



MINUTES

Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

2:00 to 4:00 pm

University of Alberta Council Chamber, 2-100 University Hall

Attendance at FGSR Council – Oct. 18

Department/Unit Faculty Representatives

Art & Design	Lisa Claypool
Biochemistry	David Stuart
Business (non-departmentalized) - MBA	Brent Collingwood
Business (non-departmentalized) - PhD	David Deephouse
Chemicals & Materials Engineering	Vinay Prasad
Chemistry	Mark McDermott
Civil & Environmental Engineering	Dave Chan
Communication Sciences & Disorders	Karen Pollock
Computing Science	Janelle Harms
Dentistry (Medical Sciences)	Pat Flood
Drama	Piet Defraeye
Economics	Heather Eckert
Educational Policy Studies	Jorge Sousa
Educational Psychology	Sophie Yohani
Electrical & Computer Engineering	Marek Reformat
Elementary Education	Doug Gleddie
English and Film Studies	Albert Braz
History & Classics	Margriet Haagsma
Human Ecology	Janet Fast
Humanities Computing	Maureen Engel
Law (non-departmentalized)	Barbara Billingsley
Library & Information Studies	Ali Shiri
Linguistics	Johanne Paradis
Mathematical & Statistical Science	Jochen Kuttler
Mechanical Engineering	Morris Flynn
Medical Genetics (Medical Sciences)	Sarah Hughes
Modern Languages & Cultural Studies	Micah True
Music	Christina Gier
Native Studies (non-departmentalized)	D'Arcy Vermette
Oncology	Mary Hitt
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences (non-departmentalized)	Scot Simpson
Philosophy	Ingo Brigandt
Physical Education & Recreation (non-departmentalized)	Normand Boule
Physical Therapy	Mark Hall
Physics	Frank Marsiglio
Physiology	Greg Funk
Political Science	Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Jared Wesley*
Psychology	Anthony Singhal
Rehabilitation Medicine - Rehabilitation Sciences	Patricia Manns
School of Public Health (non-departmentalized)	Jeffrey Johnson
Surgery	Fred Berry
Women's and Gender Studies	Felice Lifshitz

Associate Deans (Graduate) Representatives for Departmentalized Faculties

Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences	Anne Naeth
Arts	Tom Spalding
Science	Renee Elio

Ex-Officio Representatives

FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost (FGSR Council Chair)	Dean Zwicker
FGSR Vice-Dean	Debby Burshtyn
FGSR Associate Dean	Bryan Hogeveen
FGSR Associate Dean	John Nychka
Senior Administrative Officer, FGSR (Secretary)	Amy Dambrowitz
Vice-Provost and University Registrar (or Delegate)	Thomas Hidson
Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian (or Delegate)	Kathleen De Long
Director, Centre for Teaching & Learning*	Roger Graves

Graduate Program Administrators Committee (GPAC) Representatives

Department of Anthropology	Heather Cook
Department of Mechanical Engineering	Gail Dowler

Graduate Student Association (GSA) Directly Elected Officials (DEO)

GSA President	Babak Soltannia
VP Academic	Firouz Khodayari

Graduate Student Association (GSA) Council Representatives

Biomedical Engineering	Kevin Solar, Tony Zheng*
Business PhD	Dasha Smirnov
Chemical and Mechanical Engineering	Abdulrahman Albeladi
Civil and Environmental Engineering	Mostafa Tawfeek
Educational Policy Studies	Julie Mooney
Educational Policy Studies	Alleson Mason
Electrical and Computer Engineering	Adan Wang
Internetworking	Khushmit Kaur
Medical Genetics	Istahil Abdullahi
Nursing	Saleema Allana
Nursing	Helen Doan
Pediatrics	Maryam Kebbe
Renewable Resources	Liz Fedra Huayta Hernani
Surgery	Hayden Danyluk
Surgery	Jonathan Mora

Observers – Non-Voting

FGSR Executive Assistant & Operations*	Andrea Riewe
FGSR Professional Development & Community Volunteer Program Director*	Renee Polziehn
Alumni Council - FGSR Representative*	Christopher Michell-Viret
Graduate Ombudsperson*	Brent Epperson
EA to the Vice Dean and Associate Deans*	Dena Giroux
Governance Policy Coordinator*	Janice Hurlbut
Grad Student Services Advisor - Program Services*	Maria Chia
Guest*	Valerie Miller

*Non-Voting



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FGSR Council October 18, 2017

1.0 Call to Order 2:02 PM

2.0 Approval of Agenda for October 18, 2017

Moved/seconded: Jeff Johnson/Morris Flynn

Approved by a show of hands.

3.0 Approval of Minutes of September 13, 2017

Moved/Seconded: Mark Hall/Chris Michell-Viret

Approved by a show of hands.

4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Question: The amount available through the external examiner fund (\$500/examiner) is not sufficient to pay the full costs of travel for a single examiner. This may explain the under-subscription to this program. Would it be possible to divide the funds available divided between departments, rather than requesting individual applications?

Reply (D. Burshtyn): No. The total fund is \$30K per year, which would be very small if divided between departments. We will ask the Dean to consider if \$500 is too low, if there are no matching funds available

5.0 Student Presenter: Valerie Miller (ALES Falling Walls Winner) "Breaking the Wall of Healing the Earth"

Valerie presented her work on creating soils for the reclamation of the Diavik Diamond Mine site. The goal of the project is to develop universally applicable methods for generating reclamation soils from the waste materials found at mine sites. The resulting soils have the capacity to support diverse plant growth, and local generation from waste materials addresses the scarcity of local soil sources.

6.0 Report from the Dean (Heather Zwicker)

KILLAM CELEBRATION 2017

13 graduate students from across the academy were presented with Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarships. Four of these were selected for the additional honour of the Dorothy J Killam Memorial Graduate prizes: Ashley Newbigging (Laboratory Medicine and Pathology), Masoud Mohammadalizadeh Shabestary (Electrical and Computer Engineering), Morteza Seifi (Medical Genetics) and Xiong Wang (Secondary Education). Two long-time members of the FGSR Council were presented with Killam Annual Professorships: Thomas Chacko and Julie Rak. Congratulations to all of the award recipients.

SIGNATURE AREAS

Two official signature areas of teaching and research have been identified: Precision Health and Energy Systems. An official launch announcement will follow.

ASSISTANT DEAN, ADVANCEMENT

On November 1st, Meghan Unterschultz joins the FGSR team as Assistant Dean, Advancement in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. In close collaboration with colleagues throughout the Advancement organization, Meghan will pursue strategic fundraising priorities for the Faculty, including mental health, professional development and supervision. She will reach out to programs, departments and faculties as appropriate to coordinate on shared priorities.

CAMPUS ALBERTA NEUROSCIENCE RETREAT UPDATE

The Campus Alberta Neuroscience (CAN) professional development retreat in Banff was opened up to include students from other disciplines. Over two intensive days, participants gained valuable for insights in communicating better with their supervisors, developed tools for working together with other people (inside and outside their disciplines) and expanded their interdisciplinary networks and connections. Participant feedback was extremely positive. This was the first of three retreats to be held in this way, this year, sponsored by the professional development grant.

UNITED WAY

The United Way campaign has been a U of A tradition for over 30 years, and has served as just one example of how the faculty, staff, and students of the U of A have worked together to support the greater Edmonton community. In doing this, we keep the promise of “uplifting the whole people” and demonstrate our commitment to the public good, as outlined in the institutional strategic plan. The official 2017 UAlberta United Way Campaign will run from Oct 11-27, 2017. Share a selfie when you donate to the United Way and add to the big picture. #GiveShareUplift

GSMS UPDATE (Amy Dambrowitz)

On August 21, FGSR and IST made a joint commitment to complete six major improvements to the admission system for the 2017-18 admissions season. The set of system improvements was selected (based on consultation with the GSMS community) to have the largest possible benefit for end-users. 5 of the 6 functions have now been delivered. [Ed. Note: 6th delivered on October 20.]

The next phase of work for the GSMS Team will be a system upgrade, followed by the second phase of the development for the Awards system. Awards Phase II, designed after significant community consultation, will make the system available to departments and students, for application and review processes. These efforts will be the major focus of GSMS team this year.

FALL DOCTORAL RECEPTION - NOVEMBER 22, 2017 - SAVE THE DATE

The University of Alberta Honorary Doctorate and Doctoral Recipient Reception will be held on November 22. [5:30 - 7:30 p.m., Maple Leaf Room, Lister Conference Centre.] Deans, Associate Deans of Graduate Studies and Research, Supervisors, and Senate members will be invited to attend in support of the graduates.

PARENTING CIRCLE

The first monthly meeting for the Parent Link will take place on October 19 from 12:00-1:00 in Triffo Hall (1-16). Please share information about the Parent Link with students who may be interested. The goal of the first meetings is for graduate students parents to tell us what they need. Questions about the Parent Link can be forwarded to Dr. Deanna Davis.

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE

The 2nd annual *Invest in Your Future Career Symposium* will take place on November 15 and 16. Registration will open for students on Friday, October 20. Our two keynotes will be Dr. Maren Wood, a Certified Career Coach who founded *Beyond the Professoriate*, and Dr. Jorge Cham of *PhD Comics* fame.

On November 1st, there will be a pre-conference session on *How to Engage the Public in Your Research through Film* presented by Dr. Michael MacDonald.

Information about both the events can be found on the FGSR website. Several of the sessions can be used towards the Professional Development requirement.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: HARVEY WEINGARTEN

On November 14 from 10-11:30 a.m., Dr. Weingarten will present on Learning Outcomes in a Research Intensive University. Those who attended the last Learning Outcomes workshop be sent an invitation. Others who are interested in attending should contact Debby Burshtyn.

MENTORSHIP SESSIONS

The next session (November 20, 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.) will focus on *Best practices for good communication between supervisors and their graduate students*. The session will address communication strategies to promote best practices in healthy and productive professional relationships, where trust, mutual respect, and creative exchange is most likely to flourish. Registration deadline is November 13th.

Session 3 (January 15, 2018) will be *How to develop supportive writing groups in your department*.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

- The deadline for Doctoral Microgrants applications is Friday Oct 20, 2017.
- Writing Bootcamps - please contact John Nychka with the names of graduate student volunteers to help run (thesis) writing bootcamps over the Fall and Winter breaks.
- US Travel Ban - due to the changed nature of the ban, we are no longer waiving application fees for applicants from all countries on the list. Our view, which aligns with that of the RO, is that students now have sufficient time to make decisions about where to apply. We will continue to waive application fees for applicants from the United Nations Least Developed Countries list.

- Debby Burshtyn and John Nychka will be hosting a professional development session for Graduate Coordinators on November 28 from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. entitled *How to Reach Agreement in Meetings*.

CONVOCATION LIST FOR FALL 2017

The list was sent to all FGSR Council VOTING members (only) on October 17. Responses are due on Thursday, October 19 at 4:00 p.m. Please confirm that the list is complete and correct.

*Question: Are applications currently being accepted for graduate student travel grants?
Reply (H. Zwicker): No. We spend until all available funds are gone. The most recently released funds were first spent on applicants who were declined due to lack of funds in the previous round. (B. Hogeveen): We are considering how to alter the fund release schedule to make the system as fair as possible by releasing funds at the times most students are planning academic travel.*

7.0 USchool (Melania Woloszyn)

USchool bring students from socially vulnerable, Indigenous, and northern/rural communities to U of A for a week of inquiry-based learning on campus in order to plant the seed about post-secondary education. USchool invites graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and professors to deliver engaging, hands-on, age-appropriate lessons in their area of expertise. This is an opportunity for graduate students to stretch their skills in making research understandable to the general public. Support is available in developing kid-friendly activities that communicate the core principles of your area of research. Council members are asked to encourage their students (and post-docs) to participate.

8.0 Curriculum Re-Design: School of Public Health (Jeff Johnson)

Over the past four years, the School of Public Health has worked to redesign the curriculum for the Master of Public Health degree. The changes are currently proceeding through governance. We are bringing them to FGSR Council in order to seed a conversation about curriculum design, learning outcomes and second-level specializations.

As described in the Governance Outline of Issue: "These new MPH curricula establish common ground for incoming MPH students from diverse backgrounds, thereby ensuring all students develop a solid understanding of public health as a field. This demanded a shift in the design of our curricula from "Who is the lecturer and what does s/he want students to know?" to "What competencies does the MPH graduate need to perform as an effective public health practitioner?"

The new common core courses involve integration of some of the practice-oriented content contained in the current, disciplinary-focused common core courses. As a consequence of this integration into the new common core, most of the MPH degrees required some changes in the specialization course requirements, either to minimize redundancy, or maintain prerequisites for advanced specialization courses."

The changes also include reordering replacing the final capping exercise and with the an end-of-program practicum. The changes, which support a core competencies model, were encouraged by the accreditation body [the US-Based Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)] and will be included in the upcoming accreditation review.

The School of Public Health also uses the common core courses model in its 7 MSc and 4 PhD programs.

The next set of challenges will be to manage the change in teaching assignments, the new scheduling, and the transition from the traditional program to the core competencies program as existing students complete their programs under the old requirements.

Comment (H. Zwicker): This approach could also be applied across departments in related disciplines with similar courses as an approach to saving funds while ensuring quality by eliminating unnecessary duplication of courses. Possible areas of overlap might include statistics courses, theory courses or methods courses.

9.0 Discussion: Exploring Curriculum Re-Design (Debby Burshtyn)

The changes in the MPH program address two current issues in the development of graduate programs: learning outcomes and curriculum change. These issues are further complicated by the use of second-level specializations (a degree descriptor recognized by the University of Alberta, but not by the Government of Alberta).

Illustrative Examples:

Category	Example	GoA Recognition	UAlberta Recognition
Degree	PhD	Y	Y
Specialization	PhD in Biological Sciences	Y	Y
Second Level Specialization	PhD in Biological Sciences with a specialization in Ecology	N*	Y

*Governance implication: Second Level Specializations can be approved within the University of Alberta, if the core content and learning outcomes are sufficiently similar to an existing Government of Alberta-approved specialization.

Due to historical circumstances, the use of the second level specializations is inconsistent across our graduate programs. In order to make this governance pathway more valuable going forward, we would like to develop a working definition of second level specialization. A framework would give us the ability to consider new programs.

This effort will not attempt to address the use of second level specializations for existing programs - it is not a clean-up effort.

Discussion:

A poll by show of hands showed a ratio of 2:1 for second level specializations with shared core courses.

It was noted that some programs of this type are multi-departmental collaborations with core courses supporting multiple second level specializations. Programs of that nature could provide a model for supporting interdisciplinarity.

In contrast, the council was reminded that the power of a graduate course can sometimes be in its discipline specificity. Recognized disciplines and departments also make us legible to our peers. A balance must be struck between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity.

Certificate programs are another mechanism for introducing incremental change. We are working together with the University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge to develop a rubric for certificate programs.

Well-designed and rational use of second level specializations could reduce the amount of Government of Alberta review required for approval. That is the goal.

Debby Burshtyn will be convening a working group (separate from the Policy Review Committee) to begin reviewing the definition of secondary specializations and a framework for reviewing new programs in this category. **Volunteers are welcomed. Please be in touch with Debby Burshtyn if you are interested in participating.**

First volunteer: Margriet Haagsma (History and Classics).

10.0 Discussion: How should FGSR ensure supervisors are informed of FGSR activities and policy changes?

After the question was posed, the floor was opened to discussion. A number of suggestions were made:

To reach supervisors, connect knowledge about graduate supervision to positive the FEC process outcomes (a motivated audience).

It is one thing to reach out to people, it is another thing to have them hear you and integrate the information. This is not a push problem, it is a listening problem.

Council members need to carry back key messages to departments. There is a lot of change coming to the role of supervisor. One approach might be to host departmental “Lunch and Learn” sessions.

Alternate channels of communication: FGSR could produce an “Update of the Month” for campus TV screens.

Certify faculty members as supervisors. If supervisors are required to meet a threshold of knowledge, there is a different level of interest in communications and awareness.

The Dean noted her willingness to spend time to bring messages to faculty and department councils, but that is not of value to come to those events only to address the members of the Dean’s/Chair’s office.

Question: How do we measure the quality of supervision at the university? Reply (H. Zwicker): This is a thorny problem, but we are working on it.

11.0 Professional Development as part of an NSERC CREATE program (John Davis)

The planners of the Quanta CREATE program acknowledge an important contradiction: less than ½ of physics graduate students will become faculty members, yet we continue to train all graduate students as future faculty members. They also recognize a knowledge gap: how can faculty members train others to be prepared for jobs that faculty members do not hold?

The leaders of Quanta believe that the problem can be most effectively addressed in the classroom (not in the lab). The CREATE program provides the funds for applied courses, business courses, participation in eHub, and coordination with existing PD programming (such as the MITACs courses). The funding is also allowing faculty members to connect with alumni who are working in industry to determine what the alumni wish had been part of their graduate programs. To date, the focus of the PD work has been on soft skills: writing, presentation skills and project management. Having administrative support has been essential to the success of the program.

Question: Is the CREATE program funding administrative support? Reply (J. Davis): NSERC will not fund administrative support, but it can be negotiated as part of the university’s matching support.

Question: Are the PD courses for credit? Reply (J. Davis): Some are being offered as special topics courses. The PD courses are additional to the degree, and exceed the 8-hour PD requirement. The students have not objected to the extra work.

Question: How many students are you reaching? Reply (J. Davis): There are currently 6 PIs between the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary. At the University of Alberta, there are approximately 25 students this year.

12.0 GSA Monthly Report (Babak Soltannia)

Noted highlights from the submitted report are: thanks to FGSR for hosting the Fall meet and greet event; the GSA Fall Social was well attended; the Student Success Centre is offering writing sessions targeted to graduate students in partnership with the GSA; the GSA Awards Selection Committee in reviewing applications for the Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award on behalf of the Government of Alberta; and Sasha van der Klein (GSA VP Labour) in working with campus stakeholders to address graduate students homelessness. The Early Call for Talent and Training program will begin soon to seek out potential GSA members for the 2018-19 academic year.

Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) has sent two open letters to the Government of Alberta. The first requests regulated tuition for both Canadian and International graduate students. The second asks the government to continue to support professional development for graduate students.

13.0 Demonstration: GSMS Search Functionality (Deb McGibney)

The expanded and speedier GSMS search function was demonstrated, including download capacity.

Question: When we will be able to separate the different years' applications? Reply (A. Dambrowitz): We are about to test a system of individual admission-year desks, so expect to have the function available shortly. This is part of a long-term plan for application archives.

Question: When are you planning to communicate with the community about the status of the system? Reply (A. Dambrowitz): Updates are sent regularly to all users through the production notice system. In addition, a letter explaining the system status will be sent to FGSR Council, GPAC, GEFAC, Deans' Council and Chairs' Council after the sixth item is complete.

14.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:57 PM.