

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, 2011, 2:00 pm

Attendance

Exofficio

M Shirvani, Dean & Chair	R Poliquin, Vice-Dean
J Harrington, Assoc Dean	G Pavlich, Office of the VP Research
L Rose, FGSR Council Secretary	

Department Representatives

N. Lovell (for Andie Palmer), Anthropology	R Brown, Law
S Harris, Art and Design	M Mackey, Library Info Studies
D Stuart, Biochemistry	T Nearey, Linguistics
H McDermid, Biological Sciences	S Hughes, Medical Genetics
J White, Business MBA	D Burshtyn, Med Micro & Immunology
T Simmen, Cell Biology	A Nahachewsky, MLCS
K Cadien, Chem Mat Eng	H Bashaw, Music
M McDermott, Chemistry	C Andersen, Native Studies
D Chan, Civil & Environmental Engineering	K Moore, Nursing
E Posse de Chaves, Pharmacology	S Persad, Pediatrics
J Sander, Comp Sci	A El-Kadi, Pharm, Pharm Sci
C Flores Mir, Dentistry	S Peterson, Physical Education
T Chacko, Earth Atmospheric Sci	L Kline, Physiology
T Ono, East Asian Studies	L Thorlakson, Political Sci
B Humphreys, Economics	T Checknita, Psychiatry
D Chovanec, Ed Pol Sci	N Galambos, Psychology
R McKay, Educational Studies	J Volden, Rehab Sci
A Kirova, Elementary Education	G Thomas, Secondary Ed
C Harol, English and Film Studies	K Hughes, Sociology
G Armstron, Renewable Resources	

GraduateProgramAdministrator Representatives

J Forslund, AFNS

GraduateStudentRepresentatives

N Yousefi, GSA VP Academic  
 T Korassa, GSA VP Labour  
 A Abdelmoneim, Pharmaceutical Sci  
 S Gilady, Medicine  
 F Mani, Chem and Mat Eng  
 J Meston, Educ Policy Studies  
 A Schlacht, Cell Biology  
 F Shariff, Secondary Education  
 J Stolar, Renewable Resources

Guests/Observers

M Airmet, Neuroscience	L Harder, Arts
J Anderson, FGSR	T Krukoff, FoMD
C Hanrahan, FGSR	J Maclean, Graduate Ombudsperson

1 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Approval of the September 2011 minutes was deferred. "Presentation from the Dean" was added as Item 9. The agenda was approved with changes.

2 SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To allow adequate time for consideration of the content, approval of the September 21, 2011 summary minutes was deferred until the next meeting of Council.

3 Matters arising from the minutes  
Program Fees

A memo providing information questions with answers on thesis-based program fees was presented. (See meeting package.)The Dean briefly reviewed the content with Council and noted that fees tables were not attached but would be sent to Council members before the next meeting. He invited members to submit additional questions to him for inclusion on the memo that programs may send to students.

4 Comments from the Chair

A presentation was added to the agenda as item 9 on the agenda. See item 9 for comments from the Chair.

ACTION ITEMS

5 New Combined Degree: MBA/Pharmacy

J. White provided a brief summary of the proposal. She noted that the combined degree is MBA and BSc, Pharmacy and explained that the Pharmacy degree has been offered in its current format for the past 5 years. The combination of the degrees increases diversity in studies for the MBA program and provides business education for students in the Pharmacy program.

The following questions were raised:

Q. Does reduced credits reduce eligibility for graduates of the combined degree to enter a doctoral program?

A. No limitations for PhD eligibility are known.

Q. What is the success of other combined programs?

A.1) MD/MBA launched in June 2011 with 2 students

2) JD/MBA has typically 4-6 students registered per year

The motion to approve the proposal was PUT and CARRIED, 46 – 0, 3 abstentions.

6. New Master of Coaching Degree

S. Peterson provided a brief summary of the proposal. He explained that the degree is intended to replace the existing option in the course-based

MA program that has been offered for at least 10 years. He noted that the current program has been very successful in recruiting strong students who have been successful in the program and subsequently obtained good jobs in athletics. He noted that the change to a named degree will improve the marketability of the program and the graduates in their career development.

