

## MINUTES

### Meeting of the GC Policy Committee Wednesday, 15 November 2017, 12:30–13:50

Room 200, Graduate Student Centre, 6371 Crescent Road

**Present:** Ljiljana Biukovic, Barb Conway (in lieu of Thomas Chang), Matthew Evenden, Susan Porter, Wendy Robinson, Jennifer Shapka, Balsher Sidhu, Larry Walker (Chair), Zhaoming Xu

**Regrets:** Yousry El-Kassaby, Lutz Lampe, Mark MacLachlan, John Ries, Clive Roberts

**Staff and invited guests:** Max Read, Josephine Ok (minutes)

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#### 1. Introductions and regrets

#### 2. Adoption of the agenda

All	}	<i>That the agenda be approved.</i>
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Carried

#### 3. Minutes of the meeting held 15 September 2017\*

All	}	<i>That the minutes of the meeting held on September 15, 2017 be approved.</i>
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Carried

#### 4. Approval of candidates for degrees (N = 559)

Wendy Robinson Zhaoming Xu	}	<i>That the candidates for degrees (November conferral) be approved and forwarded to the Senate for approval, and that the Dean, in consultation with the Registrar, be empowered to make any necessary adjustments.</i>
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Carried

#### 5. Use of degree status designations such as PhD(c) and PhD(ABD) – for discussion

Larry noted that there was a recent case regarding the misuse of degree status designations. Degree status designations such as PhD(c) and PhD(ABD) are sometimes used by students, which could be used to indicate that a doctoral student has passed all of their requirements for a PhD except for the dissertation. These acronyms could be misleading to the public by implying that a student has already obtained a PhD in a particular area of specialization. Additionally, these acronyms are not officially recognized credentials at UBC. Members discussed whether a policy on restricting students' use of these acronyms was possible. While we are able to tell a student that we do not support the use of these acronyms, a protection of privacy policy at UBC states that staff are unable to confirm a student's enrolment status; they are only able to comment on a student's completed credentials. Therefore, staff would be unable to enforce a policy as they can't report externally on a student's status. Members

agreed that a “soft” policy (adding a statement on the G+PS website but not in the UBC Calendar) would be appropriate. An email to the Graduate Advisors was also supported.

## **6. The role of comprehensive examinations in doctoral education – for discussion**

Members discussed the pros and cons of having comprehensive examinations in doctoral education. UBC requires comprehensive exams to graduate, whereas some Canadian, UK, and Australian universities don't. It was noted that a comprehensive exam provides an early opportunity to identify students who may not be able to graduate. Other pros included: ensuring consistency within graduate programs; following guidelines; providing a positive learning experience for the student where they can become aware of their weaknesses (i.e., statistics, research design) and work on those areas. A con was noted where sometimes supervisors may not follow the guidelines provided by the graduate program.

Members agreed that every graduate program should include in their student handbook a detailed section on comprehensive exams. G+PS currently has a section on comprehensive exams on their website, as well as a discussion paper from CAGS (circulated). Members agreed that it would be helpful to designate one staff member or a work-study student to look at each graduate program policy on comprehensive exams.

## **7. Other Business**

There was a discussion on UBC-O faculty and membership in G+PS.

UBC-V Senate policy states that tenure-track faculty members in the research professoriate stream are eligible to become members of G+PS and to supervise graduate students. Non-tenure-track faculty members at UBC and others external to UBC must go through an application process to supervise graduate students. UBC-O faculty members are required to go through the same process to supervise UBC-V graduate students and to serve on doctoral supervisory committees (i.e., approval of the grad program and G+PS). Recently, at an Associate Deans–Research meeting, there was some discontent over this situation.

Members discussed whether UBC-O faculty members should be treated identically to UBC-V faculty members. If yes, there should be some restrictions, including: the supervisor should be from the campus in the student's home program; 50% of the committee should be members of G+PS; and all incoming G+PS faculty should take mandatory workshops on supervision. There was also a suggestion to include a checkbox when submitting a supervisory committee to indicate if they were UBC-O faculty.

## **8. Meeting adjourned: 1:45pm**

*Lunch provided*

\*Minutes of previous meetings are available here:

<http://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/graduate-council/academic-policy-committee-previous-meetings>