

Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

2:00 to 4:00 pm

University of Alberta Council Chamber, 2-100 University Hall

Attendance at FGSR Council – March 20, 2019
Department/Unit Faculty Representatives

Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science	Ben Willing
Biochemistry	David Stuart
Biological Sciences	James Stafford
Business (non-departmentalized) - PhD	David Deephouse
Cell Biology	Andrew Simmonds
Chemicals & Materials Engineering	Vinay Prasad
Chemistry	Michael Serpe
Civil & Environmental Engineering	Dave Chan
Communication Sciences & Disorders	Lu-Anne McFarlane
Dentistry (Medical Sciences)	Patrick Flood
East Asian Studies	Tsuyoshi Ono
Educational Policy Studies	Jorge Sousa
Educational Psychology	Sophie Yohani
Electrical & Computer Engineering	Marek Reformat
English and Film Studies	John Considine
Extension (non-departmentalized) (MACT, MACE)	Mary Beckie
History & Classics	Margriet Haagsma
Library & Information Studies	Ali Shiri
Mathematical & Statistical Science	Jochen Kuttler
Mechanical Engineering	Morris Flynn
Medical Microbiology & Immunology	Edan Foley
Music	Maryam Moshaver
Nursing (non-departmentalized)	Diane Kunyk
Obstetrics & Gynecology (Medical Sciences)	Denise Hemmings
Oncology	Alan Underhill
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences (non-departmentalized)	Scot Simpson
Political Science	Siobhan Byrne
Rehabilitation Medicine - Rehabilitation Sciences	Patricia Manns
Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology	John Parkins
School of Public Health (non-departmentalized)	Jeff Johnson
Sociology	Amy Kaler
Women's and Gender Studies	Felice Lifshitz

Associate Deans (Graduate) Representatives for Departmentalized Faculties

Arts	Tom Spalding
Medicine & Dentistry	Hanne Ostergaard
Science	Mark McDermott

Ex-Officio Representatives

FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost (FGSR Council Chair)	Deborah Burshtyn
FGSR Vice-Dean	Bryan Hogeveen
FGSR Associate Dean	Victoria Ruétalo
FGSR Associate Dean	John Nychka
Vice-Provost and University Registrar (or Delegate)	Jane Lee (Delegate)

Graduate Program Administrators Committee (GPAC) Representatives

Extension	Eileen Crookes
Department of Anthropology	Heather Cook
Department of Mechanical Engineering	Gail Dowler

Graduate Student Association (GSA) Directly Elected Officials (DEO)
Representatives

VP Academic	Masoud Aliramezani
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Graduate Student Association (GSA) Council Representatives

Biomedical Engineering	Kevin Solar
Civil and Environmental Engineering	Tony Zheng
Computing Science	Dylan Ashley
Educational Policy Studies	Alleson Mason
Electrical Engineering	Thomas Cam
Medicine	Saima Rajabali
Pharmacology	Andrew Woodman
Pharmacology	Zoë Dworsky-Fried
Radiology and Diagnostic Imaging	Martha Ruiz
Surgery - Masters	Catherine Stewart

Observers – Non-Voting

FGSR Operations Coordinator (Secretary)	Medha Samarasinghe
FGSR Executive Assistant & Operations*	Andrea Riewe
FGSR Executive Assistant to the Associate Deans*	Dena Giroux
Assistant Dean, Advancement*	Meghan Unterschultz
FGSR, SFO*	Sylvia Fong-Wong
FGSR Professional Development & Community Volunteer Program Director*	Deanna Davis
Graduate Ombudsperson*	Remonia Stoddart-Morrison
GFC Secretary*	Meg Brolley
FGSR Governance*	Janice Hurlburt
FGSR Governance*	Maria Chia

*Non-Voting

FGSR Council March 20, 2019

- 1.0 Call to Order at 2:00 PM**
- 2.0 Approval of Agenda for March 20, 2019**
Moved/seconded: Tom Spalding/Dylan Ashley
Approved by a show of hands.
- 3.0 Approval of Minutes of February 13, 2019**
Moved/seconded: Morris Flynn/Elaine Simmt
Approved by a show of hands.
- 4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes**
None.
- 5.0 Report from the Dean**

There were no questions arising from the written report.

Dean Burshtyn reported that the FGSR Supervision report went to the Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee (BHRCC) on February 26. The committee wants to explore how to better handle disclosures of inappropriate behaviour relating to supervision. In particular, the in-between situations that fall between a clear violation and non-issues.

The minimum funding discussion has made the rounds to the Provost's Advisory Council of Chairs and full Chairs' Council chaired by the President. Discussions were robust and the key issue remains resourcing. Following early consultation at GFC, we will produce a consultation report.

Bill 19 and tuition regulation continues to be an issue. It will be important to gain a common understanding of what this entails. The specifics will need to be settled by the early fall as admissions letters for fall 2020 start going out around October and the details will need to be included.

Dean Burshtyn also informed Council members that the formal request for a no cost extension for the Government of Alberta PD grant has been submitted and we hope to hear back before the election date is set. The extension would allow the Graduate Student Internship Program to fund 50-75 additional internships throughout the summer.

FGSR is partnering once again with UCalgary for the 2nd annual **Grad Impact Week** from April 1-5, 2019. In the week following the 3MT Finals, we will be sharing stories of graduate research and the work of our grad students, profiling our students and their impact on our institutions and our province as a whole. We will share these stories on the FGSR website and you can follow along on social media with the *#gradimpact* hashtag.

6.0 Learning Outcomes Working Group Update

Maxine Clarke, Senior Office - Strategic Initiatives, presented an update on the Learning Outcomes Working Group.

The Alberta Credentials Framework has laid out the credential standards for Alberta's post-secondary institutions, so this is an opportunity to bring our own program learning outcomes into alignment.

The FGSR Learning Outcomes Working Group's mandate is to support the creation of excellence in the graduate student experience by ensuring that all students understand the expectations and deliverables of their Doctoral programs and are able to articulate what they know and what they can do by the time they graduate. Defining these learning outcomes is one of the ways to meet the goals of students.

PhD/Research programs can seem ambiguous and not consistently clear about the learning outcomes to students. Across campus there is a spectrum of how clear students are about the learning outcomes of their programs. Some programs have fully documented and transparent outcomes while others may be implicit, and the rest have some combination. The goal would be to provide ways for programs to define and document explicit learning outcomes that can then be shared with students.

Clearly defined, explicitly stated learning outcomes would allow students to gain a clear understanding of the expectations of the program, would allow programs to ensure that evaluation is clear and the effectiveness of programming can be measured, and finally the UofA would be able to clearly express the value of our advanced degrees.

The FGSR LO working group consists of 15 members including graduate coordinators and key FGSR staff. This group will develop tools and content to support programs as they articulate and document learning outcomes specific to their programs. These will come to FGSR Council for discussion before moving into the governance process for approval and inclusion in the calendar.

A Council member asked if and when the Working Group will look at course based master's program learning outcomes. The focus will initially be on doctoral programs but then will shift to focus on the other programs.

7.0 Annual Report on Graduate Enrolment 2018 - 2019

Senior Officer - Strategic Initiatives, Maxine Clarke presented summary findings from the Annual Report on Graduate Enrolment. The highlights are listed below:

- PhD enrolment peaked in 2012. There's been an average 2% decline per year since then and is now levelling off. This is the first year that course based masters are the largest population. The gender ratio is 1.6/1 females to males.

- There's a small group of Indigenous students: 2.5 % of graduate students self-identify as FNMI; 6.5 % as Indigenous from Alberta. The enrolment of Indigenous students is trending upwards.
- International student enrolment is at 37%, with the highest percentage in PhD programs. The top four faculties with high International student populations are Engineering, ALES, Pharmacy, and Science.
- The distribution of completion times for International students is 1 year ahead of domestic students.

In response to a question about the bump in applicants, Dean Burshtyn outlined that the GSMS admissions system and the previous year's geopolitical events led to Canadian universities getting more applications. The number of applicants from India is also on the rise.

The next steps with this data will be to consider issues such as why international students are finishing faster, how this data relates to the QA process, and comparisons of international and domestic attrition rates among other topics. This group is positioned well to consider these questions before they percolate up to other groups.

A Council member asked how completion is defined and calculated. U15s only count in terms and the completion time is rounded to the end of the term in which students are registered.

Any discrepancies that departments may be seeing in their own data compared to FGSR's are probably accounted for by issues of full time or part time registration, or not subtracting leaves from the times. The strategic analysis data isn't able to adjust for these things; however, these discrepancies do seem to get sorted out during program reviews.

Dean Burshtyn, Vice-Dean Hogeveen, and Senior Office Maxine Clarke have been meeting with Faculty Deans to offer more granular faculty and program data. The Deans have been finding this info useful and helpful for planning of programming as well as for issues such as EDI.

8.0 GSA Monthly Report

Masoud Aliramezani, VP Academic of the GSA provided the report, including two highlights:

- The new GSA executive will be in place as of May 1.
- Happy spring to all!

9.0 Notice of Motion: Raise ELP scores to bring in line with undergrad scores

Dean Burshtyn asked Council members permission to change this item from a notice of motion to an actual motion given what seems like a very straightforward decision. Council members indicated they were fine to move forward with an actual motion.

Maria Chia, Program Services Graduate Student Services Advisor, currently seconded to the Governance unit, outlined the context for raising the ELP scores to align with the UA's undergraduate ELP requirement.

Currently, FGSR overall values for TOEFL, CAEL and Pearson are lower than UA undergraduate requirements. The minimum band scores for TOEFL, MELAB and Pearson are either lower or not specified.

The following changes are proposed in order to bring FGSR minimum ELP in line with the UA's undergraduate requirements:

- Raise the minimum internet-based TOEFL score to 90, and raise the minimum band score to 21.
- Add a minimum MELAB band score of 80, and a minimum score of 3 on the speaking component. The minimum overall score remains at 85.
- Raise the minimum CAEL overall score to 70. The minimum band score remains at 60.
- Raise the minimum Pearson overall score to 61 and add a minimum band score of 60.

Ms. Chia reviewed the comparison table of ELP requirements for graduate admissions at other top 10 Canadian universities. Most have higher ELP minimums, including UofT and UBC. FGSR ranked 6th out of nine institutions requiring ELP.

Motion: *Be it resolved that the Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research raise the TOEFL, MELAB, CAEL and Pearson English Language Proficiency (ELP) minimum and band scores to align with the previously raised IELTS scores.*

Moved/Seconded: David Deephouse/Margriet Haagsma
Motion Carried

FGSR will ensure these changes are reflected in the 2020-21 calendar for implementation of fall 2020 admissions.

10.0 Best Practices Corner: The Good Candidacy: Instilling Best Practices in Your Department

Dr. Lee Foote, professor in the faculty of ALES presented a summary of his research in the book *The Good Candidacy*. He interviewed experts and graduate students as part of his research on this topic.

Dr. Foote suggested that graduate student mental health and morale can plummet into a 'pit of despair' as students make their way through their programs. Supervisors can try to anticipate this dip and try to flatten the downward curve. It's important for students to know that they are not the only ones experiencing these feelings as they approach their exams. The high stakes nature of passing this milestone is linked to the fear of public humiliation and being an outcast if the results are a fail.

Dr. Foote suggests using a different paradigm to prepare students. A one term, 3 credit course would allow students to review key readings, practice writing papers, and becoming experts in their research area. Rather than seeing candidacy as a leap across a wall, reimagine the preparation as a ramp that helps students over time with gradually more challenging work.

During their candidacy exams, students often report feeling like they are in a firing squad with different types of questions (including back and forth between examiners, unhelpful comments, antagonistic questions, or stream of consciousness rambling by examiners). The Chair of the exam should be empowered to support the student by ensuring the exam proceeds in a fair way. It's important to avoid having good students fail out for the incorrect reasons. Committees are examining for student potential, integrity, and collegiality. The Chair and committee might want to consider how this is an opportunity to celebrate the student as a colleague conducting original research and participating in their exam as an equal.

A council member asked for Dr. Foote's thoughts on external examiners and students not knowing their questions in advance of the exam. Dr. Foote commented that external examiners must be selected carefully with attention to their experience as examiners. The quality of the external is important to the overall exam experience for students.

11.0 Discussion: AGES Allocation

Vice-Dean Hogeveen led a discussion about how best to allocate the Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarships (AGES).

Background:

- Under the regulations for QEII smaller units were allowed to get ½ units of funding
- Under the 2019-20 AEGS regulations ½ value awards are no longer permissible
- Values can be set between \$11,000 and \$15,000
- For the sake of this discussion we are assuming that we will be given the same amount of money from the GoA as last year (\$4.5 million)

The money will be allocated to departments to determine how best to use it once we finalize an allocation plan.

Council engaged in a discussion about whether the Master's and PhD values should be the same or different. If set at \$11,000 (Master's) and \$15,000 (PhD) the total number of awards would be very similar to last year's award numbers (352).

Council members suggested that keeping the values the same, at a lower value, would allow departments to give out more awards, and would make the allocation process simpler. Since the cost of living does not differ from program to program having one value would be fair. It's important to note that the value of a single award cannot go below \$11K. The different amounts have been set (in the past) for prestige rather than any other reason. A member inquired if the AGES terms of reference

indicate anything about a renewal process. Perhaps renewal eligibility can be the differentiator between Master's and PhDs.

If we settle on the idea of one amount then we must decide what that amount should be. For example, if the value is set at \$12,500, we would get 362 awards. If the value is set at \$11,000 then there would be 410 awards.

Vice-Dean Hogeveen then moved the discussion to the new AGES allocations for international graduate students.

Background:

- 2018-19 - There were no funds available for international graduate students
- 2019-20 - AEGS has allocated 25% (\$1,131, 150) of the total amount for international graduate students.

Council engaged in a discussion around how to ensure these funds aren't overspent. There are two possible options including having the international funds centrally adjudicated by FGSR or by creating an allocation formula for units.

In Option 1, units would be given a quota based on the percentage of total graduate students. The applicants would be sent to FGSR for adjudication by the GSC.

Option 2 would require an allocation formula for units to use in order to do their own allocations.

A Council member notes that an allocation method might be complicated if the rules don't allow for half value awards.

Vice-Dean Hogeveen explained that the University of Calgary is going for a second phase of competition for International students. This approach might allow us to maximize the number of awards; however, this timing is difficult for recruitment as the offers will be delayed. FGSR is exploring if we can have some flexibility in how we can set these competitions up. It would be ideal to try it one way and have the ability to adjust as we see fit. FGSR will do a model to show proportional allocation.

The discussion concluded with Vice-Dean Hogeveen promising to report back with more information at future Council meetings.

12.0 Discussion: Full time/ Part time Registration Regulations

Dean Burshtyn suggested that in the interest of giving the previous discussion item more time, this item be moved to the next meeting. Council agreed.

13.0 Question Period

A Council member inquired if there was a deadline for a decision on the minimum funding proposal. Dean Burshtyn explained there was no timeline but that it will not be in the near future. The proposal must move through GFC and is still in consultation.

Dean Burshtyn clarified that Tri-Council funding levels were confirmed to be going up.

14.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:38 PM