Questions were raised regarding the impact on the current MA program. S. Peterson explained that the current MA program remains successful and would continue as such without the option of coaching.

It was noted that there were only 2 other similar programs in Canada: MEd with a Specialization in Coaching Studies, at the University of Victoria and a Master of Coaching at the University of Ottawa.

It was questioned whether a master of Physical Education or Kinesiology could more readily meet other potential, program development in the Faculty of Physical Education in the future. S. Peterson responded that the MA currently serves that purpose.

It was confirmed that there would be no specializations within the degree.

S. Peterson noted that Coaching is a field of study but also a profession. The focus for this degree is to develop coaches. This would be more challenging in a program with a more general focus and the addition of a specialization.

It was noted that CAQC is currently working towards the classification of degrees as professional versus research. This may pose a risk that the existing MA could be classified as professional. It is anticipated that the MA will remain classified as a research degree

The motion was PUT and CARRIED, 38– 3, 7 abstentions.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. Supervisors and Termination Presentation (See presentation slides in Council Package).

J Harrington presented a brief review of sections 7.13 and 8.5 of the FGSR Graduate Program Manual. Key points highlighted included:

- A supervisor cannot terminate a student's program of studies. It is the Chair or Graduate Coordinator who decides whether to submit a written recommendation for termination. Supervisors and Administrators may submit requests to the Chair or Graduate Coordinator.
- A Guidance Note on termination was presented and can be found at:

<http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/facstaff/resourcesgradcoords.htm>

- J Harrington referred Council to a list of "Resources on campus to assist graduate students" found at:

<http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/facstaff/resourcesgradcoords.htm>

She reminded Council that in cases when the student/supervisor relationship is beyond repair, departments must "attempt in good faith to work with the student to find alternative supervision within the department" and to "keep the FGSR apprised of these efforts." If no supervisor is found, the student may choose to voluntarily withdraw, or after good faith efforts have been made, the department may recommend termination for lack of a supervisor.

It was explained that the University is responsible for meeting contractual obligations, such that, "Where the supervisor has been providing funding to the student, the funding should continue for a period of **at least 30 days** from the date on which the graduate coordinator determines that the supervisor-student relationship is beyond repair."

J Harrington also reminded Council of the existence of a collective agreement governing academically-employed graduate students (AEGS) and that employment obligations are covered in that agreement.

Departments were invited to discuss student/supervisor issues with the Associate Deans as they arise and strongly encouraged them to document dates and events of when such issues arose.

A member asked if it was possible to transfer a student from a thesis-based program to a course-based program when a supervisor could not be found. J Harrington answered that it was not. (Note: a recommendation for transfer can always be made, but that starts a detailed FGSR process before approval is given.)

A member asked if there was concern that students may argue that they voluntarily withdrew from their program under duress and were pressured by their supervisor or department. J Harrington answered that there was no concern as the FGSR reviews all such recommendations with the student before action was taken.

A member asked under what grounds a department could require that disbursed funds to a student be returned. J. Harrington answered that the issue would be determined by the terms of the Collective Agreement and the letter of funding.

A member raised concern that a supervisor's record could be tarnished if a number of their students voluntarily withdrew from a program instead of the student being required to withdraw. M Shirvani answered that faculty members' records are not impacted any differently if their students

withdraw voluntarily or are required to withdraw. J. Harrington concurred and added that the transcript indicates student academic performance. Department Chairs and FEC are responsible for faculty performance and are familiar with the need for students occasionally to withdraw or be withdrawn from their program. A member noted that this was comparable to employee performance issues when an employee is given the opportunity to quit rather than be fired.

It was suggested that Graduate Coordinators could include information from this presentation in their training sessions for new supervisors.

8. Report of the Graduate Students' Association

It was noted that the GSA Strategic Plan was not included with the meeting materials for this meeting. It will be distributed with the next Council meeting materials.

N Yousefi provided a summary of the report and explained that it would be presented to GFC at the end of the month. He noted that a training program continues for graduate students who have expressed early interest in standing for elected office.

