

Attendance at FGSR Council – March 30, 2022

DEPARTMENT/UNIT FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES

Present:

Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science	Ben Willing
Anthropology	Marko Zivkovic
Art & Design	Joan Greer
Biochemistry	David Stuart
Biological Sciences	Deborah McKenzie
Business (non-departmentalized) - PhD	Trish Reay
Cell Biology	Richard Wozniak
Civil & Environmental Engineering	Wei Victor Liu
Communication Sciences & Disorders	Esther Kim
Computing Science	Denilson Barbosa
Dentistry (Medical Sciences)	Carlos Flores Mir
Drama	Stefano Muneroni
Earth & Atmospheric Sciences	Arturo Sanchez
East Asian Studies	David Quinter
Economics	Heather Eckert
Educational Policy Studies	Darryl Hunter
Educational Psychology	Denyse Hayward
Educational Studies	Douglas Gleddie
English and Film Studies	Mark Simpson
Health Sciences Education	Douglas Gleddie
History, Classics, and Religion	Heather Coleman
Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation (non-dept)	Normand Boule
Laboratory Medicine & Pathology	Jelena Holovati
Law (non-departmentalized)	Linda Reif
Library & Information Studies	Dinesh Rathi
Linguistics	Johanne Paradis
Mathematical & Statistical Science	Christoph Frei
Mechanical Engineering	Alexandra Komrakova
Medical Genetics (Medical Sciences)	Zhixiang Wang
Medical Microbiology & Immunology	Edan Foley
Medicine	Nadia Jahroudi
Modern Languages & Cultural Studies	Irene Sywenky
Music	Michael Frishkopf
Nursing (non-departmentalized)	Dianne Tapp
Obstetrics & Gynecology (Medical Sciences)	Denise Hemmings
Occupational Therapy	Shaniff Esmail
Oncology	Alan Underhill
Pediatrics (Medical Sciences)	Sujata Persad
Pharmacology	Elena Posse de Chaves

Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences (non-dept)	Ayman El-Kadi
Philosophy	Ingo Brigandt
Physical Therapy	Marguerite Wieler
Physics	Sharon Morsink
Physiology	Zamaneh Kassiri
Political Science	Jared Wesley
Psychiatry	Allen Chan
Psychology	Chris Westbury
Radiology & Diagnostic Imaging (Med Sci)	Lawrence Le
Rehabilitation Medicine - Rehabilitation Sciences	Patricia (Trish) Manns
Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology	Henry An
School of Public Health (non-departmentalized)	Ruth Wolfe
Secondary Education	Bonnie Watt
Sociology	Gillian Stevens
Surgery	Fred Berry

Regrets:

Biomedical Engineering
 Elementary Education

Absent:

Business (non-departmentalized) - MBA
 Chemicals & Materials Engineering
 Chemistry
 Communications and Technology (MACT)
 Computing Science - Multimedia Program
 Digital Humanities
 Electrical & Computer Engineering
 Faculte Saint-Jean (non-departmentalized)
 Human Ecology
 Internetworking (MINT)
 Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation
 Medical Sciences Graduate Program - FoMD
 Native Studies (non-departmentalized)
 Neuroscience
 Occupational Therapy
 Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences (Medical Sciences)
 Physics
 Renewable Resources
 Women's and Gender Studies

ASSOCIATE DEANS (GRADUATE) REPRESENTATIVES FOR DEPARTMENTALIZED FACULTIES

Present:

Arts	Kim Noels
Education	Doug Gleddie
Engineering	Tian Tang
Medicine & Dentistry	Greg Funk
Rehabilitation Medicine	Trish Manns
Science	Mark McDermott

Regrets Sent:

Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences (ALES) Leluo Guan

EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVES

Present:

FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost (FGSR Council Chair)	Brooke Milne
Vice-President (Research) (or Delegate)	Laura Beard
Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian (or Delegate)	Dale Askey
FGSR Vice-Dean	Ali Shiri
FGSR Associate Dean	Micah True
FGSR Associate Dean	Samer Adeeb
Vice-Provost and University Registrar (or Delegate)	Carlo Dimailig

FGSR Associate Dean	Andrea MacLeod
FGSR Associate Dean	Frances Plane

Absent:

President (or delegate)	-
Chair, FGSR Academic Appeals Committee*	Moin Yahya
Director, Centre for Teaching & Learning*	Janice Miller-Young

Regrets Sent:

GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS COMMITTEE (GPAC) REPRESENTATIVES

Regrets Sent:

Department of Neuroscience Amber LaPointe

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA) DIRECTLY ELECTED OFFICIALS (3) & GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA) COUNCIL (20) REPRESENTATIVES

Present:

<i>GSA President</i>	<i>Anas Fassih</i>
<i>VP Labour</i>	<i>Jessica Grenke</i>
Mechanical Engineering	Kashif Javed
Nursing	Sania Amiri-Ishani
Pediatrics (PhD)	Sabrin Bashar
Pharmacology	Julia Nichols
Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Science	Emilee Storfie
Civil & Environmental Engineering	Babalola Olabode
Civil & Environmental Engineering	Mona Ahmadirad
Earth and Atmospheric Studies	Mohamed Ali
Educational Psychology	Mehrdad Yousefpoori Naeim
Internetworking	Shing Kit Lao
Materials Engineering - PhD	Sophie Shi
Mechanical Engineering	Farzad Aghazadeh
Medical & Microbiology - PhD	Emma Takeuchi
Neuroscience - Masters	Nicole Dittmann
Nursing	Megan Sommerfeld
Oncology (PhD)	Andrew Locke
Pediatrics	Violet Sun
Pharmacology, PhD	Nayiar Shahid
Psychology	Eamin Zahan Heanoy
Public Health	Nazif Mahbub
School of Public Health	Ademola Itiola

Absent / Alternates:

<i>VP Academic</i>	<i>Kathy Haddadkar</i>
<i>VP External (Alternate)</i>	<i>Mohd Tahsin Bin Mostafa</i>
<i>VP Student Services (Alternate)</i>	<i>Paresh Kumar</i>

OBSERVERS – NON-VOTING

FGSR, HR & Operations Coordinator*	Medha Samarasinghe
FGSR Executive Assistant & Operations *	Andrea Riewe
FGSR, EA to the Associate Deans*	Dena Giroux
FGSR, Admissions & Program Services Supervisor*	Joyce Anderson
FGSR, Supervisor, Graduate Awards*	Amanda Brown
FGSR, Director, Professional Development*	Renee Polziehn
FGSR, Business Analyst*	Justine Gill
FGSR Program Services Team Lead*	Kris MacManus
GFC Secretary*	Heather Richholt
Graduate Ombudsperson*	Remonia Stoddart-Morrison

*Non-Voting

FGSR Council March 30, 2022

1.0 Call to Order at 2:02 PM

Vice-Provost and Dean, Brooke Milne, called the meeting to order. Members requiring further support with the virtual platform can reach out to Andrea Riewe for help. Those with voting authorities will have received an email with links. Voting members were asked to have this open in preparation for the voting items.

2.0 Approval of Agenda for March 30, 2022

Moved / Seconded: Gregory Funk, Carlos Flores Mir
Approved by consent.

3.0 Approval of Minutes of February 23, 2022

Moved / Seconded: Elena Posse de Chaves/Darryl Hunter

Discussion / Amendments:

- The minutes will be revised to note the correct department for Dr Posse de Chaves to say Pharmacology.

Approved by electronic vote.

4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

None

5.0 Report from the Dean

COVID-19 Updates

- Please forward any questions about COVID to Medha at medha@ualberta.ca; she will take your questions to the PHRT committee and get back to you.

Restructuring

- More on this later in the agenda.

Supervision:

- Details about the tools will be forthcoming by mid April.
- The policy pieces are active and posted on the UAPPOL website.

Ukraine situation:

- The main UA website will have an FAQ up; it will be updated with information as the situation evolves.

Discussion / Questions:

- A Council member asked what supports there are institutionally to support translating transcripts and determining other ways to validate the key requirements for admissions for Ukraine.
 - Programs were encouraged to be as flexible with their requirements and assessments as possible. FGSR will look into translation services. Units considering admitting Ukrainian applicants were asked to let FGSR know and to flag the applications so that our team can expedite the process.

6.0 GSA Monthly Report

Anas Fassih, GSA VP Academic, presented the GSA monthly report as submitted.

- The GSA has been responding to the changes in COVID restrictions by the GoA. They have results from three surveys sent to graduate students about the GSA's handling of the pandemic.
- The GSA is also in talks with the Registrar's office and the Office of Advancement to explore how to create more emergency bursaries for graduate students.
- This funding is in addition to the GSA's continued advocacy for a guaranteed funding model. This will help ensure there is fair distribution of funding. They will be doing an environmental scan and getting information from students about their current funding packages in order to propose more specific details to UA's Administration.
- The VP Student Services has negotiated a \$45/student rebate for the UPass by negotiating directly with ETS.
- The elections for the GSA Executive are complete and the team is working on onboarding the new members over the next month.
- As the campus transitions to in-person activities over the next few weeks, the GSA will focus on doing more outreach to grad students. There has been a drop over the last two years due to the pandemic.
- Finally, the GSA will be hosting their annual Awards night in person on April 7th.

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council Member noted that there is inequity amongst grad student funding. Some faculty members will withdraw stipend funding if students get additional resources while others will

allow students to carry stipends and award funds. There may not be much that can address this issue but she wanted to flag it as an area to consider in conversations around minimum funding packages.

- UofC has a minimum funding plan. An environmental scan can be done to see what students need.

Dean Milne took a moment to thank the outgoing GSA executive members for their hard work and collaboration. She congratulated Anas Fassih who is staying on in his role as President of the GSA. She also introduced and welcomed the new executive and noted that we were looking forward to working with them.

7.0 Proposal: Nursing PhD: Deletion of Written Comprehensive Exam

Dean Milne invited the Associate Dean - Grad for Nursing, Dianne Tapp, to present the proposal. The requirement for a written comprehensive exam is a Faculty of Nursing requirement in addition to the institutional candidacy exam requirement. The need for this additional exam has been debated over several years; however, it's come up again as the Faculty goes through a PhD curriculum review. The main reason to discontinue the comprehensives is that there are issues with clarity and purpose as well as uneven supervisory expectations and uneven student experience with them. The Faculty of Nursing Council passed this proposal unanimously last month.

Motion: Be it resolved that FGSR Council approve the elimination of the PhD written comprehensive examination as a requirement for the Doctoral degree within the Faculty of Nursing, for implementation upon final approval and for inclusion in the next possible calendar as per the related calendar changes.

Moved / Seconded: Anas Fassih/Doug Gleddie

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council member asked if there was an oral component to the comprehensives.
 - The wording in the proposal is to distinguish it from the oral exam; the comprehensive exam only has a written component.
- A Council member noted that this is the second instance of the removal of a program level comprehensive exam this year in Council. Are there any risks to student preparedness or the competitiveness of the programs by removing this requirement? Does the removal impact a student's opportunities in the job market?
 - The candidacy can be an effective way to assess that students have acquired substantive knowledge. We can't definitively say that there's a link between doing a comprehensive exam and later success or competitiveness.
 - Comprehensives are not universal across the U15s. Candidacy, however, is consistent in graduate programs and signals a level of achievement during the program progression.
 - Comprehensives are adding time to degree completion, which can be something that is evaluated critically for funding or employment. Attrition rates are also significant at this point. There is benefit in streamlining the requirements.

- A member noted that there are other ways to cut time to completion without removing requirements. The department of Political Science has piloted this approach and would be happy to share their findings with others.
 - Dean Milne noted that course requirements are another area which could use a review as they are very heavy in some programs while other programs have no course requirements at all.
- A Council member observed that during his own doctoral studies comprehensives were being phased out in favour of candidacy exams so they really are meant to be used in place of each other rather than requiring both.
- A Council member asked if the removal of comprehensives was being driven by the institution as a way of streamlining graduate programs.
 - Dean Milne reiterated that the inclusion or decision to remove comprehensives is entirely with the program. Only the candidacy exam is an institutional requirement. As Associate Dean Tapp noted in her remarks, completion time was one of the factors impacting their decision; however, each program should reflect on the specific requirements they have and determine what makes the most sense based on discipline specific factors. It is important that the UofA's graduate program requirements are commensurate with the expectations of the discipline.

Approved by electronic vote.

8.0 Proposal: Academic Standing and Academic Probation Changes

Dean Milne introduced the item and very briefly outlined the key considerations for this proposal. The proposed changes help provide clarity and transparency in how to deal with students who fail courses, how to provide a clear plan of remediation, and how to calculate student GPAs going forward. Important changes to the proposed policy include:

- how CGPAs are calculated (failures stay on record but are not included once they are replaced/remediated);
- which courses must be retaken vs. those that can be substituted for an equivalency;
- how many attempts a student may make to remediate a failure; and,
- setting an upper limit on maximum number of allowable failed credits

It also provides clarity for convocation; students must deal with failures before convocation even if they meet the minimum 2.7 GPA. All of the changes are intended to make it easier to manage/monitor, and be more inclusive of student support/success, through earlier intervention and remediation.

The proposal also makes it more explicit that the unit can always submit an exceptional request to consider allowing the student to remain in the program with a clear plan to move forward to regain satisfactory academic standing. Units can provide an opportunity to address issues.

This is an important regulation change that has immediate impacts on students in program now.

Motion: Be it resolved THAT FGSR Council approve the changes to the Academic Standing, Academic Probation, and related portions of the Calendar for Graduate Regulations, for implementation upon approval and inclusion in the 2023-24 calendar.

Moved / Seconded: Jared Wesley/Ben Willing

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council member asked if students who are currently in the program benefit from this proposal.
 - Yes, as soon as it is approved, it can be applied to current students. There are immediate implications to students currently in the program.
- A Council member said he was supportive of providing students with a second chance. He noted that an amendment to clarify the proposal would make it explicit. He suggested “a failed course that is required and/or is core must be replaced with the same course”
- Academic Probation is used in the Council Member’s program quite often when students have failed courses or done poorly on practica. The Academic probation sends a strong signal to the student about program expectations and requirements since failure to meet these could put the public at risk. There is no other recourse at present for these course based students.
 - There is a form that could be modified and used for course based programs and academic probation. The main impact is a different label to monitor progress and attain minimum requirements.
 - Dean Milne clarified that FGSR will run failed grade reports each term in order to see the status and address the issues in a more timely manner. Now the process is done bi-annually and oftentimes it’s well past the term in which the student actually failed the course before their standing is flagged as unsatisfactory.
 - Associate Dean Andrea McLeod has been working with other course based programs to determine what a course based version of a progress report would look like in order to provide monitoring, and support to students and programs.
- A Council member had some suggestions related to wording and ordering of sections within the proposed language.
- The current wording suggests a rewording to say “passing grade of C+ for the *course*” rather than a C+ average for all courses would be clearer.
- A Council member asked if programs can have their own credit hours that students can fail without being required to withdraw. If the program currently has requirements then they will override the 6 credits. If it does not already exist in the program regulations, it will need to be added and it is at the program’s discretion to develop and have approved such a regulation that sits above the institutional minimum.
- Dean Milne summarized several editorial changes that were raised and committed to making the adjustments for the next approval stage.

Approved by electronic vote.

Approve: 56 / Oppose: 5 / Abstain: 2

9.0 **Update: FGSR's Grad Restructuring**

Vice-Provost and Dean Milne provided an update for information on the progress to date on graduate restructuring, and in particular the work that FGSR has been doing. She clarified that this item, as noted in the agenda, is not a voting item, it is for information.

Institutional Context:

There have been three parallel workstreams: (1) Academic restructuring which is happening under the Provost, (2) SET which is looking at services such as HR and IT and includes Student Services. The four central units serving students including RO, DOS, UAI, and FGSR participated in several meetings on the Student Service stream. (The [Student Service Catalog](#) outlining placement of services is available, as well as [the Operating model for the central student services](#) which was published on December 2nd but was shared with FGSR Council and GPAC on November 28th.) (3) The final stream is the design and implementation of the Colleges and in particular the Offices of Education, which will serve both undergrad and graduate populations in each respective college.

Early in Dean Milne's tenure, FGSR carried out a Value Alignment Planning process to help establish a strategic plan. There were consultations with key stakeholders in January 2020. FGSR has also reviewed the Uniforum data and grad specific codes in order to review and propose alternative models of delivery that maximize efficiencies, and have standardization when and where it makes sense. Key to this is also moving away from paper based workflows to electronic workflows through EDRMS.

She outlined the timeline of FGSR meetings, advisory groups and committees, or institutional meetings that she/FGSR has been involved in to discuss graduate administration over the last two years.

