

**Summary Minutes of a Joint Meeting of the
Deans' Council and the Council of
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall
Wednesday, September 16, 2009, 10:00 am**

1. Approval of the Agenda

Approved; items 4 and 5 were reversed.

2. COMMENTS FROM THE PROVOST

No comments.

3. COMMENTS FROM THE INTERIM VICE-PROVOST AND DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

No comments.

4. DISCUSSION ITEM: Integrated E-Mail

J Schaeffer presented the Councils with information on the potential move to an external e-mail provider and requested reaction. Councilors raised the following:

- There was some concern in Medicine & Dentistry, as the current system is stable, contains over 1,500 users, and has a low cost of \$19,000/year. There is a risk of disruption in moving to a new system, which could pull IT staff away from their priorities. A thorough risk/benefit analysis was requested.
- Off-loading e-mail could allow other areas of IT (such as e-learning) the capacity to grow.
- Concern was expressed with outsourcing. Suggestions were made to request a watertight guarantee on avoiding advertising or eventual fees, in expectation that Google will hope to make a profit from these services in the long term.
- Concerns were raised regarding information residing on servers in the United States and the ramifications of the Patriot Act. The Provost responded that the U of A has no protection from the Patriot Act, and the US government already has access to our systems through US companies used by the University, including Microsoft, IBM, etc. If information is requested, the U of A routinely denies access, although through the Patriot Act, no request is necessary.

A website will be launched and will include answers to Frequently Asked Questions and the features of the proposed system. There will be town hall meetings, and the process is moving quickly. If the U of A goes ahead, it will be on a four-year contract, with an assessment at the end of the contract.

5. DISCUSSION ITEM: Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention

Documents had been provided earlier and were now presented to Council. Comments included:

- A high GPA has no impact on admission processing time.
- If departments identify strong applications to expedited, FGSR will comply.
- Departments' application processing times may not be accurate since some departments hold applications until internal deadlines.
- No figures are available reflecting how long it takes students to respond to offers, and the timing of other institutions and their 'respond by' dates.

- Departments are expected to follow up with students and keep recruiting after FGSR issues an admission approval letter to the applicant.
- While many students are being given recruitment scholarships, they are not subsequently being nominated for the tri-council awards.
- U of A CIHR award numbers are low; with budget increase at 0%, the U of A needs to work to secure these awards.
- Without first reaching tri-council award quotas, the U of A is not in a position to ask for more funding. Tri-council performance is a national achievement indicator.
- There is available funding that is not being used, such as the CONACYT agreement. Of the 50 spots available, only four to five are being used each year.
- The provincial government provides specified funding for graduate students; U of A departments that are falling below their allocated number of graduate students may lose the funding.
- Encouraging students to complete their degrees in a timely way will free up resources and faculty time. There was a suggestion that completion times be compared with students at other universities in similar programs, rather than within the U of A.
- A GSA Councilor requested figures reflecting the average graduate student support by Faculty and suggested that since some students are admitted with no guaranteed funding, a minimum funding commitment to graduate students be implemented and that this would also facilitate recruitment. In response, it was noted that allocating resources to a guaranteed funding program would reduce funding for professor and support staff allocations.

M Shirvani stated that departments will be surveyed in the coming months for their best practices, their challenges, and for more detailed information on their admissions procedures.

6. QUESTION PERIOD

None.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The Joint meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am. FGSR Councilors were invited to stay for the remainder of the meeting to address FGSR Council Business.

**Summary Minutes of a Meeting of the
COUNCIL OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
Held in the Council Chamber, University Hall
Wednesday, September 16, 2009, 10:00 am**

Attendance

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|-------------------------|-------------|
| M Shirvani in the Chair | L McGann |
| M Allen | P Schiavone |
| H McDermid | |

Department Representatives

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| L Dossdall, AFNS | M Lipsett, Mechanical Engineering |
| A Palmer, Anthropology | D Burshtyn, Med Micro & Immunology |
| S Caulfield, Art & Design | G Tyrell, Medical Sciences |
| R Kaufman, Biological Sciences | E Le, Modern Lang & Cultural Studies |
| J White, Business MBA | H Bashaw, Music |
| D Cooper, Business PhD | D Wylie, Centre for Neuroscience |
| T Lowary, Chemistry | P Koop, Nursing |
| D Chan, Civil & Environmental Eng | B Dussault, Nursing |
| R Greiner, Computing Science | A Shaw, Oncology |
| F Peters, Educational Policy Studies | P Cheung, Pediatrics |
| G Buck, Educational Psychology | A El-Kadi, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences |
| J McMullin, Electrical & Comp Eng | B Linsky, Philosophy |
| J McClay, Elementary Education | L Harder, Political Science |
| T Zackodnik, English & Film Studies | A Joyce, Psychiatry |
| M Adria, Extension (MACT) | N Galambos, Psychology |
| H Madill, Health Promotion Studies | J Volden, Rehabilitation Science |
| D Mills, History & Classics | S Brown, Religious Studies |
| B Skrypnek, Human Ecology | A Hamann, Renewable Resources |
| G Rockwell, Humanities Computing | S Jeffrey, Rural Economy |
| L Reif, Law | K Hughes, Sociology |
| H Julien, Library & Information Studies | C Boliek, Speech Pathology & Aud |
| S Rice, Linguistics | |
| T Hillen, Mathematics & Stat Sciences | |

Graduate Program Administrator Representatives

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|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| G Mathew, Anthropology | F Hey, Public Health Sciences |
| S Campbell, Medicine | |

Graduate Student Representatives

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| MA Rahman, GSA VP Academic | B Farnesi, Pediatrics |
| D Manolescu, GSA VP Labour Relations | S Ahmed, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences |
| N Romaniuk, Chemistry | A Mohamed, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences |
| B Jensen, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences | L Mazzino, Physics |
| M Shahbakhti, Mechanical Engineering | C Dyck, Political Science |
| M Azadi, Mechanical Engineering | L Zhyznomirska, Political Science |
| A Chazimirsaid, Mechanical Engineering | E Omosa, Rural Economy |

Ex officio

G Pavlich, Office of the VP (Research)
A Schmude, Office of the Registrar

A regular meeting of the Council followed a joint meeting of Deans' Council and the Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

a) **Approval of the May 15, 2009 summary minutes**

The minutes were approved.

b) **Matters arising**

None.

2. FORMAL BUSINESS

Proposal for an Independent PhD in the Department of Biomedical Engineering

Councillors had before them the proposal and the following motion:

That FGSR Council approve the proposal for an independent PhD in the department of Biomedical Engineering.

A Wilman and R Snyder, Biomedical Engineering presented the proposal. Dean Lynch noted that the proposal had the strong support of Engineering.

MOTION It was moved by R Snyder and seconded by L McGann that the motion be approved.

VOTE The motion was PUT and CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.