

**Minutes of a meeting of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee
held on Monday, March 9, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. in Maggie Benston Centre 2212**

Present:

Wade Parkhouse, Chair

Andrew Calvert

Barry Williamson

Steve Robinovitch

Natalie Gick

George Blazenko

Fred Popowich

Ursula Arndt

Paul Budra

Eli Gibson

Heesoon Bai

Graham Lyons

Michel Joffres

Raj Sanghera

Sheilagh MacDonald, Secretary

Regrets:

Lannie Kanevsky

George Agnes

Clea Moray

Ed Bukszar

Martin Hahn

1. Approval of agenda

The agenda was amended to include Awards Adjudication under “Other Business”. **Motion carried**

2.

Approval of minutes

Meeting minutes of February 9, 2009 were approved with one correction. **Motion carried**

3.

Business arising from the minutes:

- 3.1. Composition of the SGSC –(5.1 February 2009 agenda) sent to Senate for approval. The new format eliminates the secondary faculty representatives and brings the committee in line with SCUS. The effective date is 1 April 2009. The composition will include representation from the new faculties- Communication, Art and Technology and Environment, in line with the restructuring of units on campus. The Dean will re-visit the composition in one year.
- 3.2. GGR changes (5.2 to 5.6 February 2009 agenda) – calendar changes will be drafted in order to meet calendar deadlines.

4. Chair’s report

- 4.1. Enrollment Management – the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies will focus on managing graduate enrollment. If the targets are not met there is a consequence in

terms of government funding accountability. A small working group will be formed to address this matter.

- 4.2. Annual report-will be posted to the website and sent out to SGSC members once it's approved by Senate. The report highlights the increase in the total graduate student population and the increase in thesis-based programs. Of interest is the fact that more students are winning external awards and the awards are for higher amounts than in the past.
- 4.3. Recruiting cycle – in order to compete with other universities, the Dean is considering moving the major entrance award competition ahead to February.

5. For Discussion:

- 5.1. Entrance Awards – the current deadline of March 15th is too late and students have often accepted offers elsewhere. Proposed change: move the nomination deadline to February 15th and shorten the adjudication process. SPCSAB has targetted 75% of the awards to PhDs and 25% to MAs.
- 5.2. International Students – there is a change in the flow of graduate students into Canadian universities and the university must adjust to the new reality - discussion followed regarding possible acceptance of a three year BA from Europe and India; finding ways to deal with the difference in tuition costs between countries; possibly double parchments for some degrees.
- 5.3. Annual Reports – the Dean is presently focusing on how well departments are tracking the career of graduate students. The Dean wants students to get feedback that provides students with a clear sense of their progress. Proposed change: the Dean is considering asking departments for spreadsheets showing progress for all students by May of each year. Clear tracking will identify problem areas and will streamline the appeals process. Summary of the reports – satisfactory/non-satisfactory/outstanding to form part of a student record on SIMs.
- 5.4. Program-fee refund – **[GS2009.05]**
The Dean is reviewing the process. SFU refunds fees for continuing-fee students are based on the month a student completes their thesis. Only 25% qualify for any sort of refund and the majority qualify within the first month of a semester. The process is labour intensive for staff in the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and unfair to students not on continuing fees. Proposed change: to discontinue the refunds in the second and third month of the term as a cost-saving measure and to bring the university in line with other institutions in B.C.
- 5.5. Assessment Committee for New Graduate Programs (ACNGP) **[GS2009.06]**
Proposed change: to disband so as to reduce redundancies and speed the process. This will bring SGSC in line with SCUS. The Dean recommended that SGSC assess this proposed change over the next two weeks and recommend amendments. Once done, the proposal will go to SCAR. Meanwhile, the committee will continue with its duties until a decision is made by Senate.

6. For Discussion: [GS2009.07]

6.1. Faculty of Education

- a. Calendar revision: Education Technology and Learning Design (number of required courses and description).

Motion: To approve changes (M. Joffres/P. Budra) **Motion Carried**

- b. Calendar revision: Secondary Mathematics Education (change to course courses and change to program description to correct typographical error)

6.2. Faculty of Health Sciences

- a. MPH (addition of two concentrations – Environmental and Occupational Health and Social Inequities and Health)

7. Items for Information –previously approved: [GS2009.08]

7.1 Faculty of Science:

- a) Mathematics
MATH 701-3 (change to units and correction of typo in description)

7.2 Faculty of Health Sciences

- a) Minor course change: HSCI 830-3 (change to title).

Motion: to approve minor calendar changes to 6.1 (b);6.2(a);7.1 (a);7.2 (a)
(M. Joffres/E. Gibson) **Motion Carried**

8. Other Business:

Awards Adjudication Process – some concerns have been expressed about the addition of graduate students on adjudication committees. The Dean noted that for the vast majority of departments the inclusion of students was not problematic and that the focus on transparency is foremost; however to address any concerns, the Dean will ask departments who are using students for feedback.

9. Next scheduled meeting is April 14, 2009. Materials deadline is March 30, 2009

Meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.