

Meeting minutes of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC) held on March 8, 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)  
John C. Foerster (Graduate Student)  
Hannah Buteau (Curriculum, GPS)  
Ruth Anyankpele (Recording Secretary)

**Faculty Chair:**

Andrew Gemino (BUS)  
Lucy LeMare (EDUC)  
Parvaneh Saeedi (FAS)  
Sean Zwagerman (FASS)  
Philippe Pasquier (FCAT)  
Dongya Yang (FENV)  
Frank Lee (FHS)  
Mary-Catherine Kropinski (SCI)

1. Approval of agenda
2. Review of the SGSC minutes of January 11, 2022
3. Business arising from the minutes
4. Chair's Report

The Chair informed the committee that GPS has been working with International Students Services (ISS) office and SFU International to support students impacted by the political situation in Ukraine and Russia. For students currently enrolled at SFU, some of these issues include trouble accessing funds from their home country. GPS is also working closely with ISS, SFU International and the academic units to facilitate admission applications from all threatened students or scholars globally. The committee was advised to look out for policy change announcements from the Canadian government with regards to Ukrainian students.

5. For Approval

**5.1 Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences**

5.1.1 Department of Gerontology

Course Change (unit): GERO 899 MA Thesis  
Program Change: Gerontology MA

Moved by S. Zwagerman; seconded by N. White

**Approved**

5.1.2 Department of Political Science & School of Criminology

Notice of Intent: Dual Master of Arts in Applied Security & International Policy

A committee member requested clarification on the proposed tuition model which includes a tuition differential between domestic and international students. SFU's

current tuition model has a fee differential for professional programs but not research programs. The committee was informed that the program will be restructured as a professional program. The Chair reminded the committee that a deeper conversation on tuition amount will be had at the SCUP level, whereas SGSC is more concerned with the tuition model.

Committee members raised questions around the one-month gap between term one and two and the effect it would have on co-op opportunities for students.

Clarification as requested on if there would be an individual SFU supervisor per student. S. Zwagerman informed the committee that this will be clarified in the Full Program Proposal.

*Lucy LeMare joined the meeting*

Moved by S. Zwagerman; seconded by F. Lee

**Approved**

- 5.1.3 Department of Psychology  
Program Change: Psychology PhD  
Program Change: Psychology MA

GPS had reached out to the program to discuss concerns around endorsing a "track" that contains one course. A committee member raised concerns around how this will look on a student's transcript to potential employers, especially if the student will not continue in the PhD program, where the tracks are more developed.

The committee decided to table this item to a future meeting. S. Zwagerman and GPS will work with the department to make the desired program changes and address the committee's concerns.

*Parvaneh Saeedi joined the meeting*

Moved by S. Zwagerman; seconded by F. Lee

**Tabled**

- 5.1.4 School of Public Policy  
Program Change: Public Policy MA

Moved by S. Zwagerman; seconded by G. Agnes

**Approved**

- 5.1.5 Urban Studies Program  
New Course: URB 663 Diversity and Equity in Cities

Moved by S. Zwagerman; seconded by P. Pasquier

**Approved**

## **5.2 Faculty of Environment**

### **5.2.1 School of Resource & Environmental Management Program Change: Master of Resource Management (Planning)**

Moved by D. Yang; seconded by A. Gemino

**Approved**

## **5.3 Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies**

### **5.3.1 Capstone Unit Standardization**

GPS reached out to all the programs affected to get their feedback and approval on the standardization of capstone units. The committee discussed concerns around academic units' ability to lower program requirements after the units are adjusted.

K. Gerlich Fitzgerald clarified that all changes will be made by GPS in goSFU. GPS will work with academic units to revise the list of courses and ensure all the courses impacted are included in the final list and appropriately updated if approved.

Moved by K. Gerlich-Fitzgerald; seconded by N. White

**Approved**

## **6. For Discussion**

### **6.1 GGR 1.5.2 – S/U grades towards Master's Requirement**

The committee was concerned about academic units deciding to grade an entire program as S/U and the negative effect on student's scholarship and award applications. A committee member recommended putting a 50% limit on the number of S/U courses that count towards program requirements. The committee also discussed the possibility of designating a grade notation for when students request S/U on compassionate grounds. GPS will look into other post-secondary trends on compassionate grading.

J. Foerster provided some insight from a student and teaching assistant perspective, stating that students are interested in S/U as it allows them take electives from other programs without it negatively impacting their CGPA.

The committee discussed the effects of S/U on transcripts and how it is viewed externally. SGSC agreed to bring this item back for discussion at the next meeting.

### **6.2 Canadian Association of Graduate Students (CAGS) Competition**

The committee was informed that it has become difficult to encourage students and faculty members to enter the CAGS competition due to its low incentives. A committee member felt as though the current incentives do not match the workload, which can be demotivating. The committee discussed the possibility of adding an internal award to encourage students and faculty members to apply.

Another committee member pointed out that the criteria for CAGS is inconsistent with SFU's internal selection process. GPS will look into standardizing its requirements and adjudication process to match CAGS. This includes defining what is considered to be an exceptional thesis.

### 6.3 Graduate Admissions Application System

K. Gerlich-Fitzgerald informed the committee that in October 2022, GPS will launch the new system, “goGRAD”. Currently, GPS and IT services are working on a fix to stabilize OASIS pending the release of goGRAD in Fall 2022. OASIS was initially designed to handle 4,000 applications per year and we are now receiving up to 11,000 applications per term.

GPS will provide an in-depth explanation of the new system at a townhall meeting to be held in April. The committee was asked to forward all questions and feedback to the GPS team in time for the townhall.

#### 7. For Information

##### 7.1 Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology

###### 7.1.1 School for the Contemporary Arts

Course Change (Title): CA 877, 883, 885, 887, 888, 889

**Approved under  
delegated authority**

##### 7.2 Faculty of Science

###### 7.2.1 Department of Biological Sciences

Course Change (grading): BISC 800, 831, 832, 833

###### 7.2.2 Department of Statistics and Actuarial Sciences

Course Change (prerequisite): STAT 641, 642, 645, 652, 675, 685

**Approved under  
delegated authority**

#### 8. The date of the next SGSC meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2022