

Graduate Policy Committee Meeting
MINUTES
8 March 2017
12:30pm–1:50pm

Room 200, Graduate Student Centre, 6371 Crescent Road

Attendees: Ljiljana Biukovic, Barb Conway (guest), Yousry El-Kassaby, Matthew Evenden, Jens Locher (guest), Mark MacLachlan, Josephine Ok (minutes), Max Read, Anna Ringsred, Clive Roberts, Susan Porter, Jenna Shapka, Larry Walker (Chair), Zhaoming Xu

Regrets: Tom Chang, Cyril Leung, John Ries, Wendy Robinson, Belsher Sidhu

1) Introductions and regrets

2) Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was approved by general consent.

3) Minutes of the meeting held 11 January 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting held January 11, 2017 were approved by general consent.

4) New business

a) Requirement for lay abstract for theses and dissertations (for approval)

Larry presented on the proposed requirement for all theses and dissertations to include a lay abstract in the preliminary pages of the document. A lay abstract explains the key goals and contributions of the thesis or dissertation in terms that can be easily understood by the general public.

Members discussed whether the lay abstract and the scholarly abstract could be similar, and if the lay abstract (maximum 150 words) could be extracted from the scholarly abstract (maximum 350 words). One member noted that, in some cases, a lay abstract could be rather difficult to produce, if the scholarly work is of an unfamiliar nature to the general public. However, it was noted that students will ultimately be required to provide a lay abstract for when they graduate, as their doctoral citation is read out as the student walks across the stage during graduation ceremonies. The members reached a consensus that a lay abstract is a necessary component of completing theses and dissertations, as students must be able to communicate their research findings to the general public.

Motion: *That the requirement for lay abstracts for theses and dissertations be approved.*

Carried.

5) For discussion

a) G+PS Strategic Plan

Susan led the discussion on the G+PS Strategic Plan by asking members, 'if you had unlimited money, what would you recommend to make UBC the absolute best place for graduate education?'

The discussion points were as follows:

- More funding for students – one member noted that UBC is not as competitive as other universities
- Better pay for graduate students in RAs, TAs
- Better pay for new faculty hires, to attract high profile researchers
- Supervisory workshops to professors to improve supervision (G+PS already does this)
- Conduct assessments on the quality of supervision
- Hire junior faculty (and postdocs) and free them from writing grants, and provide them money to lead graduate students – this will build an academic community and improve student-professor relationships
- Offer international co-op opportunities, including master's co-op opportunities
- Identify a central space for a 'graduate life centre'

Members also discussed the next steps in the strategic planning process, and decided to have group consultations with faculty in the following groups (based on similar interests):

- Arts / Sauder School of Business / Allard School of Law
- Science / Applied Science / Land and Food Systems / Forestry
- Medicine / Pharmaceutical Sciences / Dentistry
- Education
- Professional Programs / Course Programs

Faculty would be able to attend any meeting and would not be limited to their home faculty. Susan will also prepare a document with some guidelines to lead the group consultations. Members were also requested to encourage faculty attendance within their own faculties.

b) PhD Outcome Tracking

Jens presented on the PhD Outcome Tracking microsite, which is in its final stages of completion before being published to the public. This microsite utilizes a fully interactive dashboard to present the findings of this project, which tracked the outcomes of PHD alumni who graduated between 2005-2013 post-graduation. This project is intended to be repeated every two to five years to establish a foundational tracking of career outcomes or various purposes.

6) Meeting Adjournment: 1:50pm