

Attendance at FGSR Council – April 21, 2021
DEPARTMENT/UNIT FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES
Present:

Anthropology	Marko Zivkovic
Art & Design	Joan Greer
Biochemistry	David Stuart
Biological Sciences	James Stafford
Business (non-departmentalized) - MBA	Michael Maier
Business (non-departmentalized) - PhD	Trish Reay
Cell Biology	Richard Wozniak
Chemicals & Materials Engineering	Vinay Prasad
Chemistry	Michael Serpe
Civil & Environmental Engineering	Selma Guigard
Communication Sciences and Disorders	Esther Kim
Computing Science	Greg Kondrak
Computing Science - Multimedia Program	Anup Basu
Computing Science - Multimedia Program	Greg Kondrak
Drama	Stefano Muneroni
East Asian Studies	David Quinter
Economics	Heather Eckert
Educational Policy Studies	Darryl Hunter
Educational Policy Studies	Evelyn Steinhauer
Educational Psychology	Veronica Smith
Educational Studies	Douglas Gleddie
Electrical & Computer Engineering	Yindi Jing
Elementary Education	Trudy Cardinal
English and Film Studies	Mark Simpson
Faculte Saint-Jean (non-departmentalized)	Samira El Atia
Health Sciences Education	Douglas Gleddie
History & Classics (inc. Religious Studies)	Heather Coleman
Human Ecology	Rachel McQueen
Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation (non-dept)	Normand Boule
Laboratory Medicine & Pathology	Monika Keelan
Law (non-departmentalized)	Linda Reif
Library & Information Studies	Dinesh Rathi
Linguistics	Johanne Paradis
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 (non-departmentalized)	Dianne Tapp
Obstetrics & Gynecology (Medical Sciences)	Denise Hemmings
Occupational Therapy	Shaniff Esmail
Oncology	Alan Underhill
Oncology	Gordon Chan

Pediatrics (Medical Sciences)	Sujata Persad
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences (non-dept)	Arno Siraki
Philosophy	Ingo Brigandt
Physical Therapy	Mark Hall
Physics	Craig Heinke
Physiology	Zamaneh Kassiri
Political Science	Siobhan Byrne
Psychiatry	Allen Chan
Psychology	Chris Westbury
Radiology & Diagnostic Imaging (Medical Sciences)	Lawrence Le
Rehabilitation Medicine - Rehabilitation Sciences	Esther Kim
Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology	Henry An
School of Public Health (non-departmentalized)	Ruth Wolfe
Secondary Education	Bonnie Watt
Sociology	Gillian Stevens
Surgery	Fred Berry
Women's and Gender Studies	Felice Lifshitz

Regrets Sent:

Mathematical & Statistical Science
 Mechanical Engineering
 Renewable Resources

Absent:

Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science
 Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine (Medical Sciences)
 Biomedical Engineering
 Dentistry (Medical Sciences)
 Digital Humanities
 Earth & Atmospheric Sciences
 Internetworking (MINT)
 Neuroscience
 Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences (Medical Sciences)
 Pharmacology

ASSOCIATE DEANS (GRADUATE) REPRESENTATIVES FOR DEPARTMENTALIZED FACULTIES

Present:

Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences (ALES)	Leluo Guan
Arts	Kim Noels
Education	Doug Gleddie
Medicine & Dentistry	Greg Funk

Regrets Sent:

Science	Mark McDermott
Absent:	
Engineering	Jason Carey
Rehabilitation Medicine	Trish Manns

EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVES

Present:

FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost (FGSR Council Chair)	Brooke Milne
FGSR Vice-Dean	Bryan Hogeveen
FGSR Associate Dean	Janice Causgrove Dunn
FGSR Associate Dean	Tracy Raivio
FGSR Associate Dean	Ali Shiri
Vice-President (Research) (or Delegate)	Laura Beard
Vice-Provost and University Registrar (or Delegate)	Carlo Dimailig

Regrets Sent:

President (or Delegate)	President Flanagan
Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian (or Delegate)	Dale Askey
FGSR Associate Dean	Victoria Ruétalo

Absent:

Chair, FGSR Academic Appeals Committee*	Moin Yahya
Director, Centre for Teaching & Learning*	Janice Miller-Young

GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS COMMITTEE (GPAC) REPRESENTATIVES

Present:

Department of Dentistry	Dalyce Barss
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Absent:

Department of Neuroscience	Amber LaPointe
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GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA) DIRECTLY ELECTED OFFICIALS & GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA) COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Present:

<i>GSA President</i>	<i>Marc Waddingham</i>
<i>VP Academic</i>	<i>Sachiketha Reddy</i>
<i>VP Labour</i>	<i>Veronica Taylor</i>
Biomedical Engineering, PhD	Kevin Solar
Economics, PhD	Christian Kwarkye
Electrical and Computing Engineering	Puruhithika Kunde
English & Film Studies	Shashi Kumar
Mechanical Engineering	Sai Swaroop Reddy Pogalla
Nursing	Sania Amiri-Ishani
Pharmacy	Yasser Tabana
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences	Amanda Greenwell
Political Science - PhD	Meagan Auer
Psychology	Tiffany Kung
Surgery	Kasra Shayeganpour
Surgery	Mukt Patel
(ALTERNATE) Biomedical Engineering	Amir Adel
(ALTERNATE) Agricultural and Resource Economics	Meghan Lim
(ALTERNATE) Educational Policy Studies	Alleson Mason

(ALTERNATE) Oncology	Andrew Locke
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Regrets Sent:

Library & Information Studies	Lindsey Chochula
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Absent:

<i>VP External</i>	<i>Anas Fassih</i>
<i>VP Student Services</i>	<i>Sridhar Parasharamatham</i>
Civil & Environmental Engineering - PhD	Salam Khalife
Mechanical Engineering PhD	Armin Norouzi Yengeje
Music	Kathy Haddadkar
Neuroscience - PhD	Nicole Dittmann
Pediatrics	Shubham Soni
Pediatrics	Claudia Holody
Pharmacology, PhD	Nayiar Shahid
(ALTERNATE) AFNS	Klevis Haxhijaj
Mechanical Engineering PhD	Armin Norouzi Yengeje

OBSERVERS – NON-VOTING

FGSR, HR & Operations Coordinator*	Medha Samarasinghe
FGSR Executive Assistant & Operations *	Andrea Riewe
FGSR, EA to the Associate Deans*	Dena Giroux
FGSR Professional Development & Community Volunteer Program Director*	Deanna Davis
FGSR, Admissions and Program Services	Joyce Anderson

Supervisor*	
FGSR, Communications Coordinator*	Rob Desjardins
FGSR, Director, Professional Development*	Renee Polziehn
FGSR, Senior Financial Officer and IT*	Sylvia Fong-Wong
GFC Secretary*	Heather Richholt
Graduate Ombudsperson*	Remonia Stoddart-Morrison
Presenter, Director, Office of the Student Ombuds*	Natalie Sharpe
Presenter, Faculty Relations Officer*	Maryam Bagheritari
Presenter, Graduate Ombuds Intern*	Veronia Taylor
Presenter, Senior Faculty Relations Officer*	Brian Pearson
Professor, Mechanical Engineering *	Morris Flynn
Team Lead, Program Services*	Kris MacManus

*Non-Voting

FGSR Council April 21, 2021

1.0 **Call to Order at 2:01 PM**

Vice-Provost and Dean Brooke Milne called the meeting to order.

She welcomed members of Council, and reminded everyone of the process of using Zoom. She noted that members requiring further support with this platform can reach out to Andrea Riewe for help. Those with voting abilities received an email with links. They were asked to have this open and ready to go.

Dean Mine noted that FGSR had recently reviewed the policies regarding Observers attending FGSR Council, following inquiries from some non-members who were interested in attending. The following are some key points to keep in mind:

- Meetings are open to FGSR councillors (or properly appointed alternates) and specific visitors who have been invited by the chair to attend and speak to certain agenda items. Councillors who wish a visitor to be invited for a given agenda item shall inform the chair well in advance of the meeting date and in time for this to be recorded in the agenda. Non-participating observers may attend meetings subject to the will of Council.
- *Participation in debate:* Normally only members of Council (or their proper alternates) may participate in debate. However, visitors who have been invited to the meeting by the Chair to address a particular issue may participate fully in the debate of that issue. Visitors may not vote on any issue. Observers may neither participate in debate nor vote.

