

Meeting minutes of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC) held on January 9, 2017 in the Thesis Defence Room, SFU Library

Present:

Ex-Officio

Wade Parkhouse (Chair)
Peter Liljedahl (Associate Dean)
Jeff Derksen (Associate Dean)
Mary Ann Pope (Director, Records)
Nicole White (Library)
Krista Gerlich-Fitzgerald (Curriculum)
Melanie Trotto (Secretary)

Graduate Students:

Hannah Celinski
Baraa Habash (Alternate)

Faculty Chairs:

Faisal Beg (FAS)
Martin Andresen (designate for FASS)
Zoë Druick (FCAT)
Shawn Bullock (EDUC)
Dongya Yang (FENV)
Stephen Smith (HSCI)
Peter Ruben (SCI)

Guests:

Laura Reid (Ombudsperson)

Regrets:

Ian McCarthy (BUS)
Chantal Turpin (GSS Representative)

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| 1. Approval of agenda | Approved |
| 2. Review of the SGSC minutes of November 7, 2016 | Approved |
| 3. Business arising from the minutes | |
| 4. Chair's Report | |

The Chair reported on admission application numbers and, as of January 3, 2017, applications have increased nine percent from last year. This may be due to changes in departmental application deadlines.

There were 240 eligible applications from 297 applications for Tri-Council funding. Of those 240 applications, 76 were current students and 164 were incoming students. Award allocations are decided every three years by the tri-council. SFU has a total of 73 awards allocations which is competitive against other similar sized research universities in Canada. Currently SFU has 3,800 graduate students in research-based programs which is 25% less than University of Calgary, however, SFU has two more allocations.

Jeff Derksen attended the 2016 Annual CAGS Conference and reported on three themes reflected at the conference. The first theme was the variation and focus in Indigenous programming. McMaster's, University of Winnipeg, and University of Regina spoke about their programs which ranged in numbers from 14-25 Indigenous students. These programs focused on incorporating mentorship and Indigenous knowledge to assist with student success.

The second theme was re-thinking the PhD. A discussion took place on the worth of comprehensive exams in doctoral studies and ways to link a student's dissertation to their comprehensive exam. The future of doctoral studies does include students aiming for careers outside of academia and therefore the content of graduate programs including comprehensive exams should prepare for students for various skill sets.

The third theme was issues affecting graduate students. Key concerns raised by graduate students included supervisory conflict, housing and homelessness, funding and fee clarity, international student experience, mental health and wellness and comprehensive exams.

For more details on the presentations, slides from the 2016 CAGS presentations are available online:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9lkj6acau4fxcm5/AABI6FZTIqfhY55JjMu2DCC9a?dl=0>

5. For Discussion

5.1 Guest: Laura Reid, Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson expressed that her role is to assist in clarifying student issues and exploring options for solutions. She emphasized the collaboration that takes place between DGS, GSS and the Ombudsperson. On average the Ombudsperson sees 400 students a year with approximately 25% of those students being graduate students. The "Administrative Fairness Checklist for Decision Makers" was discussed as a useful tool to ensure fairness is considered when making decisions relating to student issues. It can be found on page 11 of "Fairness is Everyone's Concern" which is available in the SGSC-2017-01 repository.

5.2 Cross-listed undergraduate/graduate courses [GS2017.01]

Over the past five years, approximately 500 cross-listed undergraduate/graduate courses have been scheduled. Main concerns with cross-listed courses are whether there is there equity in grading, graduate level content, and value for students.

The Chair asked the committee to put forth suggestions for possible solutions to be incorporated into best practices. Suggestions included controlling class size and the ratio between graduate and undergraduate students per class; offering graduate courses to fourth-year undergraduate students for credit toward a graduate degree; and offering an extra hour of class time for graduate students in a cross-listed course.

5.3 New SGSC agenda format [GS2017.02]

The SGSC agenda format will be changing over the next few months in order to help facilitate focus on discussion and the items for approval at both SGSC and Senate. Faculties may need to change their procedure and memo submission for SGSC and will be apprised when established.

5.4 Appeal of an Evaluation of Unsatisfactory Performance [GS2017.03]

The appeal process currently may take up to three months from the date of the unsatisfactory performance letter. This uncertainty may have a negative impact on

students—especially international students who are on visas—consequently SGSC discussed the proposal to streamline the process. The consensus of SGSC was that the proposed changes would benefit the students and motioned to approve the Appeal of Unsatisfactory Performance form as presented. Any students who have received an unsatisfactory performance in Fall 2016 may still use the previous process.

Moved by F. Beg; seconded by P. Ruben

Approved

5.5 Faculty of Education

[GS2017.04]

- a) New course: EDUC 760 Academic and Social Behaviour Assessment in Education
- b) New course: EDUC 882 MA Extended Essays
- c) New course: EDUC 885 MEd Extended Essays
- d) New course: EDUC 886 MA Thesis
- e) New course: EDUC 984 Qualifying Examination
- f) Course change (title, description, prerequisite): EDUC 829, 841, 860
- g) Course change (units): EDUC 901, 902, 911, 912, 921, 922
- h) Program change: Master of Arts in Educational Psychology
- i) Program change: Master of Education in Educational Psychology
- j) Program change: Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction
- k) Program change: Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum Theory and Implementation
- l) Calendar change: Graduate Degrees in the Faculty of Education

The Chair raised concerns regarding items h and i. As both credentials offer the same required courses and vary only in capstone, the question raised was why are these two different credentials, as typically a credential can have varying types of capstones. A clear distinction between the MA and MEd is requested. While reducing the course work in both programs is in line with the GGRs, it was questioned how it will lead to timelier completion if this changes the expectation of the thesis/extended essays.

The Chair raised concern regarding the program change for the Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction. It was questioned why 900 level courses were included in the program when the rest of the program uses only 800 level courses. The MA Educational Theory and Practice specialization appears to be a new program and does not fit the criteria of a specialization which requires 50% of the original program to be the same. The MA specialization also requires the exact course work requested for changes to the doctoral program. While there is no requirement for course work in a doctoral program, it is suggested that the program language be revised to make it clear what requirements would remain for students who have completed the MA in the same specialization at SFU.

6. For Approval

6.1 Faculty of Health Sciences

[GS2017.05]

- a) New course: HSCI 841 Qualitative Research and Analytical Methods

b) New course: HSCI 842 Indigenous Health in Canada

HSCI 841 refers to software in the course description; it is recommended that this is removed as software may change. Minor revisions to the course outline and a request for adding additional course work specific to graduate students for HSCI 842 were agreed to.

Moved by M. Andresen; seconded by P. Ruben **Approved subject to revisions**

6.2 Faculty of Science [GS2017.06]

6.2.1 Department of Chemistry

- a) New course: CHEM 849 Special Topics in Materials Chemistry
- b) New course: CHEM 862 Molecular Spectroscopy

Moved by M. Andresen; seconded by P. Ruben **Approved**

6.2.2 Department of Earth Sciences

- a) New course: EASC 630 Groundwater Contamination and Transport
- b) New course: EASC 635 Water, Environment and Climate Change
- c) New course: EASC 800 MSc Colloquium
- d) New course: EASC 900 PhD Candidacy Examination

Moved by M. Andresen; seconded by P. Ruben **Approved**

e) Course change (units): EASC 998 **Approved under delegated authority**

- f) Program change: Master of Science in Earth Sciences
- g) Program change: Doctor of Philosophy in Earth Sciences

Moved by P. Ruben; seconded by Z. Druick **Approved**

7. For Information

7.1 Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences [GS2017.07]

Department of Political Science

Course reinstatement: POL 838 **Approved under delegated authority**

7.2 Faculty of Education [GS2016.43]

Course reinstatement: EDUC 841 **Approved under delegated authority**

8. Other Business

- 9. Next SGSC meeting scheduled for 2:30 pm February 6, 2017 (*Material deadline January 19, 2017*)