

Summary of a Meeting of the
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall Wednesday,
February 29, 2012, 2:00 pm

Attendance

Ex officio

M Shirvani, Dean & Chair
P Melançon, Assoc Dean

R Poliquin, Vice-Dean
L Rose, FGSR Council Secretary

Department Representatives

A Palmer, Anthropology
S Harris, Art & Design
D Stuart, Biochemistry
T Raivio, Biological Sciences
D Cooper, Business PhD
T Simmen, Cell Biology
K Cadien, Chem & Mat Engineering
M McDermott, Chemistry
D Chan, Civil & Envir Engineering
J You, Comp Sci
D Chovanec, Ed Pol Sci
R McKay, Educational Studies
A Kirova, Elementary Ed
C Harol, English and Film Studies
Y d'Entremont, Faculte Saint-Jean
R McQueen, Human Ecology
R Brown, Law
T Samek, Library & Info Studies

T Hillen, Math & Stat Science
S Mitra, Mechanical Eng
S Hughes, Medical Genetics
D Burshtyn, Med Micro & Immunology
H Bashaw, Music
C Andersen, Native Studies
A Shaw, Oncology
S Persad, Pediatrics
A El-Kadi, Pharm, Pharm Sci
S Petersen, PhysEd & Rec
L Kline, Physiology
L Thorlakson, Poli Sci
E Fujiwara, Psychiatry
N Galambos, Psychology
G Jhangri, Public Health Sci
G Armstrong, Renewable Resources
J Rude, Rural Economy
P Schneider, Speech Pathology

Graduate Program Administrator Representatives

J Forslund, AFNS

A Giles, Med Micro & Immunology

Graduate Student Representatives

N Yousefi, GSA VP Academic
A Abdelmoneim, Pharm Sci
F Mani, Chem & Mat Eng

A Schlacht, Cell Biology
T Onuczko, Secondary Education
J Stolar, Renewable Resources

Exofficio

F Peters, Chair, FGSR Appeals

A Schmude, Office of the Registrar

Guests/Observers

J Anderson, FGSR
T Krukoff, FoMD

R Polziehn, FGSR

1 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

2 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- a) January 18, 2012 Minutes
The minutes were approved.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

ACTION ITEMS

4 Graduate Students and Undergraduate Courses

R. Poliquin noted that "thesis-based master's" was added to section 204.1.1. No other changes were made to document presented to Council on January 18, 2012.

Changes were proposed to section 204 of the university Calendar concerning "Graduate Program Regulations" so as to clarify the current rules that thesis-based graduate students are only permitted to take undergraduate courses for credit when such courses are necessary and have the approval of the department concerned (or Faculty where non-departmentalized), and to prevent graduate students from pursuing an embedded undergraduate certificate.

The following questions were raised:

Q. Program requirements for some grad programs include undergraduate courses. Can students receive credit for these courses?

A. In order to receive credit towards the degree, courses must be listed in the program entry in the Calendar.

Q. When referenced in the Calendar what does 'The Department' mean?

A. The Department Grad Coordinator.

Q. How does this proposed motion affect departments that currently do not allow students to take undergraduate courses?

A. It will have no effect. The department requirements listed in the program entry in the Calendar will take precedent over FGSR requirements as long as they are not below FGSR minimum requirements.

It was noted that currently there is nothing in the Calendar to regulate graduate students' registration in undergraduate courses for credit towards their graduate degree. This proposal will rectify that omission.

The motion was PUT and CARRIED, 37 – 2, 2 abstentions.

5. Graduate Teaching and Learning Program
Recommendation for Graduate Teaching and Learning Program notation on transcript

1. It was proposed that the Graduate Council endorses the Dean, FGSR to request that the Registrar consider adding the following notation on the transcript for participants who successfully complete the requirements for level 2 of the graduate teaching and learning program: "Graduate Teaching and Learning Program Completed."

Motion to approve Proposal 1: Recommendation for Graduate Teaching and Learning Program notation on transcript was PUT and CARRIED, 42 – 0, 1 abstention.

2. Be it resolved that the Graduate Council endorses the Graduate Teaching and Learning Program.

Motion to approve Proposal 2: Graduate Teaching and Learning Program was PUT and CARRIED, 38 – 0, 2 abstentions.

