

Summary of a Meeting of the
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH Telus
Centre, Rm 134 Wednesday, May 16, 2012, 2:00 pm

Attendance

Ex officio

M Shirvani, Dean & Chair
P Melançon, Assoc Dean
J Harrington, Assoc Dean

R Poliquin, Vice-Dean
L Rose, Manager, HR and Finance

L Harder, Arts
T Krukoff, FoMD

J Maclean, Graduate Ombudsperson

Department Representatives

E Okine, Agric, Food & Nutritional Science
A Palmer, Anthropology
D Stuart, Biochemistry
H McDermid, Biological Sciences
J White, Business MBA
D Cooper, Business PhD
T Simmen, Cell Biology
K Cadien, Chem & Mat Engineering
A Weiler, Chemistry
I Sywenky, Comparative Lit Program
J Sander, Computing Science
Y Tsui, Electrical & Computer Engineering
R McKay, Educational Studies
A Kirova, Elementary Ed
D Sweeney, History & Classics
M Engel, Humanities Computing Program
R Brown, Law

M Mackey, Library & Information Systems
T Hillen, Math & Stat Science
S Mitra, Mechanical Eng
S Hughes, Medical Genetics
D Burshtyn, Med Micro & Immunology
R Tsuyuki, Medicine
A Nahachewsky, Mod Lang & Cultural Stu
K Moore, Nursing
A Shaw, Oncology
I MacDonald, Ophthalmology
E Posse de Chaves, Pharmacology
S Petersen, PhysEd I& Rec
L Thorlakson, Poli Sci
E Fujjwara, Psychiatry
N Galambos, Psychology
K D Hughes, Sociology
P Schneider, Speech Pathology

Graduate Program Administrator Representatives

J Forslund, AFNS

A Giles, Med Micro & Immunology

Graduate Student Representatives

A Abdelmoneim, Pharm Sci

N Adnan, Student Services

Exofficio

F Peters, Chair, FGSR Academic Appeals
Committee
A Schmude, Office of the Registrar

G Pavlich, Office of the VP (Research)

Guests/Observers

J Anderson, FGSR

N Sharpe, Graduate Ombudsperson

1 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Report of Masters Recruitment Scholarships – P Melançon was added to the agenda as item 5. a).
The revised agenda was approved. (Motion – R Poliquin, 2nd – J Harrington)

2 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a) April 25, 2012 Minutes
The minutes were approved. (Motion – K Moore, 2nd – R Poliquin)

3 New Program: MA in Community Engagement – A Cook

Motion: that the Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research Council approve the proposal for a new Master of Arts degree program in Community Engagement. M - R Poliquin, 2nd - P Melançon

A Cook presented a summary of the proposal. He noted that it is a 21 credit thesis-based Master's degree program with 5 required courses. The program will focus on key concepts of community engagement. The program will admit 5 - 6 graduate students annually, until a total enrolment in the program of 20-24 students is achieved. He explained that the proponents had consulted with multiple groups and individuals, including; community representatives, Deans and students and noted that the proposal aligns well with the University's Strategic Plan. The program will be funded via the reallocation of existing faculty funds.

Motion to approve the MA in Community Engagement was PUT and CARRIED, Yes – 39, No – 4.

4 New Program: MA in Women's and Gender Studies – L Gotell

Motion: that the Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research Council approve the

proposal for a new Master of Arts degree program in Women's and Gender Studies. M - J Harrington, 2nd – R Poliquin

L Gotell presented a summary of the proposal. She noted that Gender Studies has been a strong area of research at the University of Alberta. The existing undergraduate program has grown by 47%. This new program would be filling a need as there are no programs of this kind in the Prairie Provinces. A survey of undergraduates has shown a strong demand for the programs and would allow them to do research and develop transferrable skills in community-based research.

The new Master's degree program will be offered in thesis-based and course-based formats. The annual intake would be ten to twelve students.

Q. Is there a budget for the program?
A. Faculty resources will be reallocated.

K Hughes commended the proponents on the quality of the proposed program.

Motion to approve the MA in Women's and Gender Studies was PUT and CARRIED, YES – (45), NO – 0.

5 Graduate Program Manual Revisions: Section 8

Motion: that the Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research Council approve the proposed changes to the Graduate program Manual
M – P Melançon, 2nd – R Poliquin

R Poliquin summarized the proposed changes to the Graduate Program Manual and invited comments or questions from Council.

The term Co-Supervisor no longer exists. Therefore, if a supervisor does not hold a PhD, then an additional supervisor (not co) is needed. If one of these supervisors is going on sabbatical, then a supervisor must be appointed during the sabbatical, as was the existing policy.

8-3.1.3 Candidacy –This item has not been changed.

The following questions were raised:

Q. Would it be possible to make an amendment to page 5, 8.2.1., second last sentence?
A. That statement is within University of Alberta policy guidelines and cannot be changed by this Council.

Q. If a supervisor is going to take a sabbatical, who appoints their replacement?

A. They do themselves.

Q. What should be done if a member of an examining committee is attending via Skype and the link breaks during the exam?
A. If that member is the external committee member the exam will need to be deferred.

It was suggested that an examiner could provide their questions and expected answers in advance, with different grades for written and oral responses. Another option might be to adjourn. The committee would decide. It was suggested that this should be reviewed an amendment to the policy could be proposed in the fall.

Q. Regarding page 7, 8.3.3.1, does the candidacy examination have to be held within two years of the commencement of the program?
A. No.

A member commented that this time limit is breached regularly in their program. A discussion regarding the purpose of the candidacy ensued.

It was noted that the purpose of the candidacy is to determine candidates' ability to pursue and complete original research. The candidacy exam is a review of the candidate and not the project.

The Motion to approve the Graduate Program Manual Revisions: Section 8 was PUT and CARRIED, YES 54, NO – 1, Abstain – 0.

J Harrington thanked the policy review committee for all the work put into the revisions.

E Okine commented that he will report positively to the APPR on the revisions to the Graduate Program Manual.

5.a Masters Recruitment Scholarships presentation - P Melançon

There will be six competitions at two week intervals starting in February, 2013. The 114 nominations in 2012, resulted in 32. The average GPA required is over 3.9. Twenty-eight percent of nominations result in an offer, and sixty-seven percent of these offers are accepted.

The success is approximately the same between Canadian and foreign competitors. The majority of Canadian competitors are from Alberta, and Arts and Science have been major beneficiaries of awards.

It's an effective recruitment tool because a large number of those offered the scholarship take it and there is a large pool of applicants with a greater than 3.8 GPA.

A lesser GPA can be balanced by evidence of scholarly activity.

A Department letter should include a clear summary of student record, convincing arguments, competitive statements, and an explanation of any unusual aspects of the application.

A record of scholarships and publications are important, but a cover letter by the department is influential. A 3.9 GPA is better from a well-known university than from one that is unknown.

The following questions were raised:

Q. What is the structure of the Committee?

A. Applications are adjudicated every two weeks by the decanal team in the FGSR (currently: M Shirvani, R Poliquin, P Melançon and J Harrington).

Q. Is there a bias for or against those who have attended the University of Alberta?

A. Everyone has to follow application eligibility.

Q. When PhD scholarships were allocated to the programs, why were the Masters scholarships not considered?

A. There are only about two dozen awards a year. We don't have funding for Masters Students. The emphasis has been on doctoral recruitment.

There is no specific allocation of funds to the Masters Recruitment Scholarship, but we attempt to offer as many as possible.

There has been a steady decline in the number of domestic doctoral students attending the U of A. The U of A does, however, have the highest number, and the highest percentage, of international doctoral students

Q. Is there an update of Graduate Projects?

A. Preliminary assessments for various Graduate Projects were done, and feedback would be provided to the proposers of the projects.

Over 30 projects will go to the Provost. Feedback will be to answer questions the Provost may ask. Many Proposals are multi-departmental and the numbers of each are with M Shirvani. Comments will be coming today or tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

6 SSHRC and NSERC Scholarship Update by M Shirvani.

NSERC Masters Scholarships:

2010 the U of A won 41 of 828 (5%)

2011 the U of A won 45 of 840 (5.4%)

NSERC Doctoral Scholarships:

2010 the U of A won 42 of 876 (4.8%)

2011 the U of A won 22 of 659 (3.3%)

SSHRC Doctoral Scholarships:

2010 the U of A won 40 of 1519 (2.6%)

2011 the U of A won 30 of 1519 (2.0%)