

Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

2:00 to 4:00 pm

University of Alberta Council Chamber, 2-100 University Hall

Attendance at FGSR Council –**Department Council Rep**

Anthropology, Andie Palmer
Biochemistry, David Stuart
Business – PhD, David Deephouse
Chemical & Materials Engineering, Vinay Prasad
Chemistry, Mark McDermott
Communication Sciences and Disorders, Teresa Paslawski
Dentistry, Pat Flood
Drama, Lee Livingstone
Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, Nancy Thompson
Economics, Heather Eckert
Electrical & Computer Engineering, Marek Reformat
Extension (MACT, MACE), Mary Beckie
Human Ecology, Pushpanjali Dashora
Library and Information Studies, Grace Jamieson
Linguistics, David Beck
Mathematical & Statistical Sciences, Jochen Kuttler
Mechanical Engineering, Morris Flynn
Med Sci-Medical Genetics, Sarah Hughes
Medicine, M. Sean McMurty
Neuroscience, Clayton Dickson
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Denise Hemmings
Oncology, Alan Underhill
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences, Scot Simpson
Philosophy, Ingo Birgandt
Physical Therapy, Mark Hall
Physiology, Greg Funk
Psychology, Anthony Singhal
Rehabilitation Medicine, Patricia Manns
School of Public Health, Jeffrey Johnson

Associate Deans Graduate

AFNS, Anne Naeth
Arts, Tom Spalding
Medicine & Dentistry, Hanne Ostergaard
Rehab Medicine, Trish Manns

Ex-Officio Representatives

FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost, Dean Zwicker
FGSR Vice-Dean, Debby Burshtyn
FGSR Associate Dean, Suzanne Kresta
Senior Administrative Officer, FGSR, Amy Dambrowitz
Vice-Provost and University Registrar, Thomas Hidson

Graduate Program Administrators (GPAC)

Department of Mechanical Engineering, Gail Dowler
Faculty of Extension, Eileen Crookes

GSA Representatives

Babak Soltannia, Incoming GSA President
Firouz Khodayari, GSA VP Academic
Issac Awotwe, Economics
Jennifer Ann McGetrick, Public Health
Estacio Pereira, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Dasha Smirnow, Business
Andrew Woodman, Pharmacology
Adam Oel, BioSci
Mostafa Tawfeek, Civil Engineering

FGSR

Debby Burshtyn, Assoc Dean
Suzanne Kresta, Assoc Dean
Amy Dambrowitz, Assistant Dean (Administration)
Heather Zwicker, Vice-Provost and Dean
Andrea Riewe, Executive and Operations Assistant
Dena Giroux, EA to Vice Dean & Assoc Deans
Janice Hurlburt, FGSR
Joyce Anderson, FGSR

Guests/Observers:

Brent Epperson, Graduate Ombudsperson
Joan White, Ed Policy Studies

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1.0 Call to Order 2:02 PM

2.0 Approval of Agenda for May 17, 2017

Moved/seconded: Bryan Hogeveen/Naomi Krogman

Approved by show of hands

3.0 Approval of Minutes of April 12 2017

Moved/Seconded: Debby Burshtyn/Mark McDermott

Approved by show of hands

4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

None

5.0 Report from the Dean (Heather Zwicker)

THANKS

Thank you to the departing council members, particularly outgoing Graduate Coordinators, who are attending their final FGSR Council meeting today. We appreciate your hard work to support the success of graduate students.

Thank you Dr. Suzanne Kresta, who is completing her term as Associate Dean in FGSR. Dr. Kresta has been a highly engaged advocate for teaching and learning. Under her direction, the Graduate Teaching and Learning program has been revitalized, with a clear four-part structure culminating in the scholarship of teaching and learning. This sets our GTLP apart from all other graduate student training programs in Canada. In addition to raising the profile of graduate student teachers, Suzanne has devoted herself to resolving conflicts within the portfolio of departments assigned to her. Dr. Kresta is a fearless advocate for health and safety in the broadest terms, and we will miss her optimism and energy as she heads into a well-earned administrative leave. Council can expect an announcement about a replacement soon.

WELCOME

We welcome all new members to Council and want you to know that we are here to help. The Graduate Coordinator orientation for the Fall is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, August 30 in Triffo Hall.

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STRATEGIC PLAN

We will be developing an FGSR Strategic Plan this summer. Council input will be key to a successful plan.

APPEALS COMMITTEE

Andie Palmer is the new Chair of the Appeals committee. There is still one space to fill on the committee and Council members interested in being nominated should contact Heather Zwicker (Andrea Riewe) or Debby Burshtyn (Dena Giroux).

