

Minutes of a meeting of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)
held on Monday, October 1, 2012 at 2:30 p.m. in Maggie Benston Centre 2212

Present:

Wade Parkhouse, Chair

Daniella Sieukaran

Mary-Ellen Kelm

Angie Hall

Peter Liljedahl

Sylvia Gajdics

Mary Ann Pope, Director, Records

Julia Lane, GSS

Nicole White

Rob Cameron

Sheilagh MacDonald, Secretary

Arne Eigenfeldt for FCAT

John Nesbit

Regrets:

Sean Markey

Paul Budra

Peter Ruben

Colleen Collins

Craig Janes

1. Approval of agenda **Approved**
2. Approval of the minutes of September 10, 2012 **Approved**
3. Business arising from the minutes:
4. Chair's report
TSSU-job action– the mediator has booked out. Job action involves the elimination of over time.
5. For Discussion:

5.1 Minimum Attendance at a Master's defence

[dgs 12-8]

Changes are made to accommodate examiners external to SFU who cannot be physically present. If this is the case, they may use a web interface. If the examiner is from SFU they must be present. The proposed changes clarify the existing policy but allow for unique circumstances. Respect for the student and work that they have done must be made very clear. Goal: Chair of the graduate program committee, or alternate, examiner, candidate, and senior supervisor must be in attendance. No more than two members of the examining committee can come in by remote.

Associate Deans on SGSC are to take the proposal back to the units for feedback.

Revisit at the November SGSC meeting

5.2 Thesis defined as a Collection of Documents

[dgs 12-9]

The current guidelines were originally approved by Senate in the 1970s and last updated in 1997. These guidelines must be replaced in order to meet current needs. Looking at a thesis as a collection of articles is the first step towards these revisions.

The Associate Deans on SGSC are asked to take the proposal to the various units and gather feedback in a digital format – email or documents. The results are to be compiled and sent to P. Liljedahl who will update the proposal.

Revisit a future SGSC meeting

5.3 Special Arrangements Program (SAR)

[dgs 12-10]

1. Change of name to: Individual Graduate Program
2. Change to GGR 1.35 Admissions to an Individual Graduate Program:
 - i) Increase the number of courses taken on campus
 - ii) Limit to the number of directed readings taught by the same individual

P. Liljedahl, SAR Steering Committee Chair, indicated that changes were necessary to improve the program. The “special arrangements” name does not clearly indicate the nature of the program. J. Nesbit (EDUC) cautioned that the name change could lead to confusion because there is an existing Education Individual Program.

While the student retention rates have greatly improved in the last ten years, requirements regarding attendance at SFU must be formalized to improve an attrition rate that has been at 50% in the past. It has also become clear that the program guidelines need to be improved.

Changes to the residency requirements and directed readings reflect current practice.

Questions were asked if this program currently serves any purpose. The Dean responded that while the Master programs are already sufficiently interdisciplinary, the program does serve units without PhD programs. P. Liljedahl indicated that the cohort programs at other institutions are very successful. Conclusion: The program cannot be phased out but the cohort program can be expanded.

P. Liljedahl will consult with faculty members who rely on the SAR program for their students and will bring the SAR changes back to SGSC.

Tabled

5.4 Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology

[GS2012.35]

School for the Contemporary Arts (SCA)

Proposal and initial discussion for: Master in Comparative Media Arts by Cohort Special Arrangement

The Dean indicated that the most practical way to mount this program is under Special Arrangements with SGSC as the governing body. This will enable SCA to test out the program

areas and make changes over a short period of time with the intent of making it a regular program in 2-3 years.

This is the first draft reviewed by SGSC. The Dean will provide guidance to Arne Eigenfeldt in Contemporary Arts outlining required changes.

6. Other Business

Graduate Committee on Agenda and Rules (GAR) – to be established to operate as a sub-committee of SGSC. Its purpose is to vet the SGSC documents and include any that are adequately prepared on the SGSC agenda. Those that are not ready will be sent back to the units for improvement. Once the changes are approved, the documents can be re-submitted to the next SGSC meeting.

The committee has been established in response to the general deterioration in the quality of submissions to SGSC. Senate has been growing increasingly unhappy with curricular submissions and has been sending documents back to SGSC and SCUS for improvement.

The committee will be set up this fall and will be comprised of the following members: the Dean, Associate Dean/Academic, Peter Liljedahl, Director of Graduate Records and Admissions, Mary Ann Pope, and a volunteer from amongst the Associate Deans on SGSC. This position will rotate through every four months to give all Associate Deans a chance for valuable experience. The SGSC volunteer can attend meetings or simply provide feedback. The documents will be sent out electronically and will be cleaned up as a group effort.

7. Next scheduled meeting, **November 5, 2012** (*material deadline – October 22, 2012*)