The Graduate Teaching Program remains a priority for the GSA. An award for excellence in Graduate Teaching is under development for implementation next year.

T Korassa reported that the Take Back the Term event was recently presented by the GSA and Dean of Students Office. This event was created to complement sessions and information provided during orientation including information on academic appeals, the Collective Agreement, and library resources. Approximately 50 students attended.

A member suggested that it may be helpful to include a session on academic dishonesty/integrity in the first term. T. Korassa responded that Chris Hackett presented a session on this subject during the Fall Take Back the Term event. She noted that questions raised by participants at the session indicate that some students held different understandings of what academic dishonesty included.

9. Presentation by the Dean

M Shrivani commented that potential for students to misunderstand fees owed has been raised and invited the Vice-Dean FGSR to explain. R. Poliquin explained that currently only one line is available in Bear Tracks for thesis-based fees. The account program fees page has been developed to address the implementation of quarterly payments of program fees.

M Shrivani reported on the current status of Scholarships and Awards competitions in FGSR.

#### Vanier Scholarship

69 applications were received for the Vanier Scholarship. He noted that nationally, 40% of the quota was left unfilled. The results of the Vanier competition are expected in March 2012. He added that the national competition was formerly managed with a 2-step process but is now handled in 3 steps with a focus on leadership.

#### Queen Elizabeth II Awards

The allocation of QEII awards is mostly filled for this year.

#### Letters of Financial Support

General Legal Council for the University has agreed to look at Department templates and provide feedback. It was noted that legal advice would not include policy advice regarding the terms under which funding would be offered.

#### China Scholarship Council (CSC)

M Shirvani reported that the UA continues to participate in the CSC partnership to recruit quality students from China. UA remains a popular exhibitor at the CSC recruitment fair in China. The latest fair was held in October 2011. 2 UA representatives attended the fair: 1 representative for Undergraduate and 1 representative for Graduate Studies. 141 completed applications have already been received from students who attended the fair. Science and Engineering remain the most popular programs for participants at the CSC fair. FGSR will forward the application packages to the applicable departments. The Chair noted that most students have to go through their home university before applying for CSC funding. "CSC admissions to UA are subject to receipt of CSC scholarship." can be stipulated as a condition of admission. FGSR is working to find some domestic tuition support for CSC students.

#### Doctoral Recruitment Scholarship

The Scholarship Committee will be assessing the Doctoral Recruitment scholarship. A brief activity report may be useful for review of unsuccessful offers of admission. The applicant information is already in the system. The Chair noted that it will be helpful if Departments can provide information on why a student did not accept the offer.

The Chair reported that the yield weight for admission offers to registrations is ~75%. He noted that departments had spent ~80% of the recruitment scholarship dollars allocated to them.

The Chair explained the financial challenges that transpired last year for

recruitment scholarships.

\$3.2 M was budgeted. However \$4.2M was spent. There is currently \$2.45 M committed. It is anticipated that the deficit for these awards should be recovered by 2014. Given that department allocations remain unspent in some areas, there is some concern that FGSR will not be permitted to maintain the deficit over 3 years. This matter will be discussed with the Provost before the December 2011 Council meeting and the Chair should be able to report on next steps at that time.

10. J. Harrington explained that the Policy Committee is reviewing the question of whether or not Graduate Students should be permitted to take Undergraduate courses as part of their program and asked Council for input on this matter. A policy will be brought forward to the next meeting for consideration.

It was noted that in accordance with S.204.1.1 of the Calendar course-based masters students must take Graduate courses but the section is silent on the matter for thesis-based programs. A member commented that students take Undergraduate courses to raise their GPA and the courses should therefore, be considered as extra to program.

A member commented that in some cases it is more difficult to obtain passing grades in Undergraduate courses. It was suggested that thesis-based students should be allowed to take Undergraduate courses as they may need additional introductory background in specialized areas. i.e. languages. Several members suggested that this should be up to the Programs' discretion and should not be regulated by the FGSR. A member suggested that the policy could indicate the "normally" Undergraduate courses are not permitted in a Graduate Program.

A member commented that if a student required additional course-work beyond the program requirements then it should be considered extra to program.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.