

Meeting minutes of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)  
held on July 4, 2016 in the Thesis Defence Room, SFU Library

**Present:**

**Ex-Officio:**

Wade Parkhouse, Chair  
Mary-Ellen Kelm (Associate Dean)  
Peter Liljedahl (Associate Dean)  
Mary Ann Pope (Director, Records)  
Patty Gallilee (Designate for Library)  
Krista Gerlich-Fitzgerald (Curriculum)  
Melanie Trotto (Recording Secretary)

**Faculty Chairs:**

Faisal Beg (FAS)  
Juan Pablo Alperin (Designate for FCAT)  
Phil Winne (EDUC)  
Peter Ruben (SCI)

**Regrets:**

Lisa Shapiro (FASS)  
Ian McCarthy (BUS)  
Sean Markey (FENV)  
Stephen Smith (FHS)  
Abhishek Nanjundappa (GSS)  
Hannah Celinski (Graduate Student)

1. Approval of agenda **Approved**
2. Review of the SGSC minutes of June 6, 2016 **Approved**
3. Business arising from the minutes

The June SGSC items have been submitted to Senate for information. A senator has raised concern regarding the removal/de-emphasis of thesis options which may be discussed at Senate's meeting this evening.

4. Chair's Report

The Chair attended a Dean's retreat which focused on student experience. Carleton University ranked second in this area, according to Maclean's. SFU offers the same add-ons as Carleton yet ranked twelfth. Curriculum delivery was suggested as a possible reason for the discrepancy in rankings. It was noted that the discussion at the retreat focused almost exclusively on the undergraduate experience. An initiative to focus on the graduate student experience will be undertaken over the few next years. One area that will be looked at is a separate Health and Counselling site specifically for grad students to help protect their privacy from students they may be teaching.

The Chair related that the student exit survey now has four years' worth of data compiled. The survey data shows overall increases in student satisfaction however, student experience received the lowest scores. It was suggested the raw data from the Burnaby Mountain College survey and focus groups be used to identify potential areas of improvement.

5. **For Approval**

5.1 **Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**

[GS2016.22]

5.1.1 Department of Sociology and Anthropology

- a) Program change: Master of Arts in Sociology
- b) Program change: Master of Arts in Anthropology

Motion moved by J. Alperin, seconded by F. Beg

**Approved**

**5.2 Faculty of Science**

**[GS2016.20]**

5.2.1 Department of Physics

- a) New course: PHYS 890 General Relativity and Gravitation
- b) New course: PHYS 891 Cosmology

Motion moved by P. Ruben, seconded by M. Kelm

**Approved**

5.2.2 Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science

- a) New course: STAT 641 Introduction to Statistical Computing and Exploratory Data Analysis – R
- b) New course: STAT 642 Introduction to Statistical Computing and Exploratory Data Analysis – SAS

A concern was raised on the overlap between the two courses as they are not designated equivalent. It was discussed that the nature of both courses is to assist non-statistics and non-mathematics students with their specific research and it would be unlikely that students would take both as they would take the one with the statistical package they will be using. It was noted that the courses also are only two credits so it would likely be in addition to their minimum unit requirements. Students would also need approval of the senior supervisor and graduate program chair as it would be a course outside their department.

Motion moved by P. Ruben, seconded by P. Winne

**6. For Information**

**6.1 Faculty of Communication, Art and Communication**  
Publishing Program

**[GS2016.23]**

- a) Course change: (title, description): PUB 800

**Approved under delegated authority**

**7. For Discussion**

**7.1 Policies around reasons for grade changes**

**[GS2016.24]**

A number of different scenarios for grade changes were discussed. The committee raised concerns regarding the potential lack of equity and fairness in practices. It was suggested that a Best Practices guide be formulated for instructor and GPC use.

**7.2 Part-time registration in per term fee programs**

**[GS2016.25]**

The Chair has received feedback regarding the part-time registrations memo and further SGSC discussion will take place in the fall. The financial implications will need to be examined to check the viability of flexible and part-time registration.

**8. Other Business**

Copies of the new transcript were distributed and key changes highlighted.

There is an imminent postal strike so parchments that were not picked up at the convocation ceremony have already been mailed out. DGS is also temporarily accepting electronic transcripts.

On behalf of SGSC, the Chair thanks Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Dr. Mary-Ellen Kelm and Associate Dean, Faculty of Education, Dr. Phil Winne for their work with the SGSC.

9. Next SGSC meeting scheduled September 12, 2016 (*Material deadline August 25, 2016*)