

**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 17, 2006, 2:00 pm**

Attendance

MRT Dale in the Chair	M Shirvani
M Haughey	J Varsava
T Krukoff	H Hogg, Secretary

Department Representatives

E Bork, Ag Food & Nutri Sciences	L Given, Library & Info Studies
O Beattie, Anthropology	S Rice, Linguistics
S Caufield, Art & Design	YS Wong, Math & Stat Sciences
H McDermid, Biological Sciences	Z Xia, Mechanical Engineering
J Kao, Business (PhD)	M Glerum, Medical Genetics
A Nelson, Chem & Mat Eng	G Lopaschuk, Medical Sciences
J Takats, Chemistry	P Lacy, Medicine
A Braz, Comparative Literature	R Thornberry, Modern Lang & Cultural Stds
N Amaral, Computing Science	L Ratzlaff, Music
L Kline, Dentistry	J Mill, Nursing
L Livingstone, Drama	R Burch, Philosophy
R Everall, Educational Psychology	P Gervais, Physical Education & Recreation
J McClay, Elementary Education	R Marchand, Physics
H Zwicker, English & Film Studies	P Dixon, Psychology
S Varnhagen, Extension	P Hagler, Rehabilitation Medicine
M Cavanagh, Faculté Saint-Jean	F Landy, Religious Studies
H Madill, Health Promotion Studies	P Blenis, Renewable Resources
S O'Byrne, Law	V Adamowicz, Rural Economy

Graduate Student Representatives

T Brisbois, Ag, Food & Nutr Sci	C Delling, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
D Preece, Political Science	L Harris, Neuroscience
A Siemens, Renewable Resources	H Kaminsky, Chemical & Mat Eng
C Schreyer, Anthropology	B Jensen, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences

Ex officio

K Adams, Libraries	A Greenshaw, Office of VP Research
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1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- a. Approval of the minutes of November 10, 2005.

The minutes were approved.

- b. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Doctoral Candidacy Examination Timeline

M Haughey presented results of an e-mail survey that was sent to departments regarding the time it takes doctoral students to complete their candidacy examination. She said there was no direct correlation between the time to candidacy and the type of program (ie. Arts versus Science, Professional versus Non-professional). Overall, 83 percent of students are completing their candidacy exam within 36 months from the start of the program. Haughey said the data provide an opportunity for departments to look at their own programs to see how they are structured.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Off-campus Activities and Risk Management

In addressing Council, Bill Connor (Vice-Provost and Dean of Students) and Jim Bohun of the Office of the Dean of Students advised that the University is currently developing an interim off-campus academic activity risk management policy after an internal audit identified disparities in the way units and faculty members deal with risk management. Connor said application of the policy likely will be decentralized, where Department Chairs and Deans will have delegated authority to establish department procedures for off-campus academic activities. The intent is to not restrict travel, but to ensure people traveling off-campus know the risks involved. The interim policy is expected in the next few months. Development of a long term policy will then follow.

5. INFORMAL BUSINESS

- a. Discussion Topic—Grading of Graduate Courses

M Shirvani provided a brief report comparing grading in 500- and 600-level courses before and after the change to the 4-point grading scale. He said there was no major shift in grading distribution with the grade scale change.

- b. Question Period

There were no questions.

- c. Announcements and Reports by the Chair and Councillors

1. Graduate Research Assistance Fund (GRAF)

The Chair advised the former GAp and GITS funding programs have been combined into the Graduate Research Assistance Fund (GRAF). These funds will be transferred directly to departments' base budgets by the Office of the Provost and future adjustments will be part of the University's normal budget process. Departments have been requested to develop general guidelines outlining how GRAF will be allocated to graduate students. Guidelines are to be submitted to the FGSR by June 1, 2006.

Responding to questions, the Chair advised:

- Graduate student rates of pay negotiated annually by the GSA and University administration would still apply once they're approved by the Board of Governors
- Just like teaching assistantship funding, future GRAF adjustments are to be discussed by the Department Chair with the Dean, who then takes the matter to the Provost

- Departments are encouraged to couple GRAF with other funding sources, such as Recruitment Scholarships, to create a competitive funding package for graduate students

2. University Teaching Program

M Haughey advised that an internal review of the University Teaching Program was just completed. Key recommendations from the review include:

- Greater publicity about the UTP program to students
- Improved communication to departments about the UTP
- Development of a series of workshops on Teaching Basics specifically for UTP participants

M Haughey advised the Quality of the Graduate Student Experience Subcommittee is currently gathering input from graduate students on how the University can improve the graduate student experience at the UofA.

3. Dean's Advisory Committee Membership

The Chair advised the following individuals have agreed to sit on the Dean's Advisory Committee:

- Helen Madill, Health Promotion Studies
- Nelson Amaral, Computing Science
- R Thornberry, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
- Frank Peters, Education Policy Studies

4. Student Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedures

Councillors were provided the web URL for the new Student Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedures, for information.

5. Administrative Review of FGSR

The Chair advised a review of the FGSR would be undertaken. Terms of the review have not been defined.

d. Other Business

J Takats inquired if more Provost Doctoral Entrance Awards would be offered in the future because the FGSR offered additional adjudications in early 2006. L Blair advised the additional awards were only offered due to a positive balance from the inaugural year of the award, and there are no plans to increase the number of PDEAs offered.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 pm.