M. Shirvani thanked R. Polziehn and her team for all the work put into this program. He will bring the approved proposal forward to Deans' Council for information.

6. Dual Degree proposal with INPL, France
H. Henein presented an overview of the proposed agreement. Students from INPL would be conditionally admitted to the MSc program at the UofA. After 1 year of satisfactory progress in the program at the UofA the condition would be waived. INPL would award their institutional diploma at that time. No changes to the UofA parchment or transcript were required for this MOU. He stated that fees would be paid out of a stipend from the Advisor.

H. Henein noted that INPL students are high quality students and the standards they are subjected to are no less than students wanting to be admitted into Graduate school here.

The agreement currently addresses only INPL students coming to UofA with no UofA students going out to INPL.

K. Cadien commented that this MOU represents an opportunity to increase the number of international students from Europe.

Q. Will this agreement open the door to other departments participating in the MOU?

A. It would be up to the department if students get admitted. No new rules are being made.

Q. Would the students need to provide the same thesis in both languages?

A. Yes

Q. What measures will be used to identify if the agreement is successful?

A. 1) A number of students would move on to a PhD program.

2) The number of admissions would be measured.

3) Interest from other institutions in Europe (i.e. Norway)

It was suggested that the department include an evaluation section in the proposal.

The motion was PUT and CARRIED, 47 – 0, 1 abstentions.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. Discussion: Policy Review of Graduate Program Manual (section 8.2)
M. Shirvani summarized the changes outlined in the proposed changes to the Graduate Program Manual.

He noted that the role of the internal-external examiner is unclear (disciplinary specialist or oversight of committee members?). The proposal is that the internal-external examiner role be removed and that an "arms length" examiner be added. The change would not impact departments that elect to retain the internal-external examiner role.

General support of making the change was noted.

A member suggested that in order to achieve a more neutral chair, the chair of the examining committee should not be from the supervisory committee.

The Chair commented that for a candidacy exam to end in a conditional pass the conditions should be serious. This item raised several concerns that a student who fails an exam would be granted a second chance, but a student with a conditional pass would not be given the same opportunity if they subsequently failed to meet the conditions. A number of faculties use the conditional pass when just a bit more work is needed before proceeding on the thesis.

Other questions/ concerns include:

Q. If conditions are not met because a student changed his/her project, how will this be dealt with?

A. The Department decides on whether the conditions are met or not.

Q. What timelines are students subjected to – how much time is allowed for conditions to be met?

A. The Committee decides on timelines.

Q. If exam result is 'F' how much time must pass before the student can re-sit the exam?

A. The second candidacy must be completed within 6 months.

The Chair noted that the purpose for Items 6 and 7 were to eliminate "grey" areas of examiner types so that authority of all members on the examining committee is equalized.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

8. Report of the Graduate Students' Association

N. Yousefi Moghaddam summarized the report of the GSA which had been pre-circulated with the Council Package for this meeting. The GSA is currently preparing for the Alberta Graduate Conference which will be in Edmonton this year.

He noted that the GSA has consulted with HR Payroll Operations regarding the implementation the Bi-Monthly pay cycle and how it will affect Graduate Students. They are working together to ensure that impact on Graduate Students will be minimized.

N. Yousefi Moghaddam noted that Graduate Students will also have the option of the one-time advance payment, up to 70%. An email to HR requesting for the advance is sufficient.

9. Tracking Progress – follow up

R. Poliquin explained that 4 departments have submitted samples of the forms that they use for tracking student progress. Those samples were sent out with this meeting package.

He thanked the School of Business, the Department of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences, the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the Department of Secondary Education for providing sample tracking forms. A sample from the Faculty of Arts would be welcomed.

10. Comments from the Chair – Graduate Data

M. Shirvani highlighted a few elements of the data that was pre-circulated in the package for this meeting.

Table A: Between 2006 and 2001, there was an increase in graduate enrolments of almost 20% in headcount (Table A) and a significant increase in overall applications during that time.

Council members confirmed that administrative procedures in departments have changed very little to adjust to the increased number of applications and students.

A member asked if a more fully integrated online application system for graduate studies was feasible. L. Rose commented that FGSR has plans to review the online application system over the summer and to consider improvements.