

**Minutes of a meeting of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee
held on Monday, May 11, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. in Maggie Benston Centre 2212**

Present:

Wade Parkhouse, Chair

Michel Joffres

George Agnes

Derek Bingham

Barry Williamson

Natalie Gick

Fred Popowich

Ursula Arndt

Paul Budra

Josh Newman

Tom Calvert

Heesoon Bai

Sheilagh MacDonald, Secretary

Regrets:

Ed Bukszar

Graham Lyons

1. **Approval of agenda - Carried**
2. **Approval of minutes - Carried**
3. **Business arising from the minutes – none.**
4. **Chair's report**
 - 4.1. Graduate Supervision changes –Graduate Program Chairs and Graduate Program Secretaries will be informed next month.
 - 4.2. Grants:

NSERC – the success rate is in line with previous years.

MA SSHRC–the Dean noted that 4 nominations were unsuccessful; all four had a GPA below 3.67 for one period. Therefore, we should not submit applications below this level next year.

For both NSERC and SSHRC, the applications at the top end were very good; however the Dean had to write many letters of support for students because grades were lower than in previous years. The Dean's office will focus on providing more advice for producing research proposals that are of high quality.

Recruitment – the Dean's office will focus on contacting students with a GPA of 3.8 or higher and ask them to consider graduate school. Emphasis will be placed on Tri-Council funding – NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR.

Vanier – SFU students did very well, placing fourth in Canada with stiff competition from larger universities across the country. The quality of the applications was much higher than in previous years. 6 out of 8 students were successful.
 - 4.3. Admissions – the office is currently ahead of the curve in processing applications.

5. For Discussion:

- 5.1. Enrolment Management – the Dean indicated that in light of government funding it is to the advantage of faculties and departments to gather information related to enrollment. The Dean will focus on the matter in a meeting with SGSC. The Dean's office will hold workshops with all Graduate Program Chairs determine funding sources in order to better manage enrolment.
- 5.2. Graduate Supervision –the Dean recognizes the need to address some problem areas. To clarify mutual expectation, suggestions were made to:
- have orientations for new admits
 - assign mentors following admission until a senior supervisor is assigned
 - provide information on individual programs
 - provide copies of the graduate student handbook from the Graduate Student Society;
 - create an annual plan for every student
 - workshops for graduate supervisors
 - provide departments with a best practices guideline for intellectual property
 - provide a template for a progress report
 - provide a set of procedures for identifying problems and to help clearly define the criteria for satisfactory and unsatisfactory reports
 - provide ways of ensuring feedback on the reports to student and senior supervisor
 - Required to withdraw- Develop a set of recommendation for problems that are identified in an annual report.
- 5.3. On-Leave Status –SGSC will discuss this matter in future. Recommendation: provide more information to the departments; ensure students are aware of the penalties for going on leave. Revamp the form to have a better sense of why students are using this option. Limit the total numbers. Ensure students are aware that withdrawing and re-applying for admission is to their advantage in some circumstances.
- 5.4. Convocation Medals – with the change of faculties, there is a need to find a more equitable way of distribution.
- 5.5. Pearson Test for English – Recommendation to accept the test. Part of the examination includes an audio clip that provides a sense of English skills.
- 5.6. European degrees – Rationale: to align procedures with major universities in Canada. Recommendation: DGS to revise calendar to outline a list of countries with acceptable degrees. Departments will make the final decision.
- 5.7. Announcement of new curriculum management software program September,2009– Barry Williamson, Director of Graduate Admissions, Records and Registration announced that a new software program will track new programs and courses from application through Senate.

6. Next scheduled meeting is July13, 2009. Materials deadline is June 29, 2009

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.