

**Summary of a Meeting of the
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall
Wednesday, November 17, 2010, 2:00 pm**

Attendance

M Shirvani in the Chair J Harrington, Assoc Dean
P Melançon, Assoc Dean

Department Representatives

Graduate Program Administrators

Graduate Student Representatives

Guests/Observers

1 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

a Approval of the September 22, 2010 summary minutes

J Harrington and P Melançon were open to more feedback on item 4a2 Guidance Note on required to withdraw due to poor academic performance.

The minutes were approved.

b Matters arising

None.

3 REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Council had before it the Draft Report on Recommendations on Improving Quality of Graduate Student Supervision at the University of Alberta. A committee had been formed to assess the supervision models at the university and to look for alternate models of supervision which have proven to be successful.

Councillors provided the following comments:

- Would these various new models increase the workload on staff. A suggestion was made that there could be ways to recognize staff who try alternative supervision methods by lessening other duties.
- Why are we not assessing the quality of supervision now, rather than looking towards implementing new models in the future.

Do we have a method in place to gauge current quality of supervision.

- FGSR associate deans are available for specific cases dealing with problem supervision. It was also suggested that department chairs have the right to revoke supervision privileges if bad supervision becomes an issue.
- FGSR has started to track incidents involving problem supervision. Since FGSR approves supervision, it can technically say no to certain supervisory roles. We might also consider ways to help good supervisors become better.
- H Zwicker, one of the members of the original Quality of Supervision Committee, noted that the committee's focus was on quality of supervision and reviewing ways to bring supervisors into a good model of supervision as well as ways of recognizing good supervision. Models of co-supervision would also be useful. The point of bringing this to Council is to encourage ideas and to call for proposals from departments to take up/experiment and track results of alternate supervision models.
- There needs to be a model of quality supervision and how to monitor it.
- The Chair suggested that while resources are scarce, there is still room to work on these issues; he further proposed in view of the length and depth of the report, that Council begin with a review of Sections 5, 6, and 7 of the Report at the December Council meeting. In response to a question regarding the next action plan, he proposed that if Council agreed, it could look at implementing the recommendations as outlined in the report.
- There was some further discussion on the need to develop further models if the current supervision model is working. In the discussion it was noted that a variety of models allowed for more flexibility, particularly in some individual cases where the current system is not working. There was a suggestion that it would be useful if graduate coordinators reported on the various supervisory models that are used in their own departments.

4 INFORMAL BUSINESS

a Discussion Topic: E-Theses

L Vanderjagt, Digital Repository Services Librarian, outlined the library's role in document stewardship.

- Councillors discussed the reasons for needing to withhold theses and the conflict arising from withholding research which has been publicly funded.
- L Vanderjagt suggested that individuals who have questions related to copyright issues consult with Cindy Paul, the copyright

librarian, about the possible options and implications of delaying publication.

b Announcements and Reports by the Chair and Councillors

1. Time-to-Completion Rates for 2009

Time-to-completion rates for spring and fall 2009 convocants had been circulated to Councilors.

Comments included suggestions to review the process by which extensions are approved in FGSR; rates with full- and part-time breakdown; review completion times according to discipline, ie, takes longer to complete in some subject areas; consider variables such as fast-tracked to PhD; review time-to-completion rates over a number of years; review completion rates.

2. Vanier Post-mortem

The Chair reported the plan to review the application process in December to see if it can be streamlined and he welcomed feedback.

Suggestions included: a pre-application form to help as a finer screen earlier in the process; feedback to departments on the applications that did not go to Ottawa; further streamlining at the initial stage, eg, candidates moving here at same time as completing applications; issues related to getting FGSR feedback late in the process; helpful to see examples of successful Vanier applications; FGSR solicitation of applicants created problems in departments. Further suggestions for improvement can be forwarded to him at vanier@fgsro.ualberta.ca

3. Additional Guidance on Existing Duplicate Degree Admission Policy

J Harrington reported that FGSR wished to draw Council's attention to additional guidance on the existing duplicate degree admission policy, which had been circulated to Councilors.

4. Committee to Review English Language Proficiency Requirements

P Melançon advised that a committee to review current English language admission requirements had been set up and he welcomed others to participate on the committee or to provide him with questions or comments related to this issue.

5. Status Report on FGSR Operations

The Chair reported briefly on current FGSR office operations: on average 13 staff members in Admission Services, Scholarship Services and Program Services; tasks are prioritized due to volume of work; no staff increase due to budget situation; deadlines are imposed but departments and staff will receive multiple prior warnings. The Chair thanked departments for their patience.

c Report of the Graduate Students' Association

Councilors received a copy of the Report of the Graduate Students' Association for information.

d Question Period/e Other Business

C Hackett thanked all those who either participated in the Academic Integrity survey or assisted in encouraging graduate students to complete the survey.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm.