

Minutes of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC) Meeting held on April 12, 2022

Present:

Jeff Derksen (Chair, Dean GPS and Associate Provost)
George Agnes (Associate Dean, GPS, Students)
Roxanne Panchasi (Associate Dean, GPS, Academic)
Krista Gerlich-Fitzgerald (Associate Director, GPS)
Nicole White (Designate for Dean of Library)
Reese Muntean (GSS Executive Representative)
Hannah Buteau (Curriculum, GPS)
Ruth Anyankpele (Recording Secretary)

Guests:

Wade Parkhouse (Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic)
Michelle Grahame (Coordinator, University Curriculum and Instructional Liaison)

Faculty Chair:

Andrew Gemino (BUS)
Lucy LeMare (EDUC)
Sean Zwagerman (FASS)
Philippe Pasquier (FCAT)
Dongya Yang (FENV)
Frank Lee (FHS)

Regrets:

Parvaneh Saeedi (FAS)

Mary-Catherine Kropinski (SCI)
John C. Foerster (Graduate Student)

AGENDA

1. Approval of agenda
2. Review of the SGSC minutes of March 8, 2022
3. Business arising from the minutes
4. Chair's Report

The Chair informed the committee that GPS received funding for the BC Graduate Scholarship, which exceeds the amount received last year. The province is currently reviewing how they disperse general funds to universities, however, there is no timeline for when the review will be finished. GPS also plans to introduce a new Indigenous Graduate Entrance Award; more information will be provided as it becomes available.

The committee was informed of the upcoming convocation ceremonies. The first ceremony is scheduled to take place from May 4 – 6. This is for graduates unable to attend in person ceremonies in the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second will be SFU's regular June convocation for students who graduated in Fall 2021 and Spring 2020. SGSC members were reminded to send in nominations for student speakers, and to encourage staff members to volunteer and attend ceremonies to celebrate grandaunts achievements.

The Chair notified the committee that Wade Parkhouse, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic and Michelle Grahame, Coordinator, University Curriculum and Institutional Liaison, will be joining the meeting to present discussion items 6.1 and 6.2.

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Andrew Gemino joined the meeting

5. For Approval

5.1 Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

5.1.1. Department of Humanities
Program Change: Humanities MA

5.1.2. Department of Psychology
Program Change: Psychology MA

K. Gerlich-Fitzgerald reminded the committee to avoid submitting multiple program changes in the same term as it creates complications for the calendar and Senate office. The committee was encouraged to confirm the date of their last program change before submitting a new change to SGSC.

Moved by S. Zwagerman; seconded by A. Gemino

Approved

5.2 Faculty of Communication, Art & Technology

5.2.1 School of Communication
New Course: CMNS 849 Communication Research for Social Change
Program Change: Communication MA

A committee member requested that the frequency of offerings field in the new course proposal form be edited to once per year instead of annual.

Moved by P. Pasquier; seconded by F. Lee

Approved subject to revisions

5.3 Faculty of Environment

5.3.1 School of Environmental Science
New Course: EVSC 645 Environmental Data Analysis
New Course: EVSC 660 Ecogeomorphology
New Course: EVSC 691 Directed Readings in Environmental Science

A committee member asked if one course number can have multiple units assigned to it. K. Gerlich-Fitzgerald informed the committee that this is possible, and is referred to as a Variable Unit. The committee was advised that programs looking to reduce their course numbers can use variable units for added flexibility, this applies to courses such as directive reading but a regular course offering should not have variable units.

Moved by D. Yang; seconded by S. Zwagerman

Approved

6. For Discussion

6.1 Calendar Frequency Proposal

W. Parkhouse explained that the current system of multiple calendars per year causes misunderstanding for students, staff and advisors; as frequent changes to the calendar often affect the degree requirement on a per term basis. They proposed a three-year pilot to reduce degree requirement changes to an annual basis. All curricular changes may be submitted at

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any time; however, major program changes will only become effective in Fall. Curriculum committees (including SGSC) will be reviewing the meeting schedule for 2023 which will be published late summer.

6.2 Micro-Credentials: Definition and Process

Micro-credentials are non-credit courses targeted towards working professionals and alumni, looking to broaden their knowledge. The committee was informed that current debates around micro-credentials include: evaluation of learning outcomes, global recognition and digitalization. It was discussed that micro-credential tuition is higher than that of a research based graduate student.

The committee also discussed the relationship and distinctions between graduate certificates and micro-credentials and how they can be recognized individually.

6.3 GGR 1.5.2-S/U Grades Towards Master's Degree Requirements

GPS informed the committee that currently no other universities use a separate grade designation to specify compassionate grading. R. Muntean informed the committee that students are in support of S/U as it provides flexibility and gives credit for interdisciplinary work done with reduced risk.

GPS requested feedback from the committee on setting limits on the use of S/U to prevent academic units from grading an entire program as S/U, as it could make students ineligible for some awards. S. Zwagerman informed the committee that 13 faculty members from FASS were against the use of S/U. Most of their concerns were around the knock-on effects on student's ability to compete for Tri-agency funding.

A. Gemino shared that this S/U discussion will be discussed by Beedie faculty at their upcoming meeting, however, they felt as though a 50% limit might be too high for programs running more courses. K. Gerlich – Fitzgerald clarified that 50% means different things for the various academic units based on the number of courses in the program.

The committee agreed to bring this item for discussion at a future meeting. The plan is for GPS to develop two different policies on the use of S/U and the committee will deliberate on them. GPS will also get feedback from faculties that do not currently use S/U.

7. For Information

8. The date of the next SGSC meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2022.