If members of Council know of individuals who would like to observe, please have them reach out to Andrea for next steps.

Dean Milne reminded members that each year FGSR requests the names of FGSR Council representatives and a designated delegate. Those forms will be circulated in the coming weeks.

2.0 Approval of Agenda for April 21, 2021

Moved / Seconded: Greg Funk/ Alan Underhill

No objections were raised. Dean Milne requested Council consider an amendment to the Agenda, an item noted "Approval Item 5.5 - Approval of Degrees Notwithstanding a Deficiency." This relates to students who were affected by the CR/NC grading change in Winter 2020, who are still hoping to convocate this Spring (thus the addition to this agenda). FGSR brought forward a similar item in January 2021.

Approved by consent.

3.0 Approval of Minutes of March 24, 2020

Moved / Seconded: Heather Coleman/Doug Gleddie

A Council member inquired about the Awards report provided by AD Raivio at the previous Council meeting, and specifically about the process for department allocations this year. The adjudication appeared to happen at the department level; the member wondered whether that process has changed.

AD Raivio clarified that the process has not changed at all and the recruitment process remains at department allocations.

Attendance amendment: Siobhan Byrne was at the meeting.

Approved by electronic vote.

4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters arising from the minutes.

A Council member asked about the timeline for recruitment funding, noting that it was quite late and much of the recruitment season is already over.

AD Raivio noted that the information is now live on the website. Due to the unusual financial circumstances that the University faces this year, the details around funding confirmation were significantly delayed. The website has the updated information, and the newsletter to staff will also contain additional details.

5.0 Report from the Dean

Dean Milne noted that there will be more information in the coming weeks about the UofA's return to campus for Fall 2021. There are ongoing meetings to plan the return to campus. There are several scenarios, with associated risk assessments, currently under consideration. A number of variables must be considered, including vaccines and the proportion of the campus community that is vaccinated as well as the variants of concern. The other thing to acknowledge is the late breaking news that many Council members, and members of the community, are dealing with kids in grades 7-12 being back on-line and therefore at home.

Dean Milne reminded members that if departments/faculties are having conversations about changes to program organization, they are urged to notify FGSR as early as possible. In addition to any governance processes that have to take place, there are also changes and updates to campus solutions and GSMS, and signing authorities that will be required. The more notice we get, the better.

A reminder that there are details about support for international students returning or arriving in Canada in the written report. Students who register with one of the two campus affiliated systems for quarantining are eligible for funds to support the additional and unexpected costs of having to quarantine upon arrival.

Dean Milne noted that the full episode of the Ryan Jespersen show, Real Talk, featuring the winners of this year's 3MT competition, is currently at 3,639 views on YouTube. The podcast version of that show saw just over 8,100 downloads (and counting). This is a tremendous amount of engagement from the public about what our graduate students are doing. It's also a testament to the hard work of the FGSR team that has now put on this event twice in a virtual environment.

Questions/ Comments: None.

5.5 Proposal: Approval of Degrees Notwithstanding a Deficiency

Due to the use of Credit/No Credit grading process for the Winter 2020 term, students who were on probation were unable to raise their grades through no fault of their own. These students do not have any additional requirements to complete their program; however, their GPA remains below the minimum (2.7) required to be considered in good academic standing to graduate. The slide before Council indicates the minimum faculty requirements and the students' GPAs. FGSR is asking Council to consider approving these students for convocation, notwithstanding the fact that their GPA is currently below the minimum 2.7.

Motion: Be it resolved that the FGSR Council approve those students being recommended to convocate in Spring 2021 with their respective degrees notwithstanding a deficiency related to the 2.7 minimum GPA required to be considered in good academic standing. These students have all been affected by the CR/NC grading scheme adopted by the University of Alberta in response to the disruption to Winter 2020 due to COVID-19.

Moved/Seconded: Alan Underhill/ Greg Funk

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council member asked whether these students have the support of their programs. Many students are getting letters of support from the instructors suggesting that they would have received a certain grade if they had completed the course.
 - Dean Milne noted that the units do support the students; however, FGSR is not taking into consideration the speculations about what their final grades would have been, since the process is supposed to leave out any level of speculation.
- A Council member noted that the explanation makes sense and the SPH supports the one student who is under consideration from that Faculty.

Approved by electronic vote.

6.0 Proposal: Course Audits

Dean Milne reminded Council that this item has come to Council for discussion in February and has also been brought to other committees, including PRC, GEFAC, and the Graduate Program Support Team. The intention is to provide structure and administrative direction on the practice of course auditing within graduate degree programs. At present, the Graduate Program Manual contains vague language; in practice students may audit up to three courses with approval from their academic unit. Should further course audits be considered, permission must be sought and granted by the Dean of FGSR.

She noted that there is also a discrepancy in how audited courses are assessed fees among graduate programs. Specifically, course-based Master's students at the U of A are assessed 50% of the course's fees and 50% of any non-standard fees. Thesis-based students are not assessed fees for any audited courses taken in their program. If the course is considered essential to the student's program, it should be taken for credit, not for audit, so that the student is evaluated on the content of the course. While the proposed structure on course auditing will not prevent or preclude students from auditing a course, there will now be a financial cost to consider. Dean Milne noted that assessing partial fees for course audits is commonplace across peer institutions.

Further to this proposed change, in order to ease the transition for those who are used to the current practice, there will be a grace period of one year before the proposed change takes effect. It will appear

in the 2022-23 calendar and thus the change will take effect in May 2022 (start of spring term next year).

Motion: Be it resolved THAT FGSR Council approve the policies around Course Audits for Graduate Students for inclusion in the 2022-2023 calendar, and to take effect beginning in the Spring 2022 Term.

Moved/Seconded: Dalyce Barss / Sujata Persad

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council Member asked about the practice of using a Notice of Motion for all votes. She noted that some items seem to have one but others do not. As a result, she was unaware that the Auditing item was going to a vote at this meeting. She also inquired about the practice of excising portions of the agenda package to circulate to department contacts to review rather than providing a summary of the issues. She had requested clarity from FGSR on what could be excised from the package but had been told that this was not the common practice.
 - Dean Milne noted that not all items have, or require, a Notice of Motion. A Notice of Motion is usually reserved for large, substantive issues such as the Supervisory Initiatives. In this particular case, the changes are providing clarity and bringing together language from the Graduate Program Manual into the Calendar so that there is no gap between the policy and procedure.
 - On the second issue of excising portions of the agenda to circulate more widely amongst faculty for feedback, Dean Milne noted that this can lead to confusion if the information is not adequately situated or if an early draft leads to misunderstanding or misinformation about the item. She also reminded Council that the meeting minutes are posted on the FGSR website following each meeting.
 - A Council member noted that unlike other institutional governance committees that post their full packages online, FGSR is in fact a faculty, and similar to other faculties, does not post the full agenda packages publicly. The practice is for representatives to flag any questions or issues that arise in Council meetings to their departmental colleagues. The packages are circulated a week in advance of each meeting to allow members to review the information and prepare.
 - Dean Milne suggested that if the Council member would like additional support and information about FGSR practices, that conversation can continue offline. This particular item has come to Council twice previously and it was noted in the agenda package circulated last week that the item was coming forward with the action listed as a vote.

- A Council member noted that she views the additions to the current auditing language as restrictive. While completion times might be a factor, it is not the case for all programs, and the larger issue seems to be the fees. In reviewing the comparable institutional practices she believes that the University of Toronto delegated decisions around course auditing to individual departments, and instructors. They also permit audited courses to be evaluated as pass/fail, and finally they also have the option of leaving audited courses off the transcript. They do have a

different fee assessment model as compared to the U of A. The U of T approach might work well here as it provides some of the structure that the current proposal is trying to add, but it will also give departments the flexibility to make decisions that suit their programs and needs. The Council member provided the example of smaller programs needing to maintain a strong cohort by having more senior students participate in the seminars and contribute to the discussions. Small programs might also have to meet a threshold of registered students in order to run the course. So while the details of the revised proposal might work for larger departments, it will pose challenges for smaller ones.

- A Council member questioned whether it might be possible to have different parameters for master's and doctoral students. Giving master's students one free audited course makes sense; however, doctoral students spend a considerably longer time in their program. Could they be allowed to audit two courses for free?
- A Council member asked for clarification on the effective term for the item. The agenda states the policy would take effect in Fall 2022 but in the Chair's initial comments Spring 2022 was mentioned.
 - Dean Milne clarified that the agenda wording is incorrect. The UA calendar is updated each Spring so the new policy would take effect at that time, which is a year from now.
- The Council member also asked about the fees and possible inequities that arise when asking thesis-based students to pay the same way course-based students are assessed fees. Aren't the program fees for a thesis-based student meant to cover the courses that students take for the duration of their program?
 - Dean Milne noted that program fees are meant to cover the requirements for the program. In instances where students are taking multiple audited courses it raises the question of why they aren't taking the courses for credit and why they are spending time taking courses that fall outside of the requirements for their program. If students are wanting to gain additional enterprise in a related area then this is where members of the supervisory committee can support the students' research by bringing in their expertise to round out the students' knowledge base.
- A Council member suggested that there be a consideration of allowing course based masters students the ability to also audit one course for free, instead of the current practice of charging them 50% of the fee. She also shared the frustration noted earlier in the discussion about having to retype key points from the discussions rather than cutting out sections to present to her colleagues; the packages are lengthy.
- A Council member supported an earlier suggestion about providing doctoral students with more than one free course.
- A Council member said he would follow up with more details about how possible course weightings might help to address what he thought were equity issues for students in doctoral programs.
 - Dean Milne appreciated the additional suggested modifications; however, this item has been discussed over the past few months and is coming to Council for a vote after being recommended for approval by two other committees.

The vote did not pass.

A Council member asked for the vote results. The results are below:

Abstain: 14

Approve: 23

Oppose: 29

- Dean Milne noted that FGSR will take some time to consider the issues raised around Notices of Motion and sharing materials, and will suggest some procedures for how to proceed. She also reminded Council members of the important role they play in attending Council, engaging with the materials, and providing comments in order to continue to move business forward. She noted that the outcome of this vote is not what she expected after extensive conversations across multiple committees wherein members have invested time and consideration to approve the item to move forward to a vote. The conversation today highlights the importance of addressing issues as they are coming through for consideration. FGSR will take the points raised today back to the Policy Review Committee for additional discussion. Her concern remains that it is important to have some structure around course auditing to ensure that students are focusing on subject matter that is related to their approved program requirements.

7.0 For Info: GSA Collective Bargaining - Update and Changes

- *Tabled for a future meeting.*

8.0 Office of the Student Ombuds Report

Dean Milne introduced Remonia Stoddart-Morrison and Veronica Taylor from the Office of Student Ombuds to present on the past year's work with graduate students.

Ms Stoddart-Morrison introduced herself as the interim Graduate Ombudsperson; her colleague Veronica Taylor is the graduate student intern who will shortly be taking on the role as the Interim Undergraduate Student Ombudsperson. She thanked FGSR for the opportunity to present some findings from the period of April 2020 to March 2021.

The Office of Student Ombuds offers advice and support to students regarding academic and disciplinary issues. They are not advocates for students; rather, they advocate for fairness and equity. Their goal is to strengthen the collegial relationship between the University and the students. They play an impartial role in conflicts between students and the University. They are a free and confidential source of information on policies and procedures for students to understand the policies that govern the situation that they are in. They are also an independent body that serves undergraduate students, medical residents, and graduate students. Over the past year they have conducted their services remotely and served 1,478 clients.

The role of the Graduate Ombudsperson:

- Provide confidential consultations to graduate students, medical residents, faculty, staff, and applicants on university policies and procedures and informal conflict resolution.
- Serve as a multi-partial advisor to clients in academic and non-academic appeals and issues.
- Act as a proponent of policy reform and provide information to appropriate university decision-makers in areas where policies create administratively unfair circumstances for clients.
- Provide information sessions on student rights and responsibilities, conflict resolution and early intervention, academic, research and writing integrity, and digital citizenship.
- Advise students in preparing appeals, and attend formal appeal hearings in an impartial role to ensure respect for fair and equitable processes.

The role of the Graduate Ombuds Intern:

- Advise graduate students and graduate clients through academic, discipline, interpersonal, or financial issues that arise during their programs.
- Apply problem-solving, communication, and conflict resolution skills to help clients improve their professional relationships.
- Provide information sessions on student rights and responsibilities, conflict resolution, and early intervention.
- Advise students in preparing appeals, and attend formal appeal hearings in an impartial role to ensure respect for fair and equitable processes.

The residence status of the total clients over the past year:

- International: 918 or 60%
- Domestic: 547 or 35%
- Unknown: 77 or 5%

The client population:

- Undergraduate: 1170 or 79%
- Graduate (including Medical residents): 296 or 30%
 - Although there were more cases overall in the year, there were slightly fewer graduate student cases. This may be attributed to the fact that (1) with the credit/no credit grades in Winter 2020 there were fewer cases of students being required to withdraw; (2) more students took a leave of absence; and (3) remote delivery and communication may have contributed to fewer conflicts. In addition, (4) the postdoctoral fellows who were previously counted in this group no longer receive services from the office.
- Unknown: 12 or 1 %
 - This may include applicants or parents of applicants.

Types of cases by categories:

- Academic: 69 or 20%
- Conflicts: 172 or 49%

- Academic Offenses: 78 or 23%
 - This number increased slightly over that of previous years, and the office speculates that this is due to the challenges of transitioning to online delivery
 - The Ombuds office is hopeful that the revised Ethics and Academic Requirements offering will help with the issues that are related to academic offenses.
- Non-Academic Offenses: 2 or <0%
- Discrimination and Harassment Allegations: 19 or 5%
- Miscellaneous: 9 or 3%

The reported sources of Graduate Conflict cases could be divided into two categories:

Supervisor/Student Conflict

- Communication issues
 - The switch to remote studies meant that more communication was conducted, less frequently, over email; and it can be harder to understand intent and tone over this medium than it is when communicating in person.
- Workstyle differences
 - The main issue here is the lack of clarity on expectations around workstyle. This was also impacted by the onset of the COVID pandemic, when expectations may have changed but were not clearly communicated or understood.
- Discrimination and harassment allegations
 - In these cases, students feel they have been bullied or mistreated by their supervisors. These are allegations that have not been proven. The Ombuds office recommends having early discussions to ensure that both parties have the same understanding around expectations.
- Collective agreement disagreements
 - These are conflicts arising over perceived discrepancies between what is written in the collective agreement and what is being asked of the students or what the students end up doing.
- Authorship issues
 - These issues involve concerns and confusion around authorship. These conflicts are sometimes referred to other offices and services on campus.
- Peer Conflicts.
 - These are interpersonal conflicts that arise from sharing lab space or working closely. In these cases, students are encouraged to learn conflict management skills.

Ms Stoddard-Morrison ended the presentation with the contact information for the office.

Dean Milne thanked them for the presentation as well as the continued work they do to support graduate students.

Questions/Discussion:

- A Council Member asked whether, when students contact the office, they are the first point of contact or if students have already tried contacting their department or other resources.
 - The Office can be the first point of contact, but one of the first questions Ombuds staff ask students is if they have been in touch with their supervisor or grad chair. This is encouraged, but they also understand that some of the students are beyond the point of being able to do that.
- A member asked, regarding the note about the collective agreements, whether this involves a lack of understanding related to the hours for the students' own projects or for others.
 - The issues were mainly related to the time spent on work that was not their own.
- A Council member asked where postdoctoral fellows now go for support.
 - There is now an office that supports postdocs specifically. The details will be circulated.

9.0 GSA Monthly Report

Dean Milne welcomed Marc Waddingham, the GSA president, to provide comments. Mr Waddingham noted that this was his last meeting and wanted to thank the FGSR and FGSR Council for their work in supporting graduate students. He also asked Kathy Haddadkar, the incoming VP Academic, to introduce herself.

Ms Haddadkar is in the first year of her masters of music in choral conducting.

Dean Milne took the opportunity to thank the outgoing GSA executive for their work and collaboration over the past year. It has been a positive, constructive working experience with the entire GSA Executive, who have all been engaged, helpful, dedicated and conscientious in their roles. She thanked this impressive group of junior colleagues.