Stakeholders consulted include:

- Working group in Provost's Office
- PAC-D, VPC
- ALWG (subgroup on grad)
- GEFAC, GPAC
- FGSR Council
- GSA Executive
- VAP consultation cafes
 - Associate Vice-Presidents
 - Deans
 - Grad coordinators/Associate chairs
 - Graduate student supervisors
 - Grad Administrative staff
 - Graduate students

FGSR convened the Associate Deans Grad to participate in an informal survey in consultation with their programs. The survey goal was to map which offices carried out which tasks. The next iteration of this

was the application of a RACI matrix to 130 tasks within grad administration. A small focus group of ADs Grad provided feedback and asked questions that were helpful for clarifying details.

RACI Matrix:

R = Responsible - *Who is/will be doing the task? Who is assigned to work on this task?*

A = Accountable - *Who is accountable if something goes wrong? Who has the authority to take decision?*

C = Consulted - *Anyone who can tell me more about this task? Any stakeholders already identified?*

I = Informed - *Anyone whose work depends on the task? Who has to be kept updated about the progress?*

The RACI matrix allows for mutually exclusive assignment of roles and accountabilities to groups. This helps with clarity and efficiency in tasks that have multiple touchpoints and stakeholders. This also provides clarity for the consolidation of certain tasks, and a rebalancing/redistribution of work between central units and program support units.

Vice-Provost and Dean Milne made a proposal to add 15 minutes to the end of the meeting.

Moved / Seconded: Ruth Wolfe/Gregory Funk

Approved by consent.

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council member noted that he was unclear what role the College Office of Education will be playing in the restructuring. This unknown coupled with the loss of local grad admins is making things very challenging for grad chairs.
 - Dean Milne noted that the College Deans, College General Managers, and council of deans are leading discussions of how those offices will be populated. FGSR is facilitating and participating in those conversations so that there is consistency amongst colleges and services that are distributed within them in support of graduate program administration.
- A Council member noted that the RACI had academic leaders in a key role; however, the Provost has released the academic realignment plan. How does that impact FGSR and FGSR Council, and the plans for the RACI? Is it up to the Colleges and Faculties to figure out what to do?
 - Dean Milne clarified that the decisions around academic leaders rests with the Provost, and the Faculty and College Deans. Those are outside of FGSR's scope. She reiterated that throughout the restructuring process, she has advocated for the importance of specific, local/disciplinary knowledge and expertise and its location to remain at the program level or as close to it as possible.
 - The RACI outlines those tasks that can be done centrally as well as those that can be done at the unit/faculty/college level. This includes looking at other institutions as well as what the UofA's own FGSR structure used to be prior to 2013. By consolidating the currently divided tasks centrally, the discipline specific tasks and roles will also be clarified so that they can be delivered locally.
- A Council member asked if forms will be streamlined to support the restructuring changes.

- Yes, the electronic workflows will be CCID enabled so there will be a more seamless process and no need for “wet signatures.” Further to this, the consolidation of tasks will also reduce the practice of creating parallel yet entirely different ways to complete the same tasks.
- A Council member asked when the RACI will be circulated to all Council members rather than just limited to a small subset of members.
 - The focus group was pulled together on short notice and the FGSR’s ADs were asked to provide discipline specific perspectives; we tried to have wide representation.
 - The tasks in the RACI will be familiar as they have come up in other working groups including the Academic Leaders working group that worked through things last summer as well as the task-survey that GEFAC was asked to complete.
- A Council member said she wasn’t sure what the RACI means in terms of next steps and outcomes.
 - Vice-Provost and Dean Milne stated that the review of the tasks has helped to establish clear distinctions as well as the points of connection between FGSR and programs. This has helped to create task families, which will be helpful in establishing the roles at FGSR, the programs, the Faculties, and/or the Offices of Education within the Colleges. We hope to support and facilitate a unified and coherent distribution of work and establishment of roles.
 - This is the initial conversation and there will be more conversations in the future as we get further into this process.

10.0 Early Discussion: Exams Policy Work

Item 10.0 was tabled for next time due to the time.

11.0 Question Period

None

12.0 Adjournment

Vice-Provost and Dean Milne thanked Council members for their attendance and participation. The meeting ended at 4:18 PM.