

Meeting minutes of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC) held on April 7, 2020 remotely via Zoom.

**Present:**

Jeff Derksen (Chair)  
George Agnes (Associate Dean)  
Zoe Druick (Associate Dean)  
Nicole White (Library)  
Rahil Adeli (GSS representative)  
Daria Babeshko (designate for Associate Director)  
Michelle Grahame (designate for Curriculum)  
Janelle Kropp (Secretary)

**Faculty Chair:**

Parvaneh Saeedi (FAS)  
Sean Zwagerman (FASS)  
Andrew Gemino (BUS)  
Philippe Pasquier (FCAT)  
Lucy Le Mare (EDUC)  
Dongya Yang (FENV)  
Frank Lee (designate for FHS)  
Michael Silverman (SCI)

**Guests:**

Deena Coburn (Director)

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|--|-----------------|
| 1. Approval of agenda                          | <b>Approved</b> |
| 2. Review of the SGSC minutes of March 3, 2020 | <b>Approved</b> |
| 3. Business arising from the minutes           |                 |
| 4. Chair's report                              |                 |

The Chair thanked the committee for their additional efforts over recent weeks to support graduate student needs during the global pandemic. D.Coburn, Director of Graduate Studies, was welcomed to the meeting to provide additional information and updates on the for discussion items.

5. For Approval

**5.1 Faculty of Science**

Department of Physics

5.1.1 New course: PHYS 816 Quantum Information

The committee requested clarification whether PHYS 416 and PHYS 816 were equivalent courses. If graduate students will be granted further credit for PHYS 816, the midterm and final exams should contain additional questions to ensure students who take both courses are not writing the same exams.

Moved by M.Silverman; seconded by G. Agnes **Approved subject to revisions**

6. For Discussion

**6.1** Summer 2020 requirements for programs with mandatory co-op, practicum and internship courses (no documents attached)

The committee discussed how academic units and graduate programs are assisting students in programs with mandatory work placements given the provincial mandate for social distancing. The committee was informed that some programs are able to proceed with summer placements through companies offering remote work opportunities. Alternative assignments were also discussed, along with the option for students to enroll in course work and move their internship to the fall term. Departments are encouraged to work on creative solutions to support their students during this time.

**6.2** Defence practices for Spring 2020 at SFU and other post-secondary institutions (no documents attached)

D.Coburn provided an update on the cross-Canada discussions surrounding virtual defences. One practice implemented by other institutions has been the hiring of graduate student facilitators to assist with tech support and other set up needs. Facilitators are offered an honorarium or scholarship and this option also provides financial support to graduate students.

Committee members raised concerns regarding the use and privacy of online meeting rooms such as Zoom and BlueJeans. At the time of the meeting, BlueJeans is seen as the only acceptable platform to use, but SFU IT is working on a licensing agreement with Zoom.

**6.3** GGR 1.11.3 Postponement of Publication (document attached)

A committee member inquired regarding the definition of risks and whether the types of risks should be specified. Z. Druick explained that risks had to do with immediate threat to the wellbeing of the writer or any subjects mentioned in the thesis. It was agreed to keep the policy open and assess risks on case per case basis.

7. For Information

**7.1 Faculty of Communication, Arts and Technology**

Department of Publishing

7.1.1 Course change (deletion): PUB 897 Internship Project Report

Moved by P.Pasquier; seconded by A. Gemino

**Approved**

**7.2 Faculty of Health Sciences**

7.2.1 Course change (title, description): HSCI 803

Moved by F.Lee; Seconded by R.Adeli

**Approved**

8. Other Business

The Chair brought forth the subject of compassionate leave due to COVID-19 available for students during the spring and summer terms. The committee had a discussion on the difference between an academic break and compassionate leave and whether it is worth making revisions to the academic break policy. It was noted by a committee member that the type of leave is not identified on students' transcripts or any other documentation generated by GPS and is only listed as "leave of absence". Academic break has multiple limitations as it is not available for thesis-based students and might have potential implications for international students.

Therefore, it was agreed not to create an additional category for leave of absence as it might cause more confusion and current revisions to the compassionate leave policy already cover most of the possible scenarios.

9. The date of the next SGSC meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2020 (*SGSC submission deadline is April 15, 2020 at noon*).