She also welcomed the incoming Executive:

President: Anas Fassih

VP Academic: Kathy Haddadkar

VP External: Mohd Tahsin Bin Mostafa

VP Labour: Jessica Grenke

VP Student Services: Paresh Kumar

10.0 Notice of Motion: Supervisory Initiatives

Dean Milne noted that the agenda was behind schedule, so she would determine whether there was interest in extending the meeting by 15 minutes if needed.

She noted that this item is a Notice of Motion for the supervisory initiatives that FGSR has been consulting on for close to two years. The intention is to bring this item for approval at the May Council

meeting. FGSR has spoken with many constituents and various committees across campus, in order to gather additional feedback, comments, and suggestions. This has allowed us to continually update and make changes to the proposals in order to capture the feedback and be responsive to it. The intent of these initiatives is to focus on creating the most positive working relationship for graduate students and graduate students' supervisors.

Since the last time this committee met there have been some changes:

The Membership and Training component of the project has been moved to UAPPOL. The Office of the Provost, University Governance, and Faculty and Staff Relations have recommended this change. While the core content is as similar as possible, the format is now in line with other policies at the UofA.

FGSR has consulted with the AASUA and Faculty Relations. These conversations are ongoing.

In order to keep the nomenclature consistent with the UAPPOL policies, the wording in the membership and training documents now uses the terms "adjunct academic appointments" and "new supervisor development program." This bridges the Calendar language to that of UAPPOL, thereby connecting the initiatives.

The wording on the due dates for the tools has been adjusted to better reflect the rolling start dates of graduate students, and existing reporting schedules within units. FGSR also met with the Science GSA representatives. They had some ideas about expanding the wording around registration restrictions from the student perspective.

To be clear, the potential step of blocking registration is intended to be a lever for inquiry. If the processes aren't complete, then FGSR can follow up with students and supervisors to see if there are extenuating circumstances or other issues, and to support them to find a way to complete the outstanding item(s). Blocking of registration will not be the first step; this would only follow after repeated reminders, and as a last resort. Blocks are intended to be temporary, if applied, and will be removed as soon as FGSR has connected with the student/supervisor on any related issues.

Dean Milne noted that at the time the last Council package was circulated, there was also a smaller package of the supervisory initiatives that was sent to grad coordinators to use in order to consult with their units.

Discussion / Questions

- A Council member asked what kinds of details were still being discussed with the Faculty Association related to the collective agreement.
 - Dean Milne noted that the conversation has been around clarifying specific points and ensuring that there is a clear understanding about the terms of what the adjunct academic status with FGSR would mean. It will be important to ensure that the language is clear and also conforms with the existing collective agreement so that there is a consistent understanding of the policy and its implementation.

- A Council member inquired about the processes for elders to participate in supervisory committees and how the adjunct status might impact their roles.
 - Dean Milne clarified that the proposals before council are only focussing on the primary supervisor. A previous iteration covered members of the committee, but that portion has been paused for now. A great deal of consultation went into the discussion about how best to include elders as full members of a supervisory committee. These details will return as part of a larger policy suite in the fall. For the purpose of the supervision initiatives, the UAPPOL document is only focused on the primary supervisor.
 - Dean Milne also noted that Associate Dean Victoria Ruétalo and Dr. Deanna Davis have been consulting with Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming & Research) Florence Glanfield's office and the CLE's Dr. Jennifer Ward as they develop the Indigenous content for the supervisory development. She encouraged the Council member to reach out to Dr. Davis.
- A Council Member asked what was expected as a response from AASUA by the time the item comes to a vote in May.
 - Dean Milne noted that the conversation has been about clarifying points in the current proposal. As points are raised then FGSR can make adjustments to language for accuracy and clarity; however, we are not expecting that these conversations will change the proposal substantially.
- A Council member clarified that as noted by the previous speaker, the adjustments to the documents would be focussing on language and not content.
 - Dean Milne confirmed that the engagement at this stage is to clarify language and address assumptions or points of confusion that people may have or reset some assumptions from previous drafts; the basics of the proposals will not be changing.
- A Council member inquired about the status of ATS staff (A.2.i) within the new policy and their eligibility to supervise.
 - Dean Milne noted that FGSR is working closely with Faculty Relations to ensure that the documents capture all of the categories of individuals who are currently working in a supervisory capacity with graduate students. Those categories will continue going forward. A key component of the membership portion of the proposal is that the adjunct academic status would be granted to everyone who is currently working at the UofA, in a supervisory capacity with graduate students. She noted that FGSR will reach out with details about the specific category that the Council member asked about.
 - The Council member also noted that he was encouraged to see the idea of mentoring among supervisors, as is common practice in his faculty, as part of the supervisory development process.
- A Council member stated that it seems the change to list new supervisors as adjunct members of FGSR does not make any substantial changes to the previous policy. It is a change in nomenclature. He wondered if this change meant that there were other types of responsibilities associated with the category that may impact how a supervisor is a member or an adjunct member. Examples include implications for FEC.
 - Dean Milne confirmed that the change in name is a way to distinguish between how adjunct appointments currently work between faculties, and how this status would

