate student funding to alleviate disparity that exists across campus and funding should be in the form of TA and RA assignments to make graduate students better trainees and teachers.
- Need for more collaboration in promoting graduate programs to attract and recruit outstanding students.
- Build a greater sense of community among graduate students by improving academic and social space and providing a graduate student residence/college.

- Internal Restructuring of the GSA to create a more effective and well-balanced office.

J Charchun outlined the GSA's actions plans including continued lobbying for a graduate student residence and increase student funding, redevelopment of the GSA website, improved communications about the University of Alberta's TA and RA collective agreements, improved communications between graduate students and supervisors, and working with other campus units to involve graduate alumni in volunteer and mentoring activities.

Councillors suggested the GSA establish a dossier service for graduate students and examine whether the lack graduate student housing was a deterrent for prospective students. J Landry said the GSA would explore these issues.

Report of the Advisory Committee on Graduate Student Recruitment at the University of Alberta

O Yonge presented the committee's report noting there is tremendous variability in how departments recruit graduate students. The reports key recommendations are:

- Graduate units should design a strategic recruitment plan, designate someone to coordinate best practices for recruitment, and use U of A professors as key recruiters—world-famous researchers and professors are the best way to attract students.
- Ensure UofA website are up-to-date, easy to navigate and provide prospective student audiences with the information and services they require.
- Improve promotional materials with collaborated campus-wide and department-specific pieces.
- Greater collaboration with University of Alberta International/International Centre
- Create a recruitment webpage with a "toolbox" of best practices and host an annual best practices recruitment workshop.
- Develop a database for tracking and evaluating recruitment activities with prospective students.

Councillors provided the following feedback:

- More funding is required to make substantial offers to graduate students in an increasingly competitive environment
- First-hand accounts from current graduate students who are having positive student experience are important in recruiting prospective students.
- The UofA needs to assess capacity across campus to determine which areas can accommodate graduate student growth.

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- a. Approval of the minutes of March 16, 2007

The minutes were approved.

- b. Matters arising

None.

3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Graduate Scholarship Committee Report

J Varsava presented the Graduate Scholarship Committee's 2007 report, noting the following:

- the University of Alberta's NSERC CGS-PGS success rate was slightly down in 2007 at 59% and lower than the national success rate average, however four UofA nominees were awarded Julie Payette NSERC Research Scholarships which recognized the best PGD master's candidates
- the University of Alberta's SSHRC success rate 62%, just above the national success rate of 60%, and the UofA earned the second most CGS's in the country
- CIHR results would be forthcoming in June

4. FORMAL BUSINESS

4.1 List of Graduands for Spring 2007 Convocation

Councillors had before them the list of graduands for Spring 2007 Convocation.

MOTION It was moved by F Peters and seconded that the list be approved.
VOTE The motion was PUT and CARRIED, 48 – 1, 1 abstention

4.2 Termination of the Course-based MSc in Geophysics, Department of Physics

Councillors had before them a proposal to terminate the course-based MSc in Geophysics offered by the Department of Physics due to a lack of interest and registrations in the program.

MOTION It was moved by R Marchand and seconded by N Amaral that the motion be approved.
VOTE The motion was PUT and CARRIED, unanimously.

5. INFORMAL BUSINESS

- a. Question Period

A councillor inquired about the admission processing time in FGSR being longer this year. The Chair advised that processing is taking longer because the number of applications—especially from international applicants—has increased, FGSR staff resources are challenged and some applications are coming to the FGSR incomplete (ie. missing documentation/incomplete files etc).

The Chair said the FGSR is considering an international document evaluation training session to assist department graduate administration staff. Other avenues for streamlining the admission process are also being investigated.

- b. Announcements and Reports by the Chair and Councillors

1. Task Force on Graduate Internationalization Update

J Varsava gave a brief overview of the report from the internationalization task force.

Councillors provided the following feedback:

- Adequate and competitive funding are key tools to recruiting international graduate students; eliminating the international student differential fee should be explored; departments are encouraged to pay the international student differential fee on behalf of the student, if possible.
- More attention needs to be given to students who wish to study part-time while being employed full-time; an external/new student category should be considered.
- A grant program that enables international graduate students to take ESL classes while at the UofA should be considered to ensure teaching assistants have sufficient English skills to teach
- The President should be invited to FGSR council to discuss graduate student funding and recruitment.

- c. Other Business

M Shirvani advised that the Graduate Student Funding Task Force was finishing up its work, however not yet ready to report to Council. Although the task force did not examine student directly funded by external money (ie. payments not processed through the UofA), the report will provide a snap-shot how graduate students are being funded.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm.