

Attendance at FGSR Council – March 24, 2021
DEPARTMENT/UNIT FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES
Present:

Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science	Guanqun (Gavin) Chen
Art & Design	Joan Greer
Biochemistry	David Stuart
Biological Sciences	James Stafford
Biomedical Engineering	Alan H. Wilman
Business (non-departmentalized) - PhD	Trish Reay
Cell Biology	Richard Wozniak
Chemicals & Materials Engineering	Vinay Prasad
Civil & Environmental Engineering	Selma Guigard
Communication Sciences & Disorders	Esther Kim
Dentistry (Medical Sciences)	Maryam Amin
Drama	Stefano Muneroni
East Asian Studies	David Quinter
	Darryl Hunter
Educational Policy Studies	Evelyn Steinhauer
Educational Psychology	Veronica Smith
Educational Studies	Douglas Gleddie
Electrical & Computer Engineering	Yindi Jing
Elementary Education	Trudy Cardinal
English and Film Studies	Mark Simpson
Health Sciences Education	Douglas Gleddie
History & Classics (inc. Religious Studies)	Heather Coleman
Human Ecology	Rachel McQueen
Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation (non-dept)	Normand Boule
Laboratory Medicine & Pathology	Monika Keelan
Law (non-departmentalized)	Linda Reif
Library & Information Studies	Dinesh Rathi
Linguistics	Johanne Paradis
Mathematical & Statistical Science	Jochen Kuttler
Mechanical Engineering	Christopher Dennison
	Peter Kannu
Medical Genetics (Medical Sciences)	Rachel Wevrick
Medicine	Nadia Jahroudi
Modern Languages & Cultural Studies	Irene Sywenky
Music	Maryam Moshaver
Native Studies (non-departmentalized)	Sean Robertson
Obstetrics & Gynecology (Medical Sciences)	Denise Hemmings
Occupational Therapy	Mary Forhan
Pediatrics (Medical Sciences)	Sujata Persad
Pharmacology	Frances Plane
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences (non-dept)	Arno Siraki
Philosophy	Ingo Brigandt

Physiology	Zamaneh Kassiri
Political Science	Siobhan Byrne
Psychiatry	Allen Chan
Psychology	Chris Westbury
Rehabilitation Medicine - Rehabilitation Sciences	Esther Kim
Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology	Henry An
School of Public Health (non-departmentalized)	Ruth Wolfe
Secondary Education	Bonnie Watt
Women's and Gender Studies	Felice Lifshitz

Regrets Sent:

Faculte Saint-Jean (non-departmentalized)
 Internetworking (MINT)
 Oncology
 Physics
 Radiology & Diagnostic Imaging (Medical Sciences)

Absent:

Anthropology
 Business (non-departmentalized) - MBA
 Chemistry
 Computing Science
 Computing Science - Multimedia Program
 Digital Humanities
 Earth & Atmospheric Sciences
 Economics
 Medical Microbiology & Immunology
 Medical Sciences Graduate Program - FoMD
 Neuroscience
 Nursing (non-departmentalized)
 Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences (Medical Sciences)
 Physical Therapy
 Political Science
 Renewable Resources
 Sociology
 Surgery

Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
 Wednesday, March 24, 2021
 2:00 to 4:00 pm
 Virtual Meeting

ASSOCIATE DEANS (GRADUATE) REPRESENTATIVES FOR DEPARTMENTALIZED FACULTIES

Present:

Arts	Kim Noels
Education	Doug Gleddie
Medicine & Dentistry	Greg Funk
Science	Mark McDermott

Regrets Sent:

Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences (ALES)	Leluo Guan
Rehabilitation Medicine	Trish Manns

Absent:

Engineering	Jason Carey
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EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVES

Present:

FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost (FGSR Council Chair)	Brooke Milne
FGSR Vice-Dean	Bryan Hogeveen
FGSR Associate Dean	Victoria Ruétalo
FGSR Associate Dean	Janice Causgrove Dunn
FGSR Associate Dean	Tracy Raivio
FGSR Associate Dean	Ali Shiri
Vice-President (Research) (or Delegate)	Laura Beard
Vice-Provost and University Registrar (or Delegate)	Carlo Dimailig

Regrets Sent:

President (or Delegate)	President Flanagan
Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian (or Delegate)	Dale Askey

Absent:

Chair, FGSR Academic Appeals Committee*	Moin Yahya
Director, Centre for Teaching & Learning*	Janice Miller-Young

GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS COMMITTEE (GPAC) REPRESENTATIVES

Present:

Department of Dentistry	Dalyce Barss
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Absent:

Department of Neuroscience	Amber LaPointe
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GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA) DIRECTLY ELECTED OFFICIALS & GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA) COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Present:

GSA President	Marc Waddingham
VP Academic	Sachiketha Reddy
Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science (ALTERNATE)	Klevis Haxhij
Civil & Environmental Engineering - PhD	Salam Khalife
Economics, PhD	Christian Kwarkye
English & Film Studies	Shashi Kumar
Library & Information Studies	Lindsey Chochula
Mechanical Engineering PhD	Armin Norouzi Yengeje
Music	Kathy Haddadkar
Neuroscience, PhD	Nicole Dittmann
Pediatrics	Shubham Soni
Pediatrics	Claudia Holody
Pharmacology, PhD	Nayyar Shahid
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences	Amanda Greenwell
Surgery	Kasra Shayeganpour
Surgery	Mukt Patel

Regrets Sent:

Nursing	Sania Amiri-Ishani
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Absent:

VP Labour	Umesh Nimmathi
VP External	Anas Fassih
VP Student Services	Sridhar Parasharamatham
Biomedical Engineering, PhD	Kevin Solar
Electrical and Computing Engineering	Puruhithika Kunde
Mechanical Engineering	Sai Swaroop Reddy Pogalla
Pharmacy	Yasser Tabana
Political Science - PhD	Meagan Auer
Psychology	Tiffany Kung
(ALTERNATE) Agricultural and Resource Economics	Meghan Lim
(ALTERNATE) Biomedical Engineering	Amir Adel
(ALTERNATE) Educational Policy Studies	Alleson Mason
(ALTERNATE) Oncology	Andrew Locke

OBSERVERS – NON-VOTING

FGSR Operations Coordinator (Secretary)*	Medha Samarasinghe
FGSR Executive Coordinator*	Andrea Riewe
FGSR, EA to the Associate Deans*	Dena Giroux
FGSR Professional Development & Community Volunteer Program Director*	Deanna Davis
FGSR, Admissions and Program Services Supervisor*	Joyce Anderson
FGSR, Director, Professional Development*	Renee Polziehn

FGSR, Senior Financial Officer and IT*	Sylvia Fong-Wong
Supervisor, Graduate Awards*	Amanda Brown
Graduate Advisor, Sociology*	Patti Kim
Manager of GFC Services, University Governance*	Kate Peters
Professor, Computing Science*	J Nelson Amaral
Office of the Student Ombuds*	Veronica Taylor

*Non-Voting

FGSR Council March 24, 2021

1.0 Call to Order at 2:01 PM

Vice-Provost and Dean Brooke Milne called the meeting to order.

She welcomed members of Council, and reminded everyone of the process of using Zoom. She noted that members requiring further support with this platform can reach out to Andrea Riewe for help. Those with voting abilities received an email with links. They were asked to have this open and ready to go.

2.0 Approval of Agenda for March 24, 2021

Moved / Seconded: Greg Funk/ Bryan Hogeveen

No objections were raised. Dean Milne noted that the presenter for Item 6 will be Associate Dean - PhD, Trish Reay instead of Associate Dean, International, Edy Wong.

Approved by consent.

