

**Summary Minutes of a Meeting of the  
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall  
Friday, September 14, 2007, 2:00 pm**

Attendance

MRT Dale in the Chair	M Shirvani
M Allen	J Varsava
L McGann	

Department Representatives

D Bressler, Ag, Food & Nutri Sciences	T Nadasdi, Linguistics
G Forth, Anthropology	P Minev, Math & Statistical Sciences
J Greer, Art & Design	L Guilbert, Med Micro & Immunology
B Lemire, Biochemistry	G Tyrrell, Medical Sciences
H McDermid, Biological Sciences	R Thornbery, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
T Hobman, Cell Biology	H Bashaw, Music
B Hayes, Chem & Materials Eng	K Moore, Nursing
C Lucy, Chemistry	B Dussault, Nursing
M Loewen, Civil & Environ Engineering	J Profetto-McGrath, Nursing
I Sywenky, Comp Literature	S Dunn, Pharmacology
N Amaral, Computing Science	M Suresh, Pharmacy & Pharm Sciences
A Commons, East Asian Studies	S Petersen, Physical Educ & Recreation
S Wilson, Economics	S Morsink, Physics
F Peters, Educational Policy Studies	C Benishin, Physiology
C Rinaldi, Educational Psychology	L Harder, Political Science
J McMullin, Electric & Comp Engineering	A Joyce, Psychiatry
J McClay, Elementary Education	N Galambos, Psychology
C Devereaux, English & Film Studies	P Hagler, Rehabilitation Science
M Adria, Extension	P Blenis, Renewable Resources
H Madill, Health Promotion Studies	S Barker, Secondary Education
J Acker, Lab Medicine & Pathology	W Johnston, Sociology
W Renke, Law	

Graduate Student Representatives

J Charchun, GSA President	B Jensen, Earth & Atmos Sciences
T Freeman, GSA VP Academic	K Cameron, Educational Psychology
C Prado, Ag, Food & Nutri Sciences	A Medvedev, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies
L Lunde, Anthropology	D Reid, Music
R Shott, Biochemistry	M Lamey, Physics
D MacRitchie, Biological Sciences	C Shaoul, Psychology

Ex Officio

K Adams, Director of Libraries

Observer

C Hackett, Grad Student Ombudsperson  
M Wilson, University Teaching Services

**1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

a. Approval of the minutes of May 11, 2007

The minutes were approved.

b. Matters arising

None.

**3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Report of the Recruitment Scholarship Committee**

J Varsava presented the Recruitment Scholarship Committee's 2007 report. He advised the committee would be meeting to discuss:

- compressing the December through May adjudication period; often offers in May are too late
- creating an early superior applicant adjudication
- increasing the values of the scholarship despite no new committed funds because \$20,000 plus tuition may be too low to be considered 'elite'
- considering a greater commitment from departments in subsequent years to maintain the level of funding in latter years of the scholarships

Responding to a councillor's query, J Varsava advised 8-10 nominations were submitted for the December 2006 outstanding applicant adjudication; three scholarships were awarded and the remaining nomination were moved to subsequent adjudications.

A councillor spoke against the elimination of the May adjudication because strong candidates are still received at that time. J Varsava and the Chair said the Recruitment Scholarship Committee will work to balance these concerns with the impetus to make earlier, competitive offers.

J Varsava said the FGSR is also examining GPAs, research dissemination and research productivity of previous applications to provide the Recruitment Scholarship Committee and departments with parameters on what makes a superior application for the early adjudication.

**4. INFORMAL BUSINESS**

a. Question Period

A GSA representative inquired about the report of the Graduate Student Funding Task Force and asked when the recommendations would be made public.

The Chair said the final report of the task force is not yet complete, so the outcome is still undetermined.

A GSA representative inquired if the FGSR is considering standardizing the timing of candidacy examinations so that they occur within the first three years of a doctoral program.

The Chair advised the FGSR brought a motion to council but it was unsuccessful. He said the GSA could bring the issue back to council through a notice of motion.

A councillor inquired if all CGS holders could be considered for the Walter H Johns Graduate Fellowship. The Chair advised the current budget only permits top ups for those with a CGS of less than \$30,000. He advised the issue of top-ups is being explored by various committees, including the Recruitment Scholarship Committee and the Graduate Student Funding Task Force.

b. Announcements and Reports by the Chair and Councillors

1. Graduate Recruitment Strategies and Activities

The Chair reminded departments about the university-wide emphasis on graduate student recruitment and increasing graduate student enrolment, noting the number of admissions is predicted to increase to 6,300 for Fall 2007, up from 6,000 in Fall 2006.

He said departments should keep in mind the following:

- early application deadlines can accommodate timely funding offers
- the university-wide initiative to internationalize the graduate student population while diversifying the geographic home countries of the international graduate student population
- creating competitive funding packages; in tandem the FGSR will look at realigning existing scholarship adjudications while the university explores new funding opportunities, such as a new set of elite scholarships, enhanced top-ups from a subset of scholarship winners, or a basic floor of funding for graduate students.

The Chair encouraged councillors to attend the FGSR Graduate Student Recruitment Workshop to learn best practices and tips for recruiting graduate students.

Councillors provided the following comments:

- the university needs to pay/cover off the international student differential fee if it wants to increase the international student population; a greater focus should be placed on keeping outstanding UofA undergraduate here to do graduate programs
- the university needs to find new ways to attract prospective students because the affordability advantage of living in Edmonton is now gone
- the university need to address graduate student housing issues, including designated residence spaces for graduate students
- the university should place priority on a base minimum level of funding for all graduate students because a large number of students don't fit into the 'superior' category and those are the students who cannot afford to come to Edmonton

## 2. International Agreements

J Varsava reminded councillors about the FGSR's International Admission Agreements, noting some are under-utilized. He announced that a new agreement with DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service -- New York) would be posted on the FGSR website soon and that an agreement with the government of Egypt is currently in development.

A councillor suggested the university explore an agreement with the European community as a whole, rather than nation by nation.

## 3. University Teaching Program and Professional Development

M Allen said the UofA is ahead of many universities in graduate student professional development with programs such as the UTP and the mandatory ethics training requirement. She advised the FGSR will work to increase the number of departments participating in the UTP and encourage greater sharing of existing department-level professional development initiatives.

## 4. Deadline for Applicants from Nigeria

The Chair reminded departments that the application deadlines had changed for applicants with qualifications from Nigeria to accommodate study permit processing.

## 5. Supervisory/Examining Committee members from Athabasca University

The Chair advised the FGSR will examine adding Athabasca University to the reciprocal agreement the University of Alberta currently has with the University of Calgary regarding supervisory/examining committee membership.

## c. Other Business

N Amaral provided a brief update about the science/engineering international student pilot project, in which 40 international students arrived on campus in August and attended variety of orientations, seminars and training sessions to prepare them for teaching assistantships. He said a report will be provided to council, likely in March, once the pilot project students have completed their first term of teaching.

The Chair provided a brief overview of a joint CAGS-CGS meeting in Banff, Alberta where representatives from the US, Canada, Australia and China discussed the establishment of international principles for graduate programs to accommodate student mobility and transferability, while maintaining quality.

The GSA President advised council that the GSA has started a housing registry to help assist graduate students in finding accommodations.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 pm.