

**Summary of a Meeting of the  
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall  
Wednesday, April 20, 2011, 2:00 pm**

Attendance

M Shirvani, Dean in the Chair      R Poliquin, Vice-Dean  
J Harrington, Assoc Dean          P Melançon, Assoc Dean

Department Representatives

S Harris, Art and Design	T Hillen, Math & Statistical Sciences
D Stuart, Biochemistry	S Karapetrovic, Mechanical Engg
J White, Business MBA	D Burshtyn, Med Microbiology & Immun
B Hayes, Chemical and Mat Eng	J Despres, Music
T Lowary, Chemical and Mat Eng	K Moore, Nursing
R Greiner, Computing Science	A Shaw, Oncology
G Buck, Educational Psychology	A El-Kadi, Pharmacy & Pharmaceut Sci
R McKay, Educational Studies	L Klein, Physiology
A Kirova, Elementary Education	J Volden, Rehabilitation Science
T Zackodnik, English & Film Studies	K Hughes, Sociology
M Adria, Communications & Tech	P Schneider, Speech Path & Audiology
M Cavanaugh, Faculte Saint-Jean	
F Swyrupa, History & Classics	
G Song, Human Ecology	
M Keelan, Lab Med & Pathology	
L Reif, Law	
H Julien, Lin & Info Studies	

Graduate Program Administrator Representatives

G Mathew, Anthropology  
D Giles, Cell Biology

Graduate Student Representatives

A Rawluk, GSA VP Academic  
Bureyko, Agricultural, Food & Nutr Sci  
M Affi, Civil & Enviro Engg  
B Jensen, Earth & Atmospheric Sci  
J Babicheva, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies

Ex officio

A Schmude, Office of the Registrar

Guests/Observers

C Hanrahan, FGSR	T Chechmita, Psychiatry
L Shang, Medicine	N Erbilgin, Renewable Resources
F Myrick, Nursing	B Dessault, Nursing
F Hey, Public Health	

**1 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved.

**2 SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**a Approval of the April 16, 2010 summary minutes**

The minutes were approved.

**3 Matters arising from the minutes**

None.

**4 Comments from the Chair**

Discussion centered on awards. Of the twenty nine Vanier applications forwarded to Ottawa, the U of A won eleven. The participation of departments is a concern for Deans as some strong doctoral programs are not forwarding applications. Council members would like to receive more feedback about why applications were not forwarded to Ottawa.

Many departments have not yet used their doctoral recruitment scholarship allocations yet. Some departments are only now getting applications so will be using the allocations shortly. Council member wants to know if FGSR would consider pushing forward money that can't be used for the Fall admissions so that there is money to offer in December for Winter admissions. The assessment committee will discuss this matter and follow up.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**5 Graduate Student Teaching Awards: Proposal to change eligibility criteria**

J Harrington proposed a change to the GSTA eligibility criteria. The current policy requires students to have taught for 2 terms in order to be eligible to win a GSTA. Some departments like business only have one term of teaching so the proposal is to change eligibility criteria to one term. The request will be made to GFC.

The motion to approve the proposal was PUT and CARRIED, 34 – 0, 5 abstentions.

**6 Embedded Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Nursing Education**

B Dessault proposed having an embedded certificate in nursing education for students. The purpose is to acknowledge learning and teaching while working on degree as most graduates find themselves in teaching positions after graduation. The certificate would provide an incentive for those who would not consider doing it formally.

The motion was PUT and CARRIED, 38 – 0, 2 abstentions.

#### 7 Termination of Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics

T Hillen proposed that the postgraduate diploma in statistics be terminated. Course based grads are accredited as an associate statistician has made the diploma obsolete.

The motion was PUT and CARRIED, 36 – 0, 3 abstentions.

#### INFORMATION ITEMS

#### 8 Resources for Graduate Coordinators and Supervisors:

##### 8a. Checklist for First Meeting with a Graduate Student

The FGSR website has a section on resources for grad coordinators and supervisors. From the Associate Deans' experience many students' issues could be addressed early in the student-supervisor relationship to avoid issues later. The checklist is for the first meeting with the supervisor and grad coordinator. The GSA and Graduate Ombuds helped to compose checklist. It would be useful for the grad coordinators and supervisors to know about the academically employed graduate student collective agreement.

##### 8b. FGSR Timelines April 2011-May 2012

The FGSR timeline is for all documents and time sensitive events for the main units in FGSR. Although some deadlines are internally set by FGSR others are determined by external agencies. A council member suggested that a Google calendar would be helpful for keeping the dates straight. R Poliquin noted that during FGSR staff check these titles to ensure consistency. He asked that any standards or rules departments could enforce to ensure consistency would greatly reduce the amount of time staff must spend on this task.

#### 9 Report of the Graduate Students' Association

A Rawluk reported that the GSA is in the midst of transitioning between executives. There is one month of overlap to facilitate the transition. Tea at Triffo was a great success. It was a chance for the GSA and the senate to interact and highlight graduate student achievement. The GSA has hired Heather Hogg as the associate executive director, some summer students as well as an IT specialist.

#### 10 Report on the latest Graduate Student Funding Data

The Chair reported that total funding has increased by 9 million not including independent funding. The number of students enrolled in

graduate programs has increased by 11%. The graduate Funding Task Force is looking at detailed data to see what sort of information can be gathered.

#### 11 Feedback from the Scholarship Adjudicators

Council members heard from those who have recently served on NSERC and SSHRC adjudications committees in Ottawa. In the internal process, academic excellence is the most important for Masters applications. Research ability, contributions to field and the proposal are most heavily weighted for PhD Applications. Letters of reference should emphasize the uniqueness of student's proposal.

The feedback from SSHRC adjudicators suggested that first class standing is preferred to close to first class, and thesis based masters had a stronger chance compared to course based masters. For masters applications GPA is the most important factor, then research and awards, and finally letters of reference and the project itself. For reference, \$13000 is the amount that qualifies awards as "major". Projects should have something quantitative to show why it is exceptional.

For PhD applications the past two years of GPA and research count. Adjudicators are looking for sound bytes from department and referee letters explicitly stating why applications are strong. Letters should explain details of GPAs and awards from foreign institutions. Departmental recommendations should be clearer about why the applications were ranked in a particular order.

Council members would like to know if they can access reference letters that were particularly strong. FGSR will post the forms used to assess the applications so that departments can use it at their level. All four presenters stressed the importance of having really strong and detailed reference letters.

#### 12 Reports by Councilors: None.

#### 13 Question Period

The Chair clarified that External Examiner funding must be used explicitly for travel and accommodations. A council member asked if the allocations for Masters and PhDs can be traded. At this point, switching allocations is not an option. A council member had questions about the Graduate Student collective agreement. Departments may contact the GSA VP Labour rep, Tamara Korassa, or Medha Samarasinghe at FGSR for clarification on the collective agreement.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.