3.0 Approval of Minutes of February 17, 2020

Moved / Seconded: Doug Gleddie/Heather Coleman

Amendments: Joan Greer and Esther Kim were in attendance; they will be added to the attendance.

Approved by electronic vote.

4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters arising from the minutes.

5.0 Report from the Dean

Dean Milne reported that the previous week the Minister of Advanced Education had sent a communication to all Alberta post-secondary institutional Presidents outlining expectations for Fall 2021 Planning. Central to this is planning is a return to in-person learning ("[Returning to in-person learning](#)"). While universities have been *encouraged* to commence preparations for a full return to in-person instruction on campuses, the ministry did acknowledge that there remain many unanswered questions around existing public health measures such as

physical distancing, mask use, etc. There was a promise to “*provide updated directions and guidelines around these matters at the earliest possible opportunity.*”

President Flannagan posted a statement via *The Quad* outlining the ministry’s recommendations and how they will affect our planning at the U of A. Key to all these discussions is the continued focus on our community’s health, safety, and well-being. Various planning committees are working on proposals to ramp up for a safe return to campus; and a recognition that not everyone may be able to fully return in September. Virtual supports and remote learning options will still be available, wherever possible. Dean Milne reminded Council that there will be more updates around Fall 2021 in the coming weeks

Dean Milne was pleased to announce that FGSR received 623 applications to the FGSR Graduate Student Covid Support fund. The Awards team has worked hard to payout as many awards as possible. So far they have processed \$639,000 worth of funds, which equates to 426 awards at \$1500 each.

As departments and Faculties continue in their conversations about changes to program organization, please notify FGSR as early as possible of possible upcoming changes to graduate programs. In addition to any governance processes that have to take place there are also changes and updates to campus solutions and GSMS, and signing authorities that will be required. The more notice we get the better prepared we will be to implement the changes in the background.

Dean Milne was pleased to remind Council that FGSR’s annual 3MT event was fast approaching. The 2021 finalists are posted on the FGSR 3MT website. Council members are encouraged to view the videos and vote in the People’s Choice Voting, which opens on March 29 at 9:00 am. The live-stream event will be held on April 1 - 1:00 - 2:00 pm. This year’s western Canadian regional regional finals will be hosted by the University of Lethbridge. Dean Milne thanked FGSR’s Charity Slobod and the communications team for another amazing job helping our students present their research in such a compelling way especially as this is the second remote competition due to COVID-19.

The next session in the Mentorship series is called “Conceptualizing Mentorship through a Decolonial and Indigenized Framework” presented by Dr. Jennifer Ward on April 12th, 2021 at 12:00PM.

- Decolonizing and Indigenizing our academic institutions can transform learning, inform practice and helps us engage in meaningful and lasting systemic change (Battiste 2013; Gaudry & Lorenz 2018). Building upon the Cree understanding of *Wahkohtowin* (relational accountability and reciprocity) we can positively impact student learning and working environments. In this session, we will build upon our own mentorship skills and learn how best to support Indigenous grad students in their academic journeys.

Questions/ Comments: None.

6.0 **Proposal: EDHEC Agreement (Business)**

Dean Milne introduced Associate Dean (PhD), Trish Reay to introduce the item.

Associate Dean Reay noted that the motion is to renew a long-standing agreement between the Alberta School of Business and the EDHEC business school located in Nice, France.

This dual-degree program is the most popular one offered by Business. The significant change is that the EDHEC students completing their program at the University are now required to complete 36 credits instead of the previous 39 credits. The students participating in this dual-degree will now complete the equivalent of 66 U of A credits in the combined program; for comparison, students in the full time MBA program complete 60 credits.

Motion: Be it resolved that FGSR Council approve the renewal of the agreement between the Alberta School of Business and the EDHEC BUSINESS SCHOOL, located in Nice, France, as set forth in the attached agreement, and to take effect upon final approval.

Moved/Seconded: Greg Funk/Bryan Hogeveen

Questions/Discussion: None.

Approved by electronic vote.