apply differently to an appointment with FGSR. The FGSR adjunct status is quite different in that it does not follow the same procedure nor does it require a renewal or reporting.

- The Council member also observed that it seemed that the new policy and terminology provide an on-ramping to other policies that already exist. She wondered if the proposed policies would help to expedite some of the processes involving existing policies. Additionally, she asked if there were new processes in place in order to remove adjunct academic status.
 - Dean Milne clarified where there are references to compliance and complaints in the UAPPOL policy as it currently exists, the procedure for any faculty will follow that policy. FGSR is not creating some different category that would be related specifically to FGSR adjunct status; instead, the members would fit within existing policies.
- A Council member asked if there was an explicit statement anywhere about expectations around bullying related to asking students to do personal errands for supervisors.
 - Dean Milne suggested that it may not be explicitly stated but it is in the Student-Supervisory Guidelines related to professional expectations.
- A Council member asked about instances when students bully or harass their supervisors. She also asked if there was training to support better communication and ways to have hard conversations or deliver difficult news to students. Finally, she wondered if there could be clarity around FGSR's role in various activities such as candidacy exams or the approval of external examiners.
 - Dean Milne spoke to the role of FGSR on campus and in graduate programs. She noted that FGSR's role as it is currently is quite anomalous across Canadian institutions. There are certainly areas where the roles and processes can be improved and clarified, and hopefully as the University moves forward there will be opportunities to discuss these in more detail.
 - Dean Milne asked Dr. Davis to speak to the issue of communication training within the supervisory development program. Dr. Davis noted that roles and responsibilities of both students and supervisors are covered in Module Two. She has made a note of the Council member's comments and will ensure that it is clear that the content highlights the roles for both students and supervisors. Module Three addresses communication, and having difficult conversations is included in this section. Module Four deals with conflict resolution.
 - Dean Milne circled back to the issue of outlining student expectations that was raised earlier. The Student-Supervisor Guidelines set out the expectations for the students very clearly as it relates to the student's roles, responsibilities and obligations in particular, their responsibility in taking direction effectively and making sure that they're conducting themselves professionally. She noted that these student accountabilities are important mechanisms within the proposals that will be beneficial for supervisors to be able to manage instances where they do have difficult student situations. The tools will allow them to clearly and transparently communicate difficult things. They will also allow supervisors to set out goals for a set period of time and be able to clearly indicate possible next steps if students are unable, with support, to meet those goals. Currently, there is not a standard, transparent mechanism to deal with such difficult situations

wherein the supervisor is able to say that they have done everything they can to meet their responsibilities and obligations yet the student has been unable to progress. In such a case there would be grounds to make a recommendation for withdrawal. The process provides clarity and transparency to deal with those difficult situations. As stated in the documents, and in these discussions, FGSR recognizes that the vast majority of graduate supervisors are doing tremendous work supporting and mentoring their students. We hope that these initiatives, in addition to modeling their best practices, are things we can use to uplift the general culture of graduate supervision through consistency and transparency.

11.0 Question Period**12.0 Adjournment**

Dean Milne thanked Council members for their thoughtful engagement. She encouraged Council members to send in any questions should they have any that were not addressed or that come up over the coming weeks.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM.