

**Summary Minutes of a Meeting of the  
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall  
Wednesday, December 16, 2009, 2:00 pm**

Attendance

M Shirvani in the Chair  
M Allen

Department Representatives

L Dossdall, Agriculture, Food & Nut Sci	B Fleck, Mechanical Engineering
A Palmer, Anthropology	D Burshtyn, Medical Microbiology & Imm
R Kaufman, Biological Sciences	E Le, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
J White, Business MBA	H Bashaw, Music
P Melançon, Cell Biology	P Koop, Nursing
B Hayes, Chemical & Materials Eng	G Walker, Physical Education & Recreation
I Sywenky, Comp Literature Program	C Benishin, Physiology
R Greiner, Computing Science	P Blenis, Renewable Resources
C Flores-Mir, Dentistry	M Luckert, Rural Economy
CR Lindsey, Economics	C Boliek, Speech Pathology & Audiology
G Buck, Educational Psychology	
J McClay, Elementary Education	
T Zackodnik, English & Film Studies	
M Adria, Extension (MACT)	
H Madill, Health Promotion Studies	
B Skrypnek, Human Ecology	
K Lew, Lab Medicine & Pathology	
H Julien, Library & Information Studies	
S Rice, Linguistics	

Graduate Program Administrators

S Campbell, Medicine  
G Mathew, Anthropology

Graduate Student Representatives

MA Rahman, GSA VP Academic	M Azadi, Mechanical Engineering
A Laarman, Agriculture, Food & Nut Sci	A Chazimirsaid, Mechanical Engineering
R Shott, Biochemistry	A Mohamed, Pharmacy
N Romaniuk, Chemistry	C Dyck, Political Science

Observers

N Sharpe, University Director, Student Ombudsperson  
T Krukoff, Assistant Dean Research (Medicine & Dentistry)

**1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**a) Approval of the November 18, 2009 summary minutes**

The minutes were approved.

**b) Matters arising**

None.

**3. FORMAL BUSINESS**

**Proposal for the English Language Requirement**

Councillors had before them the following motion:

That the proposal to offer the Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) be approved.

MOTION It was moved by M Allen and seconded by A Mohamed that the motion be approved.

Discussion included:

- PTE Academic is proposed in order to benefit prospective international students.
- According to concordance tables, the proposed PTE Academic minimum score of 59 is equivalent to the FGSR TOEFL minimum. Departments are able to raise their internal minimums.

VOTE The motion was PUT and CARRIED, 36-3, 2 abstentions

Several councillors requested that there be a delay before announcing the PTE Academic, as they will require time to determine their departments' equivalent PTE Academic minimum scores.

Councillors requested a review of FGSR minimum English Language scores and GRE scores, as they relate student success. FGSR will gather information for a future Council meeting.

FGSR Council was then asked to consider the following motion:

That the proposal to remove the MELAB be approved.

MOTION It was moved by M Allen and seconded by H Madill that the motion be approved.

Discussion included the following points:

- There is no cost to FGSR to continue to recognize MELAB as an accepted test of English language proficiency.
- The MELAB minimum score of 85 is equivalent to a TOEFL of 100. Perhaps students are avoiding MELAB because their minimums are easier to attain.

In view of the comments, it was agreed to table the motion and to continue offering the MELAB as one of the options.

**4. INFORMAL BUSINESS**

**a) Discussion Topic**

**Shared-Credential Programs**

The Chair gave an overview of the material Council had before it, highlighting that Policy 1 outlines the overall framework of the programs.

Discussion included:

- There are potential entanglements in countries with different legal frameworks. Increasingly complex agreements add to the possibility of being negligent. Research ethics standards may vary; other countries' policies may conflict with those of U of A or tri-council.
- Programs may need to address time-use in facilities so as not to displace current researchers.
- In some sample programs students are required to apply to, and be accepted by, both participating institutions.
- Overarching goals of programs are to facilitate collaboration for students and research groups, and increase the U of A's profile.

- The program shouldn't add to students' completion times, but enhance the students' experience.
- U of A currently offers a jointly-delivered doctoral degree with Ludwig Maximilians Universitat in Munich, Germany, allowing students to take part of their program at LMU under the co-supervision of a UofA and a LMU faculty member. The LMU agreement has no requirements in place regarding how many credits must be taken at each institution.
- The Board of Governors has the ultimate authority to add another institution's name to the U of A parchment, or allow another institution to add the U of A's.

Any feedback or ideas can be sent to the Chair ([mazi.shirvani@ualberta.ca](mailto:mazi.shirvani@ualberta.ca))

**b) Question Period**

None.

**c) Announcements and Reports by the Chair and Councillors**

**1. Vanier Adjudication Process**

The Chair requested feedback from departments on the process for the 2010 Vanier CGS nomination process.

Feedback included:

- It was difficult for FGSR to change the 2010 Vanier timelines as eligibility was not released by the national committee until late August. FGSR is hopeful that the 2011 eligibility and timeline will be released earlier for next adjudication.
- Within the current system, if a department misses a deadline, there is no 'wiggle-room'. FGSR would like to develop a system that allows some flexibility and latitude.
- Inconsistent quality and quantity of preliminary application adjudicators' 2010 assessments.
- Allow departments to, or request that departments, vet or rank students.
- The institutional letters were written by the students' home departments – perhaps the U of A should speak with a consistent voice for all nominated students.
- If possible, make successful applications available to student and departments. Will help all students in completing applications, and references in writing their letters.
- The Offices of the President and the Provost have requested that there be no department nominations quotas.
- In order to be used as a recruitment scholarship, prospective applicants must be identified well in advance, or students applying for 2010 should be earmarked for the 2011 Vanier.
- The Vanier Adjudication Committee membership will grow for the 2010 Vanier process. The FGSR hopes to be able to provide four independent assessments of each preliminary application.

**d) Other Business**

The FGSR is awaiting details from Advanced Education and Technology regarding the number of master's and doctoral Queen Elizabeth II scholarships that will be available for the September 2010-April 2011 academic year. Although the number of awards is to be determined, the FGSR is proposing a process similar to the 2009 competition in which departments pre-selected and nominated students for QEII scholarships, separate from the General Awards competition. The overall numbers of QEII are expected to decrease, as international students were not included in the total number of graduate students (as in previous years), and the quota might return to 2008's 1:20 from 2009's 1:10.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.