

**Summary of a Meeting of the
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall
Wednesday, April 21, 2010, 2:00 pm**

Attendance

M Shirvani in the Chair
M Allen

L McGann
P Schiavone

Department Representatives

L Dosdall, Ag, Food & Nutritional Sci	F Swyripa, History & Classics
O Beattie, Anthropology	B Skrypnek, Human Ecology
D Stuart, Biochemistry	H Julien, Library & Info Studies
D Cooper, Business PhD	S Rice, Linguistics
B Hayes, Chemical & Materials Eng	B Fleck, Mechanical Engineering
T Lowary, Chemistry	D Burshtyn, Medical Microbiology & Imm
I Swenky, Comparative Literature	E Le, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
P Greiner, Computing Science	Y Labiuk, Nursing
P Defraeye, Drama	A El-Kadi, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sci
T Chacko, Earth & Atmosph Sciences	B Linsky, Philosophy
F Peters, Ed Policy Studies	S Petersen, Physical Education & Recreation
G Buck, Educational Psychology	N Galambos, Psychology
R McKay, Educational Studies	J Volden, Rehabilitation Science
J McClay, Elementary Education	P Blenis, Renewable Resources
T Zackodnik, English & Film Studies	S Jeffrey, Rural Economy
M Adria, Extension (MACT)	C Boliek, Speech Pathology & Audiology

Graduate Program Administrators

F Hey, Public Health Sciences

Graduate Student Representatives

M Azizur Rahman, GSA VP Academic	A Chazimirsaid, Mechanical Engineering
S Aria, GSA VP Labour Relations	B Farnesi, Pediatrics
B Jensen, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences	C Dyck, Political Science
H Stack-Cutler, Educational Psychology	E Omosa, Rural Economy
M Azadi, Mechanical Engineering	

Ex officio

A Schmude, Office of the Registrar

Guests

J Selman, Drama
R Bhat, PDFA

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Chair added item 4.a)5. Dean's Report. The agenda was approved as amended.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

a) Approval of the March 17, 2010 summary minutes

A councillor noted M Zoeller, Graduate Program Administrator for Library & Information Studies was not included in the list of guests.

The minutes were approved as amended.

b) Matters arising

The Chair advised he is working on the table (and links) containing comparable tuition fees from other Canadian institutions and will provide to council once ready.

3. FORMAL BUSINESS

3.1 Thesis-based Route in the Master of Arts in Communications and Technology

Councillors had before them a program proposal for a thesis-based route in the Master of Arts in Communications and Technology in the Faculty of Extension.

MOTION It was moved by M Allen and seconded by M Adria that the program be approved.

VOTE After brief comments from M Adria, the motion was PUT and CARRIED, 39-0, 1 abstention.

3.2 PhD in Department of Drama

Councillors had before them a program proposal for a PhD in the Department of Drama.

MOTION It was moved by M Allen and seconded by J Selman that the program be approved.

A council member noted the Library Impact Statement was not included in the package. P Defraeye advised University of Alberta Libraries supported the program proposal and the impact statement was submitted to FGSR. The Chair advised the library impact statement could be provided to council in the future if needed.

VOTE After brief comments from J Selman, the motion was PUT and CARRIED, 40-0, 3 abstentions.

3.3 Vision for Graduate Education at the University of Alberta

Councillors had before them a notice of motion to consider the proposed Vision for Graduate Education statement.

Council members were asked to obtain any further feedback in their departments and elsewhere, and to provide any additional comments to Associate Dean M Allen or committee members prior to a motion being presented to FGSR Council at the May 19, 2010 meeting.

Councillors provided the following comments:

- The values section is missing a statement on what role the university plays in enhancing the graduate student experience.
- The reference to junior colleagues needs to be more explicit that graduate students are junior colleagues of the faculty
- The values do not address what graduate students expect of the university.
- The vision and values need to identify what faculty bring to the process of graduate education, such as treating students as junior colleagues and acting in an ethical way with graduate students

3.4 Graduate Program Manual: Revisions to Sections 1 and 8

Councillors had before them a notice of motion to consider the proposed revisions to Sections 1 and 8 of the Graduate Program Manual. Councillors were asked to provide any feedback to the FGSR prior to a motion being presented to FGSR Council at the May 19, 2010 meeting.

Councillors provided the following comments:

- The revisions may be premature because the FGSR has a committee investigating graduate supervision models. L McGann, Chair of the committee, said the spirit of the proposed changes would hold true even though the supervision committee is examining different structures, such as formalized joint supervision, group supervision. The Chair agreed noting the term 'supervisor' would apply to various supervisory structures, not just one individual.
- Support was expressed for explicitly outlining the role of the academic advisor in course-based master's degrees; however it was noted that the term was not used throughout the rest of the proposal.

- The proposal should address the student's right to refuse supervision so departments can't force a change in supervisor upon a student.
- Concerns were raised with the proposal that academic advisors meet with students no less than two times in an academic year—one councillor said it was too infrequent; another councillor said this is difficult with the online, distance-delivery structure of some programs.
- Concern was raised with the conflict resolution proposals in Section 8 because the onus appears to be on the student to raise the issue in a timely manner.

4. INFORMAL BUSINESS

a) **Announcements and Reports by the Chair and Councillors**

1. Proposed Taskforce on English Language Proficiency

The Chair suggested council could establish a committee to review the FGSR's English Language Proficiency requirement and minimum examination scores. The group could examine if the standards translate into student success and what can be done to help international students who struggle linguistically. The Chair asked council to consider the idea; if there is interest, volunteers will be requested at May's meeting.

2. Recruitment Scholarships Update

The Chair and P Schiavone provided an update on the 2010 Recruitment Scholarship competition to date, including the number of awards available, offered, accepted and declined. Statistics for the 2009 competition were also provided.

Councillors provided the following feedback:

- Concern was raised by some councillors regarding the high decline rate; other councillors were not surprised noting applicants are often entertaining offers from multiple institutions and the U of A is not always an applicant's first choice.
- A councillor said it would be helpful to know why past applicants declined Recruitment Scholarship offers, plus what institutions those applicants went to and the value of funding packages they were offered by competitors. The Chair said an FGSR staff member previously attempted to gather this information, but the students didn't respond to the request.
- A councillor asked how many nominations were received; P Schiavone said he did not have exact numbers, but the top 50% of nominations received usually get serious consideration in the monthly adjudications.
- Concern was raised about automatically offering a Provost Doctoral Entrance Award to FS Chia and U of A Doctoral Scholarship winners because it reduces the pool of available Provost Doctoral Entrance Awards. P Schiavone noted council had already supported that decision. The Chair said it allowed the FGSR to offer more FS Chias and U of A Doctoral Awards which go to top-tier students, than PDEAs, which go to strong students who sometimes struggle in subsequent years of their programs.
- A councillor asked if Recruitment Scholarship winners go on to win tri-council awards. The Chair advised a significant number of winners renew the second year of the awards, so either students are not applying for tri-council awards or are not successful. The FGSR has implemented a new requirement that students who win a multi-year Recruitment Scholarships must apply for tri-council funding.
- A councillor suggested it would be useful for follow-up with FS Chia and U of A Doctoral Award winners to see how many finished their doctoral programs.

3. NSERC University Grading Table/Definition of First-class Standing

The Chair provided council with the NSERC University Grading table/Definition of first-class standing for information.

4. Collaborative Programs

The Chair provided council will drafts of the proposed Shared-Credential Policy and the Overlapping Programs Proposal Procedure for information. The Chair requested council to send him feedback as the proposals go through University governance.

5. Dean's Report

The Chair advised that the University of Alberta was awarded 15 Vanier CGSD awards for 2010, up from 12 in 2009. Public release of the winners is embargoed until an announcement from the federal government, expected May 17. The Chair advised the national nomination deadline for the 2011 competition has been set at Oct. 20. Further details about the University of Alberta deadline will follow.

b) **Report of the Graduate Students' Association**

The GSA VP Academic said the GSA President is currently away; a GSA report will be provided at the next council meeting.

c) **Question Period**

The Chair provided clarification about the figures in the media regarding the U of A's graduate tuition market modifier proposals, approved by the Alberta government earlier this month. The Chair said the total cost of a current doctoral program and current thesis master's program was divided by six years and three years respectively. Market modifiers of \$5,000 (doctoral) and \$2,500 (master's) over equivalent durations were then added to calculate the new tuition rates.

A councillor asked when General Awards results would be announced. L Blair advised that Andrew Stewart and U of A Dissertation Award winners will be announced as soon as the committee had made its decisions. Killam award winners will be announced once results are received from SSHRC.

A GSA councillor asked what the FGSR is doing to ensure graduate students are not negatively impacted by budget cuts with changes such as the recent reduction in the value of FGSR travel awards. The Chair advised the FGSR is trying to minimize the impact, but noted the current budget climate is tough given cuts from the Alberta government and poor performance of endowments.

A GSA councillor inquired about the current time to completion rates. The Chair provided the following approximations: 1) doctoral - just under five years for direct entry; a year longer for master's to doctoral; 2) master's - just under two years.

d) **Other Business**

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 pm.