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

All faculty members of the Policy Review Committee have agreed to stay for next year; student and GPAC representatives will be determined shortly. We will ask Council to ratify the names in September, along with a slightly revised Terms of Reference.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Office of the Provost has posted the schedule and supporting materials for Quality Assurance online. More information will be posted soon, here:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/provost/our-initiatives/quality-assurance>

Five Faculties were/will be reviewed in the 2016-2017 academic year: the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Studies, the Faculty of Extension, the Faculty of Law, the School of Public Health and the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine. If you have questions or comments about quality assurance, please contact me or Debby Burshtyn.

Comment from the GSA: The visiting committee in the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Studies was very open to the feedback and input of graduate students.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Communications have been sent out to students, faculty and staff about the approaching 12-month mark for the IDP requirement (Master's student who began their programs in Fall 2016 or later have 12 months to complete the IDP; PhD students have 18 months). Multiple sessions are being offered to support both students and faculty. Deanna Davis is available to help students and faculty, and online resources are available on the Professional development webpage.

PD AND GTL WEEKS

Congratulations to Renee Polziehn and her team on the amazing success of PD week (May 3 to 11). Sessions were bursting at the seams, with a 10-fold increase in participation. Planning is underway for the next PD Week in July and for the GTL Weeks in August.

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3MT

Autumn Watkinson has qualified for the national 3MT competition. People's Choice voting is open until May 26 on the national 3MT website.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS

International applications have shown a large increase this year, largely from South Asia. The increase is approximately 30%, on par with our U15 counterparts. A number of reasons have been proposed for the surge in applications including geopolitics, the reopening of the MEng program and the reduction in departmental prescreening of applicants.

AITF SCHOLARSHIPS

Alberta Innovates, Technology Futures (AITF) has announced that there will be a scholarship competition this year. AITF will be sending us the contracts shortly. There has been no word as to whether there will be cuts to the funding.

There were no further questions or comments.

6.0 Student Presenter (Farhia Haque)

Farhia Haque is a student in the Neuroscience and Mental Health Institute in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. She won the People's Choice award for her presentation "Rogue Soldiers: Neurons That Help Us Walk" at the University of Alberta's 3MT competition on April 13. Before sharing her 3MT presentation, Farhia highlighted the importance of undergraduate research in her transition to graduate studies, and her goal to reverse brain drain in Bangladesh by helping to bring science back to young people there.

7.0 Exam Policy (Debby Burshtyn)

The Council was asked to consider two motions for the proposed changes to the Supervision and Examinations section of the University of Alberta Calendar.

The Policy Review Committee had asked Council for advice on key issues regarding exam policies in March, and the Notice of Motion was introduced and discussed at the April 12 Council Meeting. Proposed policy changes had been developed to provide fairness to students through clear wording around roles and responsibilities, dealing with potential conflicts of interest, common procedures for examinations and decisions, and general clarity of the policies. Among the significant changes are the limits on numbers of examiners (to assist in exam length), guidance for conditional passes, and including a neutral chair for doctoral examinations.

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Some Council members had expressed concerns regarding proposed changes to require a “neutral chair” for doctoral examinations. The first motion (which was not part of the original notice of motion) was included to allow approval of that one item if it passed, or accommodate to an amendment to revert to the original language regarding chairs, before calling the motion for the greater suite of changes.

MOTION 1: *Be it resolved that the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council approves in concept the regulation that the chair of doctoral examinations is not an examiner.*

Moved/seconded: *Debby Burshtyn/Tracy Raivio*

Discussion on the motion:

- A concern was raised that a neutral chair may not have the sufficient expertise to ensure that a student has a grasp of the essential content.
- A concern was raised that requiring a neutral chair will put an undue burden on faculty in small departments. This was countered by an observation from a member of another small department that having a small pool of neutral chairs (2) who regularly serve adds professionalism and gives the students a source for advice.
- It was observed that students often come to the Office of the Student Ombuds when they perceive that a chair was not neutral.
- It was noted that students don’t feel it is appropriate to approach examiners with questions before or during an exam. A neutral chair would address this concern.
- The Council recommended edits to more clearly connect the Conflict of Interest Guidelines with the statement that the committee chair is not an examiner for doctoral exams. The changes will emphasize that FGSR should be contacted when cases of conflict of interest arise around exam chairs, and that the conflict of interest should be transparently declared.

The question was called by Heather Zwicker.

The motion was approved.

MOTION 2: *Be it resolved that the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council approves changes to the Supervision and Examination section of the Calendar as appended for implementation in the 2018/19 Calendar, to be effective July 1, 2018.*

Moved/seconded: *Debby Burshtyn/Firouz Khodayari*

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- Prior to the discussion, it was noted that the proposed changes to the policy were shared with graduate students in a consultation process managed by Firouz Khodayari from the GSA
- A Council member proposed a language change to clarify the difference between “minor editorial” and “sufficiently minor” changes. These will be made in all places that the language appears in the policy.
- A Council member asked for a change in practice in the submission of paperwork after a defense to decouple the quality/corrections of the thesis from the student’s fees owing. This will remove bias from the committee’s decision and can be accomplished without a policy change. FGSR agreed to discuss this issue to ensure clarity about what is required and implement any necessary changes in practice.
- A change was proposed to the Candidacy Examination Committee Decision flow chart, to clarify that, in the case that the recommended conditions of a conditional pass are denied by FGSR, the case is returned to the committee to set new conditions.
- It was clarified that reconvening a committee may not require an in-person meeting. As long as all members have input, electronic communication is considered sufficient.
- A concern was raised that, in small fields, it may be very difficult to find an examiner with sufficient expertise without a former supervisory relationship. It was clarified that, should the situation arise, the goal is that the relationship be clearly and openly disclosed, beginning with contacting FGSR.

The question was called by Heather Zwicker.

The motion was approved.

Heather expressed gratitude to the Policy Review Committee and Vice-Dean Debby Burshtyn for completing the review of the Supervision and Examinations section of the calendar. Clarification of this key policy will benefit students and supervisors.

A copy of the finalized wording, reflecting the final changes made by Council will be circulated with the September meeting materials.

8.0 Ophthalmology Graduate Program Specialization Name Change (Heather Zwicker)

A name change has been approved for two graduate programs in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. The renaming of

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the graduate programs is consistent with the renaming of the department, which was completed in 2013. The name changes are as follows:

From: MSc in Medical Sciences – Ophthalmology

To: MSc in Medical Sciences – Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

From: PhD in Medical Sciences – Ophthalmology

To: PhD in Medical Sciences – Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

There were no questions or comments on Item 8.0.

9.0 Governance Report (Debby Burshtyn)

Thank you to Janice Hurlburt for all of her work on FGSR governance, and for preparing the report that was distributed with the meeting package.

The GPM-Calendar review is ongoing and will ramp up over the summer. Please inform us if you find discrepancies between the two documents.

Recent program change inquiries have brought to light that some programs have listed their course requirements for specializations on their website but not in the Calendar. In the past, the practice of including requirements in program guidelines was considered sufficient, but the Office of the Provost and University Governance have indicated that this is no longer accepted practice. The reasons for the change are: (1) that websites are not date stamped, (2) that the calendar is considered to be a contract with the student for their program requirements, and so must include the full requirements, and (3) changes and their approvals should be tracked and the record should be available to University Governance. If you are affected by this change and have questions, please ask Debby Burshtyn (Dena Giroux, assistant) or Janice Hurlburt.

As a result of the Report on Academic Governance and Delegations approved by GFC on April 21, there will be an in-depth review of the policies and procedures for Course and Program Changes. For example, we may see today's changes to the Supervision and Examinations policy getting a fuller review by GFC, as there is a new culture of putting more before GFC if changes are considered too substantive or broadly impactful for them to remain at a subcommittee. Phase 2 of the governance review will review each Faculty Council and its relationship to GFC, including FGSR Council.

- You can review the full report at:

<http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/GFC%20Ad%20Hoc%20Committee.aspx>

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QUESTION: Will there be a mechanism to move course requirements for specializations through FGSR Council as a batch? Reply (D. Burshtyn): The first step is an approval by the Faculty Council of the disciplinary faculty, which has the delegated authority to approve them. These changes do not come to FGSR Council. When that step is complete, FGSR will help faculties to shepherd the changes through governance.

10.0 Associate Deans' Report: Academic Student Case Summary (Suzanne Kresta)

The preliminary numbers for student cases managed by Associate Deans in FGSR in the 2016-17 academic year are: 155 cases (down from 220 in 2015-16). Of these cases, 46 required formal intervention (down from 72 in 2015-16) and 109 were resolved informally. 13 of the formal cases were student disciplinary cases requiring investigation and rulings. The numbers may continue to rise until the end of the academic year on June 30, but the final number is expected to be lower this year.

We are pleased that 70% of the cases could be managed informally this year. We believe that this is because Graduate Coordinators are calling early and are not hesitating to ask for help. Early intervention works well, and defuses situations while they are more readily manageable.

QUESTION: What kinds of cases were these? Reply (S. Kresta): We keep that data, but do not report case numbers by category.

QUESTION: Do you know how much overlap there is between FGSR and the GSA on supervisory cases? Reply (B. Epperson): Supervisory cases also come to the Office of the Student Ombuds and are only elevated to FGSR Associate Deans if we cannot resolve them in-house. Sometimes we handle cases where supervision and labour issues overlap, but these cases normally end up in multiple offices. Reply (S. Kresta): We direct labour-related cases to the GSA.

Heather Zwicker thanked the Associate Deans and the members of FGSR Council for their adroit handling of student cases.

11.0 Learning Outcomes (Debby Burshtyn)

Alberta's Post-Secondary Education sector is slowly adopting learning outcomes across the sector, and Sarah Forgie (the Vice Provost - Learning Initiatives) is leading our efforts at the University of Alberta.

Stating the learning outcomes of the program is in the template from Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) for new program proposals, and a discussion of learning outcomes is now a

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formal section of the University of Alberta cyclical quality assurance reviews. The ultimate task will be to show how courses and other program requirements build these skills to the expected level, and, hopefully, as transferable skills. As the Faculty of Graduate Studies, we are engaged and inclined to move deliberately towards adoption of learning outcomes. We expect learning outcomes will filter down from the Canadian degree-level expectations and may operate at activity, course, program and institutional level.

At the moment, along with supporting those proposing new programs to meet CAQC requirements, we are working with the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and the Centre for Teaching and Learning to support programs as they prepare cyclical program reviews. To kick-start this process, Sarah Forgie, Tammy Hopper (Vice Provost Programs), Janice Miller-Young (Director of CTL) and Debby Burshtyn hosted the Learning Outcomes Retreat on May 2. The day was constructed to have broad representation across the academy and to start the conversation on campus about we can move on developing and implementing learning outcomes at the program level. Participants were delegated by their Deans, and plus a few more who are developing program proposals. You can find more information about the day at:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/centre-for-teaching-and-learning/events/learning-outcomes-retreat>

Key messages from the day:

- The Provost is sensitive around academic freedom issues especially where the assessment comes into play.
- The Provost sees Graduate Attributes as the foundation for institutional-level learning outcomes.
- CAQC is not inclined to mandate that all programs comply by a deadline – because they want us to do it for the right reasons: to improve student experience and quality of the education and for student mobility between institutions.
- Those who use learning outcomes at the course level find it improves their teaching, and at a program level - program cohesion (the Augustana experience)
- Student (and recent alumni) engagement is important to the development process.
- CAQC wants to support us for working this through with thesis-based programs, where the focus is on program level.

Next Steps:

- There will be a fulsome report from the event, which will inform how we develop supports for the process going forward.

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- Future public forums (including Sandy Welsh from the University of Toronto), tailored workshops and support for learning outcomes development from CTL, more detailed presentations at FGSR Council in 2017-18

12.0 Master's Recruitment Scholarship (Bryan Hogeveen)

The University of Alberta awards 10 Master's Recruitment Scholarships each year. The scholarships are high value: \$17,000 for 12 months (non-renewable), plus full-time program and non-instructional fees, and any applicable International Graduate Differential Fees. Recipients are also offered guaranteed housing in residence.

Currently, only students from outside the University of Alberta are eligible to receive the awards, unless programs can demonstrate that they are being actively recruited elsewhere. The result is that we are losing top students to other universities, and we are disadvantaging University of Alberta alumni.

Following a discussion at GEFAC, the requirement that students be from other institutions will be eliminated. The change will be effective for Fall 2018 admissions.

QUESTION: Will any of the scholarships be held back to be available for January recruiting?

Reply (B. Hogeveen): Given the high numbers recruited in Fall, we will not be holding scholarships back for January intake.

QUESTION: Can the scholarships be deferred? Reply (B. Hogeveen): Scholarships can be deferred for up to one year.

QUESTION: Can students hold another award simultaneously? Reply (B. Hogeveen): They cannot have the money, but may be able to hold the honorary title.

QUESTION: How is the 3.7 GPA calculated for international students? The students do not feel that the conversion rate is fair or reflective of quality. Reply (B. Hogeveen/H. Zwicker): There is a pre-determined conversion scale based on national and international guidelines.

13.0 Best Practices Corner (Heather Zwicker)

Council members were provided with suggestion cards and asked to propose presenters to deliver 2-minute presentations for the Best Practices Corner. Volunteers are always welcome.

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14.0 GSA Monthly Report (Babak Soltannia)

The report was submitted as written.

There were no questions or comments.

15.0 Welcome to the new GSA (Heather Zwicker)

We welcome GSA Executive for 2017-18 to FGSR Council. They are:

- Babak Soltannia (President) - PhD candidate in the department of Mechanical Engineering.
- Firouz Khodayari (VP Academic, second term) - PhD candidate in the department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.
- Masoud Khademi (VP External, second term) - PhD candidate in the department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.
- Sasha Van der Klein (VP Labour, second term) - PhD candidate in the department of Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Science.
- Royle Feng (VP Student Services) - First-year PhD student in Geophysics.

For full biographies: <http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/AboutTheGSA/People.aspx>

We look forward to working with all of you.

16.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:29 PM.