

**Meeting of the GC Academic Policy Committee**  
Wednesday, January 14, 2015; 12:30 pm – 1:50 pm  
Graduate Student Centre, Room 200

**Present:** Colúm Connolly, George Furey, Jenny Phelps, Susan Porter, Cindy Prescott, Max Read, Michael Richards, Larry Walker (Chair), Daniel Weary, Lisa Blomfield (minutes)

**Guests:** Akram Alfantazi (for Elizabeth Croft), Brian Cairns (for Kishor Wasan)

**Regrets:** Elizabeth Croft, Gail Murphy, Marina von Keyserlingk, Kishor Wasan

**Absent:** Brian Bemmels, Ljiljana Biukovic, Beth Haverkamp, Peter Leung, Clive Roberts

**1. Introductions and regrets**

**2. Adoption of the agenda**

All	}	<i>That the agenda be amended to include the proposed item of 'Admission process changes and resulting effect on admission policy' and approved.</i>
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Carried.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting (November 13, 2013)**

All	}	<i>That the minutes of the meeting held November 13, 2013 be approved.</i>
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Carried.

**4. Chair's remarks**

**Doctoral Exam Update:** In the last term (Sept - Dec 2013) we had 192 doctoral exams. It was a challenging term with regard to difficult exams and negative reports. There were 7 negative external examiner reports and 2 re-examinations. Looking at the trend over the last 5 years, we average about 16 negative reports or re-examinations per year (ranges between 13 -21). This represents about 3% of our exams.

## 5. From November 2013: Updates

### a. Visiting International Research Students (VIRS)

Jenny informed the committee that this proposal has been approved by the Senate Admissions Committee as well as the Senate Policy Committee, which means it will be put forward to Senate for final approval. There is a question of whether or not the fee that is associated with this pathway is actually a brand new fee that needs Board of Governors approval. The fee itself is the same exact amount as the Go Global fee, so whether this is seen as a brand new fee or the reuse of an existing fee will determine whether it will need approval of the Board of Governors.

We expect it to be implementable by the end of this term. Go Global will be responsible for establishing the infrastructure to manage this pathway.

### b. Prohibition on supplemental examinations in graduate programs ([Supplemental Examination Policy](#) from UBC Calendar)

Larry prompted the department that initiated this discussion to provide us with a more thorough rationale as to why they want the prohibition on supplemental examinations re-examined. They have not responded for quite some time, and as such we will remove this item from our agenda until we hear otherwise.

### c. Continuous registration policy

In general, graduate students pay registration continuously (by term or year), but there are a small number of online programs that charge tuition on a per credit basis. This inconsistent funding model has caused some course-based masters programs to ask why their students can't be charged on a per credit basis. Changing the tuition model is not something that falls under our mandate but we will prompt the Registrar and other appropriate offices in the University to investigate this.

## 6. Business Arising

### a. Supervision by non G+PS members: updating recommendation form and clarifying relevant sections of our website

This is regarding the issue of approving supervisors or supervisory committee members that are not part of G+PS. Occasionally we get requests from programs for non G+PS members to serve on supervisory committees or to supervise and there is some ambiguity on the appropriateness of this. Challenges arose within Medicine due to what is called a 'partner track' appointment (Pharmaceutical Sciences are also starting to use this type of appointment). These appointments (who are employed by other agencies but have linkages with UBC) were informed by their Faculty that they were entitled to supervise students and this isn't completely correct. This issue has since been resolved but the consequence of these discussions has led G+PS to clarify some of the wording on our website regarding the supervision, co-supervision, and serving on supervisory committees by people who are not formal members of G+PS. Note, there has been no policy change.

As a result of this clarification, we have drafted a number of changes to our form that recommends non G+PS members for supervision of a graduate student. Larry presented the revised form and highlighted the changes to the committee.

A lengthy discussion followed relating to the wording (and interpreted definitions) of the form and existing policy, who should be allowed to supervise graduate students and how we approve/monitor supervisors who are not members of G+PS. Points to note were as follows:

- The need to recognise different types of expertise, and whether or not that expertise has to have originated with graduate education.
- The difference between the sole supervision of a graduate student, as opposed to sitting on the supervisory committee, and that perhaps these should be separated to a further degree.
- There was concern about non-G+PS members being granted sole supervision, and there may need to be stronger wording around a non-G+PS member being a supervisor.
- The possibility of separating the original form into two distinct forms, one for the supervisor and one for a supervisory committee member, was discussed.
- The possibility of copying the Associate Dean on these exceptions was raised.
- The committee thought it favourable to simplify the 'committee member only' form, potentially by combining the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> requested items:
  - *Description of nominee's stated commitment to supervision and impact on student's research*
  - *Statement from nominee assenting to serve*
- The committee also discussed that for approval of a committee member, the check boxes referring to *Highest degree earned, Refereed publications and Experience in graduate education* were unnecessary (as these should be apparent on the accompanying CV).

**Conclusion and resulting action:** The recommendation of the committee is that there should be two recommendation forms, one for the appointment of a supervisor or co-supervisor and one for the appointment of a committee member. Larry and Max will redraft these two forms and present them to the committee at the next meeting.

## 7. New Business

### a. Restructuring of Graduate Council

Larry introduced this item and called for the committee to move the motion below:

<i>Michael R/Daniel W</i> }	<i>That the Graduate Policy Committee approve the revised Calendar entry and new bylaws for Graduate Council (as detailed in the attached document) and recommend them to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.</i>
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Discussion followed:

Larry walked the committee through the document relating to the background of this proposal. Graduate Council was first established by Senate in 1986, and various powers and duties related to the academic quality of graduate students at the University were delegated to it. Every few years the composition of Graduate Council changed as a result of fluctuations and considerations within disciplinary faculties. The membership eventually grew to 98, although we typically get about one third of this at our meetings.

The external review of the Faculty of Graduate Studies was conducted a couple of years ago, and the review committee arrived at the conclusion that the current structure of Graduate Council was a little dysfunctional. In March 2012, the Provost convened an ad hoc committee to consider the major recommendations arising from the external review of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and it was during this process that the ad hoc committee decided that Graduate Council should be smaller (yet still representative and legislative) with a broader mandate.

We have drafted new bylaws and guidelines for the composition of Graduate Council, and these were presented to the Committee of Deans last spring. Larry briefly ran through the calendar entry, the bylaws, and the revised allocation of membership seats that will form the new Graduate Council (shown below):

	<b>2013 G+PS Enrolment</b>	<b>No.</b>
<b>Faculty*</b>		
Arts	1905	3
Education	1726	3
Medicine	1602	3
Science	1565	3
Applied Science	1556	3
Forestry	230	1
Land and Food Systems	177	1
Law	104	1
Graduate Studies	91	1
Commerce and Business Administration	84	1
Dentistry	77	1
Pharmaceutical Sciences	61	1
<b>Students / Staff / Ex-officio</b>		
Students (GSS)		3
Graduate program staff		2
VP – Students		1
VP – Research & International		1
Senators (faculty elected by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)		2
G+PS Dean, Associate and Assistant Deans		5-6
<b>Total</b>		<b>36-37</b>

Each faculty will determine their own procedures for selecting representatives. The objective is to make this a more active, engaged body that is better integrated with the sub-committees.

Our hope is that these bylaws will be approved by this committee and then by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (at a full Faculty meeting), so that they may be submitted to the Senate Academic Policy Committee and proceed to Senate before the end of the academic year. If we can achieve this timeframe the new bylaws can be implemented in September for the 2014/2015 academic term.

Colúm raised concerns the GSS have with the proportion of graduate student representatives moving from approximately 15% representation to 7%. Colúm moved to amend the original motion and increase the graduate student allocation to 6 (from 3).

Colúm C/George F	}	<i>That the Graduate Student Membership in the proposed bylaws for the new structure of Graduate Council be amended to 6.</i>
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Discussion followed:

- Colúm reiterated that the policies Graduate Council will be working to change ultimately affect graduate students. Including a variety of graduate student representatives throughout this process will ensure diversity of perspective, and crucial input and engagement.
- Larry commented that we do have flexibility within the composition of the sub-committees. There has been pressure from the external review committee and the Provost's ad hoc committee to keep the numbers down.

Larry called for the committee to vote on the amendment to the motion.

*Carried.*

Larry then called for the committee to vote on the amended motion.

*Carried.*

## **8. Forthcoming/proposed agenda items**

- Plagiarism and scholarly misconduct processes**
- Thesis embargo policy**
- Admission process changes and resulting effect on admission policy**

## **9. Adjournment**

All	}	To adjourn the meeting.
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*Carried.*

## **10. Next meeting: Wednesday, February 12, 2014**