7.0 Graduate Scholarship Committee Report & Awards/Scholarships Updates

Associate Dean Tracy Raivio provided highlights of the 2019-20 Academic year in graduate Awards and Scholarships administration. She noted that the full report is in the Council package, and that she would focus on summarizing the COVID relief funds and recruitment scholarships.

She began with a thank you to the Awards team at FGSR, led by Amanda Brown, for their continued hard work and professionalism. In 2019-20, the team processed over 5000 applications or nominations across 91 different competitions. This involved processing the applications, contacting students and departments about missing information, disseminating the applications to the Graduate Scholarship Committee members, scheduling adjudication times, and fielding questions from students, staff, and faculty.

AD Raivio also expressed her gratitude to the Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) for the important role they play in putting scholarship and awards money into the hands of graduate students. In 2019-20, they brought together 59 members from various Tri-Council areas and 38 different departments across campus. Members reviewed all of the applications and nominations, attended adjudication meetings, and made hard decisions about which of the excellent student applicants would receive awards, and which applications would be nominated to move forward to the national committees. She noted that everyone involved with graduate awards and scholarships made a seamless transition to the remote work environment. Their adaptability and flexibility in this transition meant that there were no delays to any awards or scholarship processes.

In the 2019-20 year, FGSR gave out over \$20 million in scholarships and awards to more than 2,000 graduate students, who constituted about 24% of the graduate student population. The total amount distributed is a \$3 million increase over the previous year.

One of the institutional goals around equity, diversity and inclusion is to provide equitable access for students to scholarly opportunities. The GSC report tracks the distribution of awards and scholarships in this context in order to get some measures.

- 34% of those 2,000 students were international students; this compares to the 40% of our total graduate student population who are international students.

- 5.6% of the scholarship and award winners were self-declared Indigenous students; this compares to 2.5% of the student population who identify as FNMI.
- The distribution of award recipients by gender almost exactly matched the gender distribution of our campus-wide population of graduate students.
- These demographic statistics were pulled from FGSR's annual enrollment report.

The GSC report also tracks the success of applications that move forward to the Tri-Council national platform. In 2019-20 the UofA increased our success rate in all of the doctoral scholarship competitions. There were 36 Tri-Council doctoral scholarship winners in the SSHRC and NSERC areas and 6 Vaniers. These numbers represent an increase of 6%, 9%, and about 12% respectively from the previous year.

AD Raivio highlighted the work of the Graduate Scholarship Advisory Committee (GSAC), a new subcommittee established in 2019. Members worked very hard throughout the year, reviewing and providing feedback on the new terms of reference for the 35 new graduate scholarships and awards that were established in the 2019-20 academic year.

As Dean Milne had noted in her earlier comments, when FGSR leadership realized that there would not be any opportunities to travel in the current year and therefore the funds allocated to support student travel would not be used, the Faculty set out to repurpose and distribute the funds to students who were not receiving any financial support from the university, and those who had experienced delays in their programs. Through the COVID-19 relief fund, FGSR was able to support 426 students.

There have been some useful changes to the UofA recruitment and entrance scholarships that will be beneficial to departments. AD Raivio reminded the Council that there are currently two suites of scholarships that are used to support exceptional incoming students: the University of Alberta Doctoral Recruitment Scholarships and the University of Alberta Master's Entrance Scholarships. The doctoral scholarships are disbursed in \$5,000 allocations that departments receive every year to help them recruit strong doctoral students. The Master's Entrance scholarship is our most prestigious institutional scholarship for incoming master's students.

AD Raivio confirmed that, despite the delay in the announcement, the competitions will be happening in the coming year. There are some changes to the process this year that are designed to allow the funds to be used in a more flexible way by departments to support a more diverse group of strong incoming students. The proposal is to allow departments to use the \$5,000 allocations to recruit not only strong doctoral students, but also strong thesis-based master's students. The second change responds to the challenges posed by COVID-19 to students nearing the end of their program. It allows departments to use these allocations to support these students. It is clear from many conversations over the past year with colleagues across campus that students near the ends of their programs were significantly impacted by COVID-19. They do not have as much ability to pivot or make changes to adapt to the remote environment and the lack of access to research resources and facilities.

The scholarship will be renamed the "University of Alberta Entrance Scholarship." FGSR will be soliciting nominations from departments for their strongest prospective master's and doctoral students. FGSR will be making the allocations of the recruitment scholarship money which was based on full-time enrollments and completion. Instead of looking only at doctoral students this year, FGSR will also be including thesis-based master's students in that calculation. Recognizing that the announcement is coming a bit late and also that departments rely on these allocations for their planning, FGSR's goal is to minimize large changes to allocations.

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council member asked what criteria were used to evaluate the applications for the COVID-19 relief funds.
 - The main criterion was that students were not receiving any other funding. There were approximately 600 applications of which 426 were funded.
- A Council member asked whether the retooled doctoral entrance scholarship is for the first year of study.
 - AD Raivio confirmed that the funds are for the first year of study.
- A Council Member asked what the possible impacts are for international students who might not be able to get to Canada by the start of the term. What happens to their recruitment scholarships?
 - Due to COVID-19, some of these funds were applied last year to tuition and fees; however, ideally the recruitment funds go directly to students. Students must be in Canada and have a Canadian bank account for that to happen. Depending on how things unfold this fall, the team will have to evaluate how best to proceed. It is important to remember that the funds for recruitment must be used within the fiscal year so the payments can only be pushed back and applied for registration within that set period.
- A Council Member asked whether the changes to the scholarships are permanent or are just a one-time change for the current year.
 - AD Raivio confirmed that the changes related to equalizing the two programs are staying. The completion scholarship was instigated in the context of COVID-19, but FGSR will take all feedback into consideration in determining whether it can be continued.
- Can the amounts be clarified?
 - The Master's amount is \$17,500, in keeping with the TriCouncil level.
 - The Doctoral amount is \$21,000.

8.0 GSA Monthly Report

Dean Milne introduced the GSA President, Marc Waddingham, to provide updates.

Mr. Waddingham noted the report is as submitted. He said that the executive is beginning their transition out of their positions as of April 1st. They will be focussing on onboarding the new executive.

The GSA is working with other student groups in Alberta and others across Canada. They have written a letter to the Ministers of Health and the IRCC regarding clarification around quarantining measures and costs for incoming graduate students. They have heard back asking for more clarification so that the matter can be raised in their Question Period. While the measures seem reasonable, the cost can be prohibitive, and the GSA wants to ensure that any and all international graduate students who want to be here for the Summer and Fall terms are able to do so.

Questions/Comments:

- None.

9.0 Notice of Motion: Supervisory Initiatives

Dean Milne provided a brief review of the Supervisory Initiatives. She has been to various meetings for consultations in the past month including GFC subcommittees, Chairs' Council, GFC proper, and GFC executive. The FGSR continues to consider and incorporate feedback.

Since the last time the item came to this group, a fact-checker has been developed to provide additional information for stakeholders. This resource is meant to reset some of the assumptions as well as to clarify the

intended purpose of these initiatives. Another addition to the package are the letters of support submitted by graduate student leadership over the past several years, as well as those from collaborating units, such as the Office Of Human Rights and Safe Disclosure and the Ombuds Office, who see students when conflicts arise in the supervisory relationship. She thanked them for taking the time to submit their letters of support for the initiatives.

The item is coming forward to Council again as a Notice of Motion given the current state of the consultation process. The proposals have evolved over the past few months due to the feedback we continue to receive.

Dean Milne provided a brief overview of the reason for these initiatives. The need to support graduate student supervision has been a topic of discussion at the U of A for at least a decade. As a result, there have been some important initiatives to foster positive supervisory culture and enhance both the student experience and faculty success. When Dean Milne began her tenure, she took up this mandate by pursuing some key ideas. These included formalizing two existing requirements: annual progress meetings and the checklist for the initial conversation between the student and supervisor. FGSR was able to create templates for both a set of student-supervisor guidelines and a progress report that incorporated both FGSR's pan-institutional requirements and various topics that recurred in existing templates from 15 graduate programs across campus. FGSR created low-tech Google forms as a way to pilot these items. This was a way to gain feedback on the content as well as the workflow in order to then create an electronic workflow through the EDRMS system. This electronic version, built by colleagues in IST, ensures that the institutional platform is compatible with other systems across campus, such as Campus Solutions, in order to pre-populate as much information as possible in the forms. This will enhance user efficiency, leaving more time for discussions between supervisors and graduate students when they meet.

A complementary component of these tools is a proposal for (1) academic membership in FGSR for supervisors, and (2) new supervisory training. These are not new items to be considered at the U of A; as a number of historical documents within FGSR reveal, both have been considered at various times over the years. There has been intensive discussion of these topics for the past 14 or so months. Associate Dean Victoria Ruetalo and Deanna Davis have worked through the logistics of the training, including striking an advisory group consisting of representatives from across campus to provide feedback about the content of the training modules. Both of these items have gone through a number of iterations based on consultation and feedback. Currently, FGSR is working with Faculty Relations in order to make modifications. There will be an upcoming meeting with the Faculty Association in addition to ongoing consultation. The goal is to create a structure that is supportive for supervisors and embodies best practices already operating on campus.

Dean Milne acknowledged the hard work that the EDRMS team in IST have put into developing the forms and the workflows for the two tools. She played an instruction and overview video of the Student Supervisor Guidelines for Council so that members could see the workflow and completion process from the supervisor and student perspectives.

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council Member asked whether the department graduate offices will be getting completed copies of the forms.
 - Dean Milne confirmed that the completed copies will go to the student, the supervisor, and the graduate office. The Graduate Administrators (Graduate Chairs and Advisors) will have view access, as the copies will be available through the EDRMS student file.
- Will anyone at FGSR go through the completed forms to review the responses?
 - FGSR will run reports to flag any forms that report an “unsatisfactory” or “in need of improvement” rating. This will allow FGSR to reach out to the graduate administrator and

- graduate chair to determine whether anything needs to be monitored or to provide additional supports. The completion of the progress reports will provide a consistent record that will benefit both the student and the supervisor.
- A council member sought clarity on whether the progress report is to be completed once a year in the annual, formal meeting rather than to be completed in all the meetings that students and supervisors have throughout the year.
 - Dean Milne clarified that the Student Supervisor Guidelines are to be completed once, at the beginning of the working relationship, and the Progress Report is to be done as part of the annual, formal meeting between the student and the supervisor/supervisory committee. It can be completed up to once per term if necessary, if supervisors feel that student progress needs to be monitored more closely.
 - A Council member noted that the first impressions of the video seemed straightforward and painless. It is also beneficial that the workflow is electronic given the current virtual context. He asked whether the progress report will have a similar interface and will be able to accommodate the reporting of discipline-specific milestones.
 - Dean Milne confirmed that the progress report will have an interface that is very similar to the guidelines. FGSR and IST have worked hard to provide flexibility in the fields in order to accommodate discipline specific requirements. As students confirm their supervisory committees, there will also be opportunities for committee members to provide feedback on the forms and indicate that they have participated in those annual meetings as well.
 - Will the student initiate the process or will there be options for others to initiate the process? Will each individual be able to input their own CCID?
 - FGSR's HR & Operations Coordinator, Medha Samarasinghe confirmed that the graduate administrator would be the one to initiate the workflow of the forms by entering in the student and supervisor IDs. These IDs are connected to Campus Solutions; hence the system will automatically input other relevant details into the forms. Supervisor and Students would then be able to interact with the forms through the emails that they receive in their CCID-enabled inboxes.
 - A Council member noted that there seemed to be an opportunity for the student to check and verify that they agree with the content in the completed guidelines. What might happen if there is a lack of agreement and the workflow is unable to move past this particular conformation point?
 - Dean Milne acknowledged the possibility that there could be a lack of consensus. The next steps would depend on the question or topic that is contested. Some disagreements might require negotiation or clarification, while other items may be non-negotiable. Dean Milne added that this would be an instance where FGSR and departments would collaborate to come to an agreeable solution. The goal is that the process itself will circumvent misunderstandings or misalignments in expectations so that there isn't a stalemate. There will be many opportunities to work with the departments in order to resolve the issue at the earliest point. Dean Milne also noted that the student's confirmation of the document can be done independently so that the student has time to review and approve on their own. There won't be a sense of urgency or pressure to do it while the supervisor is in the meeting.
 - A Council member questioned what was to keep the student and supervisor from simply checking all the boxes without engaging in a meaningful conversation.
 - Dean Milne noted that the completion of the forms is meant to be done as part of a longer conversation. In her experience the boxes are not checked until there has been a meaningful discussion about each point. This provides an opportunity to review expectations in the lab, communication timelines, expectations about feedback and reasonable turnaround times. While

these topics might seem rather banal, they can contribute to later issues if there is no mutual understanding of expectations. The forms facilitate some foundational conversations that allow supervisors and students to set out the roles and obligations, and to get clarity on expectations within the relationship. This is also reassuring and empowering for the students, because they become more self-aware and informed about where to find information or whom to ask in order to get information.

- Is there an option to start the form and then take a pause or must it be completed in one sitting?
 - The form can be saved and restarted at a later time. In fact, administrators will be able to see the progress of each form that has been initiated. The system can be set to push out reminders to supervisors who may have started but have not completed the forms.
- What if there are changes to the initial terms that students and supervisors agreed to over the course of the relationship?
 - If there were changes early on, that might be a cause for concern. However, within the progress report there is an opportunity to check in on the guidelines and update any terms that may have changed.
- A Council member whose Faculty is participating in the pilot provided feedback as a supervisor of graduate students. She recently completed the form with a new student in December. An ideal time to complete the form might be at the midpoint of the first semester. Both she and the student found the process to be very useful. The conversations on the listed topics often led to addressing other things that were important. The whole process took about an hour and a half. She noted that it could be done in one sitting but would also be fine to do over two or three sessions.
- A Council member noted that in his department, students are not matched up with supervisors right at the beginning of the student's time in the program. As the graduate chair, he is currently the supervisor for all incoming students until they confirm who their supervisor will be. He hoped that there would be flexibility in timing to ensure that the guidelines could be completed once the supervisor relationship was established.
 - Dean Milne noted that the process is meant to be flexible and iterative based on user feedback. It might be worthwhile to reach out to the units that do not assign supervisors immediately to see how to support students in the early months of their program. However, it is important for students to hear about various topics including academic integrity early on. We will consider how to make some adjustments so that the project is suitable for the scenario that has been described.
- Given the changes around restructuring, it might not be feasible to have the graduate administrators initiate the work. Is there a way that the supervisors or the students can initiate the forms?
 - FGSR will take this feedback and see what options there are for addressing this issue.
- What happens if students switch from course-based to thesis-based programs?
 - The tools are to be completed only by thesis-based students, so if students switch they will be required to complete the forms after they make the change.
- Dean Milne also recalled that if departments had their own review processes set at a different time during the year, then there will be flexibility to pick a time that fits together with that. If some programs have their annual reviews established already, say in September, maintain that timing and initiate the forms to be completed before then.

Dean Milne thanked Council for their continued engagement and the thoughtful feedback.

10.0 Discussion: Number of Audited Courses

Dean Milne reminded Council that this item first came to the group last month. The goal is to provide administrative structure to the practice of graduate students auditing courses. There is currently no language in the University Calendar related to this matter. The current language is rather vague and exists only in the FGSR Graduate Program Manual. The manual states that departments are able to approve up to three audit courses for graduate students in thesis programs. Students wishing to take additional course audits must make a request to the FGSR's Dean's office for consideration and approval. Dean Milne also drew attention to the discrepancy in how fees are assessed for graduate students auditing courses. Students in thesis-based programs are not assessed fees, while students in course-based programs are assessed 50% of the course total. The data from the past five years indicate that 92% of students auditing courses are thesis-based students. This is not a proportionate practice in terms of thesis versus course-based students. It also has a financial impact on the institution. At FGSR we are noticing that there are students auditing more than three courses, which can lead to delays in time-to-completion.

The aim of this discussion is to land on some structure for the process of auditing courses, and to emulate some of the practices that have been established at other universities that enable students to audit courses while moving through the milestones within their programs and completing them in a timely manner. This proposal is trying to strike a balance allowing students to explore an area of research that might not be their immediate specialty but has relevance for their thesis, without getting bogged down by taking an entire course in order to learn what may in the end be a small component of that course.

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council Member asked if it was fair to charge thesis-based students for auditing courses when they have already paid the full-term registration fees. He could see a scenario in which assessing fees would cause thesis-based students to simply take the course for credit as a way to avoid paying fees.
 - In conversations with GEFAC it's clear that there's an equity issue if course-based students are being assessed for auditing courses while thesis-based students are not. This is an opportunity to consider the current practice of encouraging students to audit courses beyond their regular course load. In some instances, if students need to audit additional courses on top of the current credit requirements, it may raise the question of whether they have the requisite foundation in order to be able to pursue their thesis research. This is especially pertinent if they do not simply take the course for credit. The idea is to reconcile the need for additional information with the need to have mastered key content prior to beginning their thesis program.
- Dean Milne further clarified that the reason a student should be auditing a course is if the course has some information that would be critical for the student's own research. In this case, she questioned why a student would not undertake learning that component on their own as an independent researcher rather than committing to the full course. Further to this, the fact that there is currently no evaluative component to auditing also raises questions about whether the student has fully understood the information.
- A Council member observed that a student could sit in on a course for a selected time or speak to the instructor about suggested readings outside of the course, so she was unclear whether there were any efficiencies to be gained in not simply auditing the course.
 - Dean Milne suggested that one of the ways to address a possible gap in an area of study is to appoint a researcher with that background to be a member on the committee.
- In areas where there is a large array of subject expertise, it is important to ensure that students are able to take courses in other areas to get a solid understanding of methodology. This means that there is sometimes no guarantee about course availability so students audit courses in other areas. The practical reality of trying to take the courses is challenging.

- Dean Milne noted that it is a broader discussion to think about what it means to actually service a program with the required courses in order to ensure that registered students are able to meet the requirements as they are approved. The topic of taking additional courses relates to the next item for discussion on the agenda, which is the practice of declaring courses ‘extra to degree.’ This means that the courses are noted on the transcript but do not count towards the GPA. The students can take the courses when they are available and apply them to a future program going forward (e.g. take them in the master’s program, declare them as extra to degree, and then import them into a subsequent PhD program).
- A Council member wondered whether there was a happy medium that would see a cap on the number of audited courses graduate students can take. While he understood the issues of inequity and possible implications for time to completion, there is a value in being able to take courses outside of one’s program requirements.
 - In discussions thus far, groups have considered a cap at two courses. Some programs do not have the practice of using audited courses at all, so it will be useful to come to a common understanding of what a cap should be.
- Another Council member wanted to note her agreement with previous comments about the concerns for smaller departments that rely on audits to develop the specialization of graduate degrees.

11.0 Discussion: Courses Extra to Degree

Dean Milne tabled this item due to insufficient time.

12.0 Question Period**13.0 Adjournment**

Dean Milne thanked Council members for their thoughtful engagement.
The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM