

Attendance at FGSR Council – September 16, 2020

Department/Unit Faculty Representatives

Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science	Guanqun (Gavin) Chen
Art & Design	Joan Greer
Biochemistry	David Stuart
Biological Sciences	James Stafford
Business (non-departmentalized) - MBA	Michael Maier
Business (non-departmentalized) - PhD	Trish Reay
Chemicals & Materials Engineering	Vinay Prasad
Computing Science	Greg Kondrak
Dentistry	Carlos Flores Mir
Drama	Stefano Muneroni
East Asian Studies	David Quinter
Educational Policy Studies	Evelyn Steinhauer & Darryl Hunter
Educational Psychology	Veronica Smith
Electrical & Computer Engineering	Yindi Jing
Elementary Education	Trudy Cardinal
English and Film Studies	Mark Simpson
History & Classics	Heather Coleman
Human Ecology	Rachel McQueen
Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation (non-dept)	Normand Boule
Law (non-departmentalized)	Linda Reif
Library & Information Studies	Dinesh Rathi
Mathematical & Statistical Science	Jochen Kuttler
Mechanical Engineering	Christopher Dennison
Medical Genetics (Medical Sciences)	Rachel Wevrick
Medical Microbiology & Immunology	Edan Foley
Medical Sciences Graduate Program - FoMD	Elena Posse de Chaves
Medicine	Nadia Jahroudi
Modern Languages & Cultural Studies	Irene Sywenky
Music	Maryam Moshaver
Native Studies (non-departmentalized)	Sean Robertson
Nursing	Diane Tapp
Occupational Therapy	Shaniff Esmail
Oncology	Alan Underhill
Pharmacy & Pharm. Sciences (non-dept)	Arno Siraki
Philosophy	Ingo Brigandt
Physical Therapy	Mark Hall
Physics	Craig Heinke
Physiology	Greg Funk
Political Science	Siobhan Byrne
Psychiatry	Allen Chan & Andrew Greenshaw
Psychology	Chris Westbury
Rehabilitation Medicine	Esther Kim

Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology	Henry An
School of Public Health (non-departmentalized)	Ruth Wolfe
Secondary Education	Bonnie Watt
Sociology	Gillian Stevens
Women's and Gender Studies	Felice Lifshitz

Associate Deans (Graduate) Representatives for Departmentalized Faculties

Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences	Leluo Guan
Arts	Kim Noels
Education	Doug Gleddie
Medicine & Dentistry	Greg Funk
Science	Mark McDermott

Ex-Officio Representatives

FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost (FGSR Council Chair)	Brooke Milne
FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost (FGSR Council Chair)	Brooke Milne
FGSR Vice-Dean	Bryan Hogeveen
FGSR Associate Dean	Tracy Raivio
FGSR Associate Dean	Janice Causgrove Dunn
FGSR Associate Dean	Ali Shiri
Vice-Provost and University Registrar (or Delegate)	Carlo Dimailig
Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian (or Delegate)	Dale Askey

Graduate Program Administrators Committee (GPAC) Representatives

GPAC Members	None elected yet
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Graduate Student Association (GSA) Directly Elected Officials Representatives

VP Academic	Sachiketha Reddy
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Graduate Student Association (GSA) Council Representatives

Civil & Environmental Engineering - PhD	Salam Khalife
Electrical and Computing Engineering	Puruhithika Kunde
English & Film Studies	Shashi Kumar
Library & Information Studies	Lindsey Drozak
Pediatrics	Shubham Soni
Pediatrics	Claudia Holody
Pharmacy	Amanda Greenwell
Political Science - PhD	Meagan Auer
Surgery	Kasra Shayeganpour
Surgery	Mukt Patel
Pharmacology, PhD	Nayiar Shahid
Economics, PhD	Christian Kwarkye
Biomedical Engineering, PhD	Kevin Solar
Music	Kathy Haddadkar
Neuroscience - Masters (PhD in October)	Nicole Dittmann
Mechanical Engineering PhD	Armin Norouzi Yengeje
Mechanical Engineering	Sai Swaroop Reddy Pogalla
Nursing	Sania Amiri-Ishani
Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science	Klevis Haxhijaj

Observers – Non-Voting*

FGSR, Awards Supervisor*	Amanda Brown
FGSR, Executive Coordinator*	Andrea Riewe
FGSR, Professional Development & Community Volunteer Program Director*	Deanna Davis
FGSR, EA to the Associate Deans*	Dena Giroux
FGSR, HR & Operations Coordinator (Council Secretary)*	Medha Samarasinghe
FGSR, Senior Financial Officer and IT*	Sylvia Fong-Wong
Grad Administrator, Chemical and Materials Engineering*	Alex Goh
Graduate Ombudsman*	Brent Epperson
Graduate Services Coordinator, Chemistry*	Anita Weiler
?	Unknown Caller

*Non-Voting

FGSR Council September 16, 2020

1.0 Call to Order at 2:03 PM

Dean Brooke Milne called the meeting to order. She began the first Council meeting of the academic year with an acknowledgement that the University of Alberta is located on Treaty 6 Territory.

She welcomed new and returning members of Council, and reminded everyone of the process of using Zoom, how to participate in discussions, and how to use the voting mechanism. This is FGSR Council's second virtual meeting.

2.0 Approval of Agenda for September 16, 2020

Moved / Seconded: Alan Underhill / Mark McDermott
Approved by general consent.

3.0 Approval of Minutes of May 27, 2020

Moved / Seconded: Michael Maier/Trish Reay
 No adjustments were made and no questions were raised.

Approved by electronic vote.

4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters arising from the minutes.

5.0 **Overview: FGSR Council and FGSR Team & Services**

Dean Milne introduced the role of FGSR Council, the Decanal team, and the Operational teams.

The FGSR Council is established by the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, and operates under delegated authority from the General Faculties Council. Its role includes:

- Approving minimum University standards on all aspects of graduate education, including minimum admission standards, time limits for the completion of program milestones, and residency requirements
- Approving graduate policy that oversees the administration graduate programs
- Approving the creation of all new graduate credentials and new graduate programs, including graduate programs under the Shared Credential Policy
- Dealing with other matters as are brought forward by the Vice-Provost and Dean, FGSR

Currently, Council membership is based on a simple formula: “each department offering a graduate program has a delegate.” Student representatives are elected under the auspices of the Graduate Student Association.

Council is also the main forum for leading discussions on the future directions of graduate education across all of our U of A campuses.

The Departments’ Graduate Administrative counterparts meet throughout the Academic Year, usually the week after FGSR Council, and they discuss various issues pertaining to graduate students and the administration of those programs. Dean Milne reminded Council Members to encourage their non-academic grad administrative counterparts to attend the GPAC meetings.

Andrea Riewe is Dean Milne’s Executive Coordinator. Reaching out to her is the most reliable way to get in touch with Dean Milne.

Decanal Team:

Dean Milne introduced the FGSR Decanal team who work closely with Council members on student academic matters as well as on other FGSR led initiatives.

- Bryan Hogeveen, Vice-Dean: Portfolio: Quality Assurance, Program Development, Special Collaborative Projects
- Janice Causgrove Dunn, Associate Dean: Portfolio: Graduate Student Wellness and Policy & Governance
- Tracy Raivio, Associate Dean : Portfolio: Awards and Scholarships
- Victoria Ruétalo, Associate Dean: Portfolio: Supervisor Training & Mentorship
- Ali Shiri, Associate Dean: Portfolio: Digital and Data Initiatives

Dean Milne noted that the departmental portfolios for the Associate Deans will be moving to a structure that is divided along Tri-Council lines. This will also allow FGSR to keep faculties together with the same Associate Dean; it will allow them to develop deeper expertise in the discipline, and establish stronger and more consistent working relationships with the ADs-Grad/Research from the Faculties. Notably, the Graduate Student Services Advisors will remain with their current departmental assignments. FGSR will circulate a copy of this program reconfiguration out to departments and post it on our website by October 1, when the changes will take effect.

Program Support Units:

Admissions: This team processes over 4000 admissions files each year. They also clear admission conditions. The Admissions GSSAs are experts in calculating GPAs and lead training for our departmental counterparts.

Program Services: Program Services GSSAs oversee student records from the time of admissions to convocation. They process over 2000 convocants each year. Many of you will deal with this unit when working through student files.

Awards: Our Awards unit coordinates various provincial and national awards including the Vaniers, the Tri-Councils, and other awards. They evaluate 4700 applications each year and distribute \$26 million in funding to our graduate students.

PD: Our PD unit runs Ethics and Academic Integrity Sessions which count towards grad students' ethics requirements. They also hold PD sessions that fulfil the Individual Development Plan; and they develop and run the Graduate Teaching and Learning Program each year. Their Graduate Student Internship Program, moreover, has placed over 100 students in the last year. This program provides grad students with invaluable work experience with various employers.

Operations units:

Technical team: This team supports our GSMS systems, runs reports via Campus Solutions, and leads our office with the transition to paperless workflows.

Communications: Our communications team updates our website, manages social media, and coordinates the various communications that go out on behalf of FGSR

Governance: This unit will support your department with calendar changes and new program proposals.

Operations and the Dean's office: This unit supports the Office of the Dean, and the operations of the other units.

Discussion / Questions:

- A member of council asked if there would be any implications to FGSR Council's composition due to restructuring.
 - Dean Milne replied that until we know more about the recommended models she can't definitely say what the composition of FGSR Council might be.

6.0 Report from the Dean**COVID-19 Updates**

Dean Milne noted that there are three important documents on the FGSR website related to COVID-19 and graduate students and programs:

- [FAQ for students on our website](#): this document is updated regularly
- [COVID-19 & Graduate Student Funding](#): this document provides information about the various funding options for students who are not able to be in Canada
- [FGSR COVID-19 Information and Updates](#): this document is an archive of all the information we've sent out on COVID-19 to our grad administrators and coordinators

She underlined how important it is to read these communications as various factors are evolving regularly and this is our primary way to distribute information in a timely manner. The FGSR team continues to monitor new developments and will keep this group informed.

Deferrals and new cohort:

Dean Milne advised members that there are many questions about deferrals in light of COVID-19. If international students choose to defer admission beyond the Summer 2021 term, please advise them that they will join a new cohort and receive a new guaranteed tuition rate under Bill 19.

There have been some questions about rescinding offers due to the restrictions for student travel at the moment. Dean Milne advised that FGSR has been advised by U of A's legal counsel that if students have already accepted offers then there is a high degree of risk to the institution of rescinding the offer. The FGSR is working on some language to include in offer letters about funding having time limits so that supervisors do not find themselves holding up funds indefinitely. Once wording has been confirmed, we will circulate it to this group to consider for inclusion in their offer letters.

Exams:

Dean Milne reminded Council members that all exams (Final PhD, Master's and Candidacy) should still be [taking place remotely](#). Since March, FGSR has provided a daily On-call ProDean, who is available in case there are issues or questions that arise before, during or after the exam. This information is sent to the exam chair and grad administrator the day prior to scheduled exams. Dean Milne extended a thank you to the FGSR decanal team, who have been on-call since March.

Please note that if exams have been rescheduled or departments anticipate any issues and would like to have a ProDean present for the full exam, please contact us to arrange following existing procedures.

Finally, Dean Milne reminded Council members that if departments need to hold part of the exam on campus (non-remotely) for reasons such as low internet connectivity, inadequate space at home, etc., they must submit an exception request that is considered by FGSR. Please email graddean@ualberta.ca with the information that includes a list of who is attending and the proposed location where the exam will be held. We will then coordinate with Andrew Sharman's office and the PHRT Oversight committee to get approval and track the details.

Update on Supervisory Tools

Dean Milne thanked the grad administrators and chairs who are participating in the pilot of the supervisory tools. Their participation, questions, and thoughtful feedback has been constructive as we refine our processes.

We started with the Progress Reports over the summer with our low tech, Google form version. Approximately 15% of the students (and supervisors) in the participating departments have completed the Progress Reports to date. We are collating the feedback (about 2 dozen comments) from the Progress Report. Much of the feedback centers around the desire to have an automated, high tech process, especially to assist with the verification forms. IST has been developing this, and we will be using it for any future iterations.

Our collaboration with IST continues, and they are almost ready to pilot the paperless workflow process for the Student Supervisor Guidelines in the EDRMS system. We will bypass a low-tech pilot of this initiative and go straight to piloting through EDRMS in the coming weeks.

The aim is to have both initiatives approved this academic year and ready for implementation by the wider graduate program community for Spring or Fall 2021.

Summary of Main Initiatives We are Bringing Forward this Year:

In addition to the Supervisory Tools, Dean Milne highlighted the other initiatives FGSR is working on:

- Appeals Policy and Procedures: Vice-Dean Hogeveen is currently working to revise the procedures, for example by lending more structure, including time thresholds.
- Membership & Training: Associate Dean Ruétalo continues to work through the training component that will form part of the Membership Proposal. This will come to Council soon.
- FGSR is working on the minimum institutional graduate regulations, as well as ensuring that everything necessary from the Graduate Program Manual is now in the Calendar.
- Associate Dean Causgrove Dunn is leading a draft of the FGSR Core Competencies, which are directly related to Duty to Accommodate Policy requests.
- Associate Dean Raivio is working on an EDI guidebook for department award/scholarship adjudication processes, including revisiting FGSR minimum eligibility requirement for awards.

Orange Shirt Day

Orange Shirt Day is on September 30 this year, and Dean Milne asked Council members to promote it within departments and faculties. One of the goals in wearing an orange shirt on the 30th is to symbolize the coming together of our community as we embark on a journey of understanding and respect to collectively work towards reconciliation.

Governance

- If Departments need to make any calendar changes that are to appear in the 2021-2022 calendar, we strongly advise you to submit approved documents to FGSR at fgsrcal@ualberta.ca before November 1, 2020.
- If you have any questions, please reach out to Medha and she will direct your questions

Grad Coordinators Workshop

- Dean Milne thanked the Grad Coordinators who attended a workshop earlier in the week. Please email Dena Giroux for information about the next offering.

Questions/Discussion

- A Council Member asked if Winter 2021 will be remote.
 - Dean Milne responded that the U of A is planning to make an official announcement in the coming week or so. Keep an eye on the main FGSR website for this news.
- Some students have asked for updated Admissions letters. What is the process for this?
 - Please reach out to Medha and she will connect you with the Admissions Team.

7.0 Proposal: New Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) Members

Associate Dean Raivio reminded members that a new list of GSC members was approved in the Spring. This motion is for additional new members that are to be approved for membership.

Motion: *Be it resolved that FGSR Council approve the new members of the Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) as listed and for immediate inclusion on the committee.*

Moved/Seconded: Alan Underhill/Joan Greer

Questions/Discussion: None

Approved.

8.0 Proposal: New FGSR Academic Appeals Committee Members

The list was included in the meeting materials.

Motion: *Be it resolved that FGSR Council approve the new members of the FGSR Academic Appeals Committee as listed, and for immediate implementation.*

Moved/Seconded: Ali Shiri/Trish Reay

Questions/Discussion: None

Approved.

9.0 Proposal: New Policy Review Committee (PRC) Members

Motion: *Be it resolved that FGSR Council approve the members of the Policy Review Committee as listed, and for immediate implementation.*

Moved/Seconded: Klevis Haxhiaj /Mark Hall

Questions/Discussion: None

Approved.

Dean Milne thanked all the members who are serving on these committees.

10.0 GSA 2020-2021 Strategic Work Plan and Monthly Report

Dean Milne invited Sachiketha Reddy, GSA Vice President - Academic, to present the GSA Strategic Plan and monthly report.

The GSA's primary objective is to advocate for graduate students. The strategic work plan outlines the initiatives for the year. It includes feedback from graduate students. Mental health is a concern, especially during COVID-19, and the GSA continues to work on this. The GSA has a virtual help desk and a virtual games night, and also supports the food bank. In addition, the GSA also works with the Government, FGSR, the Provost's office, the SU, and the GSA-Alberta to advocate for graduate student interests.

11.0 Question Period

- When the deferral letters go out, will there be information about the financial implications?
 - New letters with a change to the admissions date cannot include changes to other items such as references to financial commitments; going forward, however, the

departmental letters should include the details related to time constraints for funding offers.

- Going forward, deferrals to the next academic year will involve tuition assessment at the new program rate, under Bill 19.
- Departments are asked to remind students about the implications of Bill 19 when deferring to another year. Students are expected to be fully aware of the changes to the fee structure when considering deferrals so that they can make an informed decision.

Dean Milne noted that FGSR has launched a virtual counter for students, which is going well. Please encourage your students to drop by if they need anything.

Please email graddean@ualberta.ca if there are any additional questions.

Dean Milne thanked everyone for taking time to attend the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:04 PM