<u>*Attendance at FGSR Council – March 2020*</u>
*No attendance was taken since there was no in-person meeting. However, the vote master ensured only one vote per department.

FGSR Council: March 2020

The FGSR Council in-person meeting scheduled for March 18, 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation.

Instead, the package was sent out, along with an opportunity to provide questions/comments on the items scheduled for approval.

The comments and questions were collated and sent to the voting members of Council on March 26 along with an e-vote form, which closed early on March 30.

The results are below; and the comments/questions that were collated are also included below.

VOTE RESULTS:

All voting items are approved or endorsed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council.

• **Item 3: Feb. 19, 2020 Minutes** - approval of the minutes from the last meeting.

   Approve - 49
   Abstain - 6
   Oppose - 0

• **Item 6: Name Change for the Faculte Saint-Jean MA in Etude Interdisciplinaire Canadienne**

   Motion: Be it resolved that FGSR Council approve the proposed name change in the Master of Arts en études canadiennes program in Faculté Saint-Jean to Master of Arts en Études interdisciplinaires canadiennes, to take effect September 1, 2020.

   Approve - 54
   Abstain - 0
   Oppose - 1

- **Item 7: Student Guide: How to Ensure a Rewarding Thesis-Based Student-Supervisor Experience at the University of Alberta**

  Note: Friendly amendments were made following the comments received from Council members.
  *Motion: Be it resolved that FGSR Council **endorse** the "How to Ensure a Rewarding Thesis-Based Student-Supervisor Experience at the University of Alberta" Student Guide, a companion to the previously endorsed Supervisory Guide.*

  Approve - 51
  Abstain - 4
  Oppose - 0

- **Item 8: Part-Time Status Options for Grad Students**

  Note: Changes and Amendments were made following suggestions from Council.
  Motion: Be it resolved that FGSR Council approve changes to the calendar to facilitate thesis-based graduate students to request a change in registration from full-time to part-time, for immediate implementation upon approval. (This item will now move forward to other bodies, including GFC for final approval)

  Approve - 51
  Abstain - 3
  Oppose - 1

Comments, Questions and Friendly Amendments received from Council Members in preparation for an electronic vote (in place of an in-person meeting on March 18).

General Corrections:
In the Report from the Dean: Evan Wong is an MPH student in the School of Public Health (not an MA)

Item 6.0 - Name Change for the Faculte Saint-Jean MA in Etude Interdisciplinaire Canadienne
The only comments were to voice support or to note that there were no questions.
No amendments were made.

Item 7.0 - Student Guide: How to Ensure a Rewarding Student-Supervisor Experience at the University of Alberta
Several noted 'no concerns', one noted this is an excellent document

Several amendments were made to the document following suggestions by Council members.
A new document is attached, and the friendly amendments are noted below:
- Title was adjusted to: How to ensure a rewarding thesis-based student-supervisor experience at the U of A.
- Since the document doesn't pertain to Course-based students, we have removed the note in the first paragraph "or an advisor in course-based master's programs."
    - FGSR will consider creating a parallel document for course-based students in the future.
- Under "How to Deal With Conflict:" we have noted that students should seek out advice from the Associate Dean in their Faculty, and that the GSA is also a resource.
- Under "How to Resolve Conflict:" we have included the Associate Dean Grad/Research or equivalent from the faculty as a place for advice.
- Under "How to Ensure A Healthy Student-Supervisor relationship", we have edited #2 to say: "If applicable discuss funding during the first formal meeting and as issues arise or whenever circumstances change. You need to know what you can and cannot expect."

Question:
- Regarding the 2nd point under "How to ensure a healthy student-supervisor relationship": What is the timeline associated with "discuss funding on a regular basis." This needs to be clear to both student and supervisor as it can become a point of misunderstanding/contention for that relationship.
  This should be discussed at the first formal meeting and as issues arise. This topic is on the Conversation Checklist for New Graduate Students, and it will also be included on the proposed Student-Supervisor Guidelines and Annual Progress Report. We have also amended the language in

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the document to more specifically note that it should be discussed at the first meeting, and then as issues arise, or if circumstances change.

Item 8.0 - Part-Time Status Options for Grad Students

Again, several Council members noted support, or no questions.

Another noted that it is very much needed, and supported completely, and the GSA responded that "it's great to see this going forward. The GSA believes that this will have a big, positive impact on a number of graduate students."

**We have amended the calendar language, and included a new document that incorporates the updates in response to the questions and comments below.

Questions:

- Will or how will this impact extension requests?
  Extension requests including those made currently by students who are part time, are considered on a case-by-case basis. Just because someone is part time won't preclude them from requesting a program extension should they require one. They should not, however, expect to continue indefinitely even while part-time without demonstrating progress is being made and a clear plan for completion that is supported by their supervisor.

- Questions around timing: Will students still have six years to complete? How does a change from full-time to part-time status impact allowed time to completion? For example, if a student changes to part-time at the end of year 4, does this extend the maximum time to compete to 8 years? How many years can students stay part-time?
  A student can remain part-time until the end of their program, but if the total time in program does not meet the minimum registration requirement, fees for the remaining required time will be added to the last term of registration. Part time fees are half of what is assessed for full time, so for example, a student who has completed 12 months of part-time registration status has completed the equivalent of 6 months of full-time registration.

  For time allowed to complete the program if a student has been approved for part-time registration, additional time would be added to the program before a student has to apply for a program extension. The amount of extra time allowed, as well as total time allowed in program with part-time status, has been added to the calendar document.

- Will supervisors have to agree/sign off on the move to part-time studies?

A student's change to PT status would be discussed with their supervisor to determine if this was the best decision for their program at the time. If they agree it is, they fill the form out and then the Associate Chair approves it. The Associate Chair might ask questions if they have them but the conversation/decision about a switch would have happened with the student and their supervisor. If the supervisor and/or the chair knows the student is engaged full time in their research but applying for PT status, one would hope they would not approve the request because it would not actually represent what the student was doing.

- Will grad coordinators need to sign off on these requests as well?
  Yes, the department will have to approve the request before sending it to FGSR

- What will this look like in terms of expectations on the annual report form?
  There will be a box to "tick" indicating if the student is full time or part time. The report would still need to be filled out at least once annually and the goals/milestones would be set to coincide with expectations that students are only working part time on their programs.

- The wording of the proposed calendar changes seems to state that students will ONLY be admitted as full-time students. That is, there does not seem to be provision for students to start their program as part time. Is this correct? If not - it seems to me that there needs to be different wording. The proposed wording on the calendar change form is as follows, "Registration status for thesis-based students. Students in thesis-based programs will be admitted as full-time students. *We have included a sentence to state that they are admitted full time unless the department has approved them to be admitted as part time to start their programs.*

- Under the heading "Full-Time and Part-Time Status" - it says "students .. may request a change from full-time status to part-time status." Does this mean that all programs will have to consider a request to change to part-time? Some programs do not currently allow any students to be part-time (we only have full-time students). Would we be required to allow part time?
  No, the program would have its own supplemental regulation noting that students can't switch. This would be an FGSR institutional regulation and departments can choose to not to follow if their programs differ. They would just need to specify that in their program requirements.

- If this calendar change is implemented, I'm wondering why any students would remain full time after completing 3 years of full time? (unless they are international students, or they have scholarships). It seems that they could reduce their tuition, and continue to do the same things as they did previously after classes are completed. (I suspect that I'm missing something here -- so perhaps what's needed is some clarification about the conditions under which students are allowed to change to part-time status.)
  The expectation is that students are registered full time and will remain so. The option for part time status allows those students who have things come up in their lives that prevent them from working

full time on their program an option to switch to part time. The discussion and approval process, and case-by-case consideration would prevent everyone from switching. Further, students would need to consider any implications to their funding and support eligibility, and it is their responsibility to check with their funding sources.