

Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

2:00 to 4:00 pm

University of Alberta Council Chamber, 2-100 University Hall

Attendance at FGSR Council – March 8, 2017

Department Council Rep

AFNS, Vera Mazurak
Anthropology, Andie Palmer
Biochemistry, David Stuart
Bio Sci, Tracy Ravio
Business – PhD, David Deephouse
Chemical & Materials Engineering, Vinay Prasad
Communication Sciences and Disorders, Teresa Paslawski
Computing Science, Jia You
East Asian Studies, Daniel Fried
Educational Policy Studies, Evelyn Steinhauer
Educational Psychology, Veronica Smith
Educational Studies, Elaine Simmt
Elementary Education, Doug Gleddie
English and Film Studies, Julie Rak
Extension (MACT, MACE), Gordon Gow
History & Classics, Margreit Haagsma
Human Ecology, Deanna Williamson
Humanities Computing, Maureen Engel
Library and Information Studies, Ali Shiri
Mathematical & Statistical Sciences, Jochen Kuttler
Medical Microbiology & Immunology, Kevin Kane
Modern Languages and Cultural Studies, Carrie Smith-Prei
Music, Christina Gier
Native Studies, Sean Robertson
Nursing, Pauline Paul
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Denise Hemmings
Occupational Therapy, Cary Brown
Oncology, Alan Underhill
Pediatrics, Sujata Persad
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences, Scot Simpson
Philosophy, Ingo Birgandt
Phys Ed and Rec, Normand Boule
Physical Therapy, Mark Hall
Political Science, Cressida Heyes
Psychology, Anthony Singhal
Religious Studies, Ryan Dunch
Resource Ec & Envir Sociology, John Parkins
Women and Gender Studies, Michelle Meagher

Associate Deans Graduate

AFNS, Anne Naeth
Arts, Tom Spalding
Education, Jill McClay
Medicine & Dentistry, Hanne Ostergaard
Science, Renee Elio

Ex-Officio Representatives

FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost, Dean Zwicker
FGSR Vice-Dean, Debby Burshtyn
FGSR Associate Dean, Suzanne Kresta
FGSR Associate Dean, Naomi Krogman
FGSR Associate Dean, John Nychka
Assistant Dean, Administration, FGSR, Amy Dambrowitz
Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Janice Miller-Young
Chair, FGSR Academic Appeals Committee, Moin Yahya

Graduate Program Administrators (GPAC)

Anthropology, Heather Cook
Faculty of Extension, Eileen Crookes
Mechanical Engineering, Gail Dowler

GSA Representatives

Sasha van der Klein, GSA VP Labour
Firouz Khodayari, GSA VP Academic
Lebogang Disele, Drama
Clara Fallone, Medical Physics
Elaine Laberge, Sociology
Chongdan Luo, Chemical and Materials Engineering
Sylvia I.C. Madueke, MLCS
Alleson Mason, Educational Policy
Jennifer Ann McGetrick, Public Health
Dasha Smirnow, Business
Andrew Woodman, Pharmacology
Mostafa Tawfeek, Civil Engineering
Adam Oel, Bio-Sci

FGSR

Amanda Brown, Supervisor, Awards Team
Andrea Graham, Graduate Prof. Development Project Manager
Andrea Riewe, Executive and Operations Assistant
Deanna Davis, Professional Development Instruction Designer
Dena Giroux, Executive Assistant to Vice Dean & Assoc Deans
Janice Hurlburt, Governance & Policy Coordinator
Joyce Anderson, Supervisor, Admissions and Program Services
Kelly Berdahl, Program Services Advisor
Michelle Graham, Awards Advisor
Renee Polzhiehn, FGSR PD & CV Program Director

Guests/Observers:

Christopher Michell-Viret, Alumni Council
Brent Epperson, Graduate Ombudsperson
Joan White, Ed Policy Studies

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1.0 Call to Order 2:01 PM

2.0 Approval of Agenda for March 8, 2017

With one change - Item 7 was moved to item 10

Moved/seconded: Debby Burshtyn/David Deephouse

Approved by show of hands

3.0 Approval of Minutes for February 8, 2017

Moved/Seconded: Suzanne Kresta/Chris Michell-Viret

Approved by show of hands

4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

None

5.0 Student Presentation: Elaine Laberge (Master's Candidate in Sociology)

Elaine presented an overview of her thesis: "The Reverberations of Childhood Poverty: A Narrative Inquiry into the Experiences of Undergraduate Students in Canadian Higher Education." Elaine's research used a narrative inquiry approach to explore how childhood poverty continues to impact students throughout their experiences on campus.

6.0 Report from the Dean (H. Zwicker)

The GSA elections are complete, and the new team will start in two months. The GSA executive for 2017-18 will be: Babak Soltannia (President), Firouz Khodayari (VP Academic), Masoud Khademi (VP External), Sasha Van der Klein (VP Labour), and Royle Feng (VP Student Services).

International travel ban - a number of concrete actions are in progress:

- Application Fees: FGSR has waived graduate application fees for applicants listing citizenship in any of the seven affected countries. The fee waiver applies to applications that were submitted after February 1, 2017.
- Application deadlines: Since programs set their own deadlines, FGSR has encouraged departments to be as flexible as possible to accommodate students from the affected countries, within reason. FGSR stands by to help with paper work-arounds where necessary.
- Travel funding: If students have received travel awards from FGSR that they are no longer eligible to use, our intention is to ensure that student travel is supported, and that individuals are not left holding the bag on a matter over which they have no control. We are also providing high-tech rooms from which they can participate in conferences.

Thank you for participating in the discussion about the potential for alternative dissertation formats at the last Council meeting. A summary of the discussion was circulated with the agenda for this meeting and the raw amalgamated comments are available by request. The University of Alberta material has been shared with CAGS and we will keep you informed about any developments.

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The IDP Review Guide for supervisors was distributed with the meeting agenda, and I invite you to share this with your graduate coordinators and the supervisors in your departments.

Upcoming events:

- The 3MT finals will be held on April 13.
- The second annual Images of Research competition is underway. The top three images from last year are displayed in Triffo Hall.
- The Graduate Teaching Award celebration will be held on April 11 from 2:30-4:00 pm. GSTA nominations are due February 20 – all inquiries should go to Deanna.
- Candidates for the position of Dean of FGSR will present their vision talks in the week of April 3 to 7. For more information, please contact Debby Burshtyn.

Question: How are Canada-bound students from the 7 travel ban countries being affected?

Reply (H. Zwicker): Students and applicants have been affected by limitations on the travel of family members. Applicants may feel that their future options and opportunities are limited.

Question: Are we welcoming students from the US who would like to change institutions?

Reply (H. Zwicker): Yes, but these students will need to apply for visas, and the processing times remain long.

7.0 The PhDiversification Project (H. Zwicker)

The PhDiversification project, funded by a grant from the Government of Alberta entitled *A Vision for Innovation in Alberta: Excellence and Transformative Talent*, seeks to support the transition of PhD graduates from graduate studies to employment. Led by Andrea Graham, the project seeks to envision the PhD employment process as a journey that begins with the application to the program and continues through to post-degree employment.

Working with the faculties of Arts, Engineering, Medicine & Dentistry, and Science (which represent 75% of graduate students), Andrea has surveyed students and supervisors to understand the key stages in the employment journey. The surveys have revealed that there is a disconnect between student and supervisor perceptions of conversations about future employment.

The results were used to create a model for the existing employment journey. The current process is student driven and largely informal, with other parties (supervisor, department, FGSR) being only peripherally engaged. The process was observed to be predisposed to supporting academic employment, and to be focused in the first three years of the program, with very little activity or interaction after the 3-year mark and completion of the candidacy exam.

The next phase of the project will focus on how the model can be expanded and improved to support PhD students' employment outcomes. Questions will include:

- What can we do to make a significant difference in employability?
- How can we leverage our networks?
- Can we intervene at the point of the application to improve outcomes?
- Can we get better employment data?

The goal of this phase will be to determine what the evidence indicates would be the best place to invest to make a change in PhD employment outcomes.

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Comment: In the model you have described, you only identify departments and faculties as overseeing decision points. This does not acknowledge the PD (professional development) opportunities that we provide.

Reply (Tom Spalding): PD opportunities are difficult to represent in a model that encompasses all PhD programs. PD opportunities are inconsistent across faculties and are not mandatory.

Reply (Andrea Graham): We have sought to represent the minimum path.

Comment: The representation does not include the impact that departments and programs make through defining the elements of program.

Comment: The model is incomplete. For example, the alumni connection to employment opportunities is not represented. Also, the requirements of Alberta Innovates awards drive training and experience for employment. These need to be clarified. In addition, it is important that the PhD program and the journey to employment remain student-driven.

Reply (Andrea Graham): Yes, the importance of networking and relationship building must be acknowledged.

Comment: The model is beautifully done, but I would suggest that the labels should be contextual. Rather than input, process and output, I would suggest the terms admissions/recruitment, education and employment.

Reply (Andrea Graham): We deliberately used Lean Sigma terminology to separate the understanding of the model from academic assumptions.

Comment: TAs, RAs and lab work continue throughout the degree, but only show at the beginning of the model.

Reply (Andrea Graham): These are represented in year one, because that is when they begin, however, we have used a colour coding system to indicate that they continue throughout the degree.

Comment: Casual jobs to support the student during the degree are not represented.

Reply (Andrea Graham): the model is meant to include the formal parts of the degree process, but I am curious about the effect of casual employment on long-term employment.

Comment: Have you compared our system to the European system, where the posting for a graduate position is more formal, and the work more clearly defined in advance? How does that affect employability?

Reply (H. Zwicker): We don't have that information.

Comment: The output section is not fully developed, as it does not consider the career arc beyond the first job. Employability throughout a career should be considered.

Comment: I would like to see you consider the impact and contribution of professional associations and accrediting bodies, to understand where those connections lead.

8.0 Graduate Program Manual Updates (D. Burshtyn)

FGSR requested the permission of the Council to make immediate corrections of omissions or errors found in the Graduate Program Manual as a part of ongoing systematic review of the document. Immediate corrections will be enacted to reduce confusion on the part of students, staff and faculty.

In the case of disagreement between the Graduate Program Manual and the Academic Calendar, the calendar will be considered to be the authoritative document. If the systematic review uncovers cases where we can

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document a change to policy for the GPM was passed by FGSR Council without corresponding changes to the Calendar, a motion for a calendar change will be brought to FGSR Council for approval.

Any changes made to the Graduate Program Manual will be summarized and provided as information items to both the FGSR Council and the Graduate Program Administrators Committee meetings.

Motion: *Be it resolved that the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council directs the staff of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, under the supervision of the Vice- Provost and Dean, to correct omissions or errors found in the Graduate Program Manual to match the current language found in the University of Alberta calendar.*

Moved: Debby Burshtyn

Seconded: Ryan Dench

Approved: 56 - Yes; 0 - No, 0 - Abstain

9.0 Examination Policy Discussion (D. Burshtyn)

The FGSR Examination Policy was reviewed and substantially changed for the 2014-15 calendar. Members of the graduate studies community have identified some gaps, causes for misunderstanding/confusion and sources of conflict in the policy, and the Policy Review Committee (PRC) is reviewing potential policy changes. The purpose of this discussion was to consider some possible corrections to the policy and provide advice to the PRC.

Following the next PRC meeting, the Council will be presented with a notice of motion about changes to the policy. Feedback directly to Debby Burshtyn is welcome in the interim.

Topics of discussion are **boldfaced**.

Supervisor - The current wording allows for supervisor(s) with no affiliation with UofA at the discretion of the Dean of the Faculty.

Common Exam Procedures - We would like to capture those features which are truly common. This could be achieved through minimum explicit guidelines or through best practices.

Discussion:

- *Explicit wording and shared standards would be of value*
- *This would be helpful in addressing accessibility services*
- *A minimum threshold would be useful and in keeping with the FGSR ethos, but the list needs to be kept short*

Limitations on number of examiners and exam length - these are two mechanisms to manage the length of time the student is being examined.

Discussion:

- *Limits should not be unreasonably short*
- *Deliberation time should be considered separately from examination time; need to clarify what is included in the definition of examination time*
- *Limits should be “normally” or “in principle” to encompass exceptions*
- *The number of examiners should allow for exceptions to allow committees to have the right ratios of examiners*
- *Large committees can lead to negative outcomes for students; this needs to be managed*

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The Chair as a neutral observer and not an examiner in the PhD defense.

Discussion:

- *It is the practice at other universities to have a pool of well trained Chairs who understand the examination procedures*
- *How common is it for examiners to chair at the University of Alberta? Reply (D. Burshtyn: Some faculties follow this practice, while others do not)*

10.0 Report from the Associate Deans

Naomi Krogman

The Mentorship Academy will launch in May with weekly Mentorship Mondays. The goal of the weekly sessions, based on a hub and spoke model of training leaders from across campus, is to foster a better mentorship culture on campus.

Working with Sasha Van der Klein (GSA VP Labour), we will be leading Managing Up, a seminar series that aims to help graduate students to manage their professional relationships with their supervisors.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning will be leading workshops on supervision and mentorship to provide support to new faculty members.

John Nychka

Recent writing support for graduate students has focused on workshops, boot camps and “Shut Up and Write” groups. The writing session hosted over Reading Week was well attended and a success with participants.

The second round of funding for the Doctoral Microgrants will be announced in mid-March, and the third call for proposals will go out in early June.

Suzanne Kresta

A resource for researchers on Indigenous community engagement will be published shortly and should be an excellent resource for graduate researchers.

The Mental Health First Aid Workshop was well attended by members of the community who have front-line interactions with students.

11.0 Best Practices Corner: Tips and Tricks for Awards Nominations (Michelle Graham)

Michelle provided a quick (but thorough) overview of submitting Awards Nominations to FGSR, including the most common pitfalls experienced by faculties and departments.

12.0 GSA Monthly Report (Firouz Khodayari)

The GSA report was submitted as distributed with the meeting minutes. There were no questions or comments.

13.0 Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:02 PM