

**Summary Minutes of a Meeting of the  
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall  
Friday, March 16, 2007, 2:00 pm**

Attendance

MRT Dale in the Chair	M Shirvani
M Allen	J Varsava
	H Hogg, Secretary

Department Representatives

E Bork, Ag, Food & Nutri Sciences	A Samek, Library & Info Studies
O Beattie, Anthropology	S Rice, Linguistics
J Greer, Art & Design	Z Xia, Mechanical Engineering
B Lemire, Biochemistry	P Lacy, Medicine
C Paszkowski, Biological Sciences	L Penrod, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
T Hobman, Cell Biology	J Mill, Nursing
B Hayes, Chem & Mat Eng	B Dussault, Nursing
J Takats, Chemistry	R Godbout, Oncology
N Amaral, Computing Science	Y Sauve, Ophthalmology
L Kline, Dentistry	S Dunn, Pharmacology
P Erdmer, Earth & Atmos Sciences	S Petersen, Physical Education & Recreation
A Commons, East Asian Studies	R Marchand, Physics
F Peters, Educational Policy Studies	P Dixon, Psychology
R Short, Educational Psychology	D Saunders, Public Health Science
Y Tsui, Electric & Comp Engineering	P Hagler, Rehab Med
J McClay, Elementary Education	E Macdonald, Renewable Resources
M Adria, Extension	N Krogman, Rural Economy
M Cavanagh, Faculté Saint-Jean	P Schneider, Speech Path & Audiology
K Darichuk, Health Promo Studies	

Graduate Student Representatives

C Delling, GSA President	C Mettananda, Human Ecology
R Hao, GSA VP Academic	B Jensen, Earth & Atmos Sciences
J Landry, GSA VP Labor Relations	C Shaoul, Psychology
C Schreyer, Anthropology	

Ex Officio

A Greenshaw, Office of VP Research	<u>Observer</u>
A Schmude, Office of the Registrar	C Hackett, Student Ombudsperson

Guests

C Amrhein, Provost & VP (Academic)  
O Yonge, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)

**GUEST: DR CARL AMRHEIN, PROVOST & VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC):**

**Graduate Student Funding Issues**

Dr Carl Amrhein, Provost & Vice-President (Academic) addressed councillors about graduate student funding as a result of the ongoing Graduate Student Funding Task Force, headed by Dr Olive Yonge, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs).

He said the task force had reached consensus of the following:

- The University of Alberta is behind peer institutions in terms of graduate student funding.
- Departments must be afforded spending flexibility if graduate student funding is to be increased.
- The focus needs to be on PhD students in years 1-4, although funding for all graduate students—including master's—must be considered.
- Students need to be provided with incentives to apply for external funding/awards.
- The analysis must be based on the current graduate student enrolment, not historical enrolments or a suggested graduate student population increase of 20 to 30 percent.

Dr Amrhein advised the task force is currently examining three main considerations:

- A minimum level of support for PhD students (ie. \$15,000 to \$20,000 range)
- More top-up awards for external award holders (ie. \$10,000 top ups)
- More high-value, elite packages (ie. \$24,000 + tuition)

Dr Amrhein said all three cannot be accomplished within the University's budget and that the funding task force would likely be looking at a combination. He opened the floor and asked councillors for feedback on the following:

- Should the priority be direct graduate student funding or should the university increase the professoriate so they can attract more research grants/funds and, in turn, provide increased graduate student funding?
- Should increases in funding be divided equally among departments or should it be tied to criteria, such as a department's ability to attract external research money?
- If graduate student funding increases, should the money flow through FGSR to departments or from the Provost directly to department chairs?

Councillors provided the following feedback:

- A GSA representative raised concerns about disparity among departments if funding is directed to the professoriate, ie. departments currently successful in attracting external funding will get richer
- A councillor said any increased funding must provide spending flexibility for departments because some programs are structured so that students begin a master's and then transfer to a PhD. Focusing on PhD funding in years one to four would not work in these programs.
- A councillor questioned how attractive a \$24,000 funding package will be when some US universities are offering funding for 5-6 years and elite packages around \$40,000.
- A GSA representative spoke in favor of minimum funding, saying it would raise the public profile of the University of Alberta and help a greater number of students, rather than becoming an elite recruitment tool.
- A councillor questioned why the choice is between more funding for graduate students either/or funding for professoriate. He suggested funds could be found in other areas and questioned staffing increases in senior administration.

Dr Amrhein advised that the graduate student funding task force would continue its work and FGSR Council would be involved in future discussions.

**GUEST: DR OLIVE YONGE, VICE-PROVOST (ACADEMIC PROGRAMS):**

**Graduate Student Experiences at the University of Alberta**

Dr Olive Yonge introduced GSA President Christine Delling and GSA VP Labor Relations Jen Landry, who highlighted the following recommendations from the Graduate Student Experience task force report.

- The University of Alberta needs to provide greater space for graduate students, for research, administration and social interaction. A graduate student residence is also a priority.
- There needs to be greater knowledge about the collective agreement governing graduate assistantships and better enforcement of its regulations.
- Graduate students and supervisors both need to be clear on their roles and departments need to publicize their standards/expectations more.
- The University of Alberta needs to foster a greater sense of community among graduate students.
- The tuition differential fee for international students needs to be eliminated.
- Graduate students need to be given support mechanisms to do their jobs effectively and to ensure their health and wellness.
- More funding is required to support travel to international conferences where graduate students can enhance their student experience and act as ambassadors for the University of Alberta.

Dr Yonge opened the floor to questions and comments.

A councillor advised her department has promoted a sense of community within by providing annual funds to the department's graduate students' association. She encouraged other departments to do the same.

Dr Yonge also provided councillors with a questionnaire about graduate student recruitment (Sec. note: also sent to councillors by email). She encouraged councillors to complete the questionnaire. The results are to be provided to a working group examining the best practices for graduate student recruitment.

### **1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

a. Approval of the minutes of January 19, 2007

The minutes were approved.

b. Matters arising

None.

### **3. INFORMAL BUSINESS**

a. Question Period

A councillor inquired about the status of the RSRCH 900 proposal. The Chair advised the proposal is currently being challenged by the Department of Computing Science and that the FGSR will be meeting with the Department Chair to review.

b. Announcements and Reports by the Chair and Councillors

1. Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey

The Chair advised that a consortium of Canadian universities is conducting a web survey of graduate students to obtain comparative data about Canada's current graduate student population. Participating institutions include all Ontario and Western Canadian universities.

2. GSA Awards Night

J Landry congratulated FGSR councillors who were recognized at the GSA Awards night.

3. Graduate Student Funding Task Force

M Shirvani reminded council that the Graduate Student Funding Task Force is examining graduate student funding based on student registrations from September 2005 to August 2006.

c. Other Business

A councillor asked if the minimum funding being considered by the graduate student funding task force would be applied to existing PhD students or just new ones.

The Chair advised that it would be millions of dollars either way, and that it is not yet clear what the recommendations will be or what how recommendations will be implemented.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.