

Meeting of the GC Policy Committee

Tuesday, November 27, 2012; 12:30 pm – 1:50 pm

Graduate Student Centre, Room 200

Present: Beth Haverkamp, Peter Leung, Connie Lin, Philip Loewen (Chair), Jenny Phelps, Susan Porter, Max Read, Clive Roberts, Marina von Keyserlingk, Daniel Weary, Lisa Blomfield (minutes)

Guests: Rachel Wu, Helene Love, Michelle Suderman, Sue Grayston

Regrets: Akram Alfantazi, Daniel Granot, Douglas Harris, Rabia Khan, Michael Richards, Curtis Suttle

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

2. Minutes of last meeting (October 23, 2012)

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| <i>All</i> | } | <i>That the minutes of the meeting held October 23, 2012 be approved.</i> |
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Carried.

3. Business arising

Philip informed the committee that we're still working through the action items and initiatives from the last meeting, and there are no further updates at this time.

4. New Business

a. Visiting graduate students

(Guest: Michelle Suderman, Associate Director, ISD & International Student Advisor)

Jenny began by reminding the committee that we looked at a proposal (which did not include a fee structure) for a new process for managing visiting graduate student researchers last year, and that this proposal had been presented to the Senate Academic Policy Committee. It was at this point that the Office of the Provost intervened, and requested we take a broader approach.

Since that time, a working group has been studying the issue and refining the proposal. The group includes representatives from the offices of the Provost, FoGS, the VP Students and the VP Research and International. One of the group's main concerns was that the original proposal didn't have a fee structure. It was felt by the Provost's office in particular, that it was important for the university to recoup the costs of managing international student visitors, and to have a more structured way of welcoming and serving these students.

Jenny reiterated that there will be a number of different approvals and processes required in order to move this policy ahead, and hopes to have a new proposal to bring to this committee early in the New Year, in order to meet the timelines for submission to the Board of Governors April meeting.

Jenny circulated the project plan for Visiting International Research Students, and briefly ran through the various mechanisms by which international graduate students are currently able visit UBC. One of these mechanisms is through Faculty Relations, and this is no longer the appropriate channel for this process. The Faculty of Graduate Studies also has a mechanism for visiting graduate students who would like to take courses. We're not proposing to change this latter mechanism, but we would like to reserve it for students who are coming to UBC to take courses for credit.

We get many inquiries from students asking how to come to UBC as a visiting graduate student, and it's clear that we need a straightforward mechanism that we can communicate to students and faculty. The university also seeks to provide an improved student experience for these students. Currently, students that come by an informal process have no official student status and therefore don't have access to any student resources, including student housing, health care, insurance, the U-Pass etc. There are also legal factors that must be taken into consideration. For example, are they here on the right study permit?

Jenny touched on the benefits of introducing a more formalised pathway, including being able to track and document this activity, supporting and leveraging research relationships, and furthering funding partnerships with international funding agencies.

The working group has proposed a coordinated approach, and last spring it was directed by the Provost's office to develop a fee structure for this program. We know that this is likely to be unpopular, but this forum, in addition to other wider consultation, gives us an opportunity to give feedback to the Provost on how the graduate community feels about charging fees for this service.

The working group spent the late spring and summer working with the Strategic and Decision Support Group and arrived at a proposed fee structure, which will become part of a new proposal. This proposal will be circulated for further consultation on campus, and will need to be acceptable to this committee, the Senate Academic Policy committee, the Graduate Council, and the Senate. If this process becomes centralised, we will also need to identify proper administrative procedures, and it was decided that the Go Global office is best situated to manage this program

Key comments and discussion points are as follows:

- How many visiting graduate students are at UBC right now? There are 250 visiting scholars, and this might be anywhere between 5 and 95 percent of the total number of visiting students. We just don't know.
- The different mechanisms currently used by Faculties to bring in visiting students were discussed at length.
- The possibility of a sliding fee was raised.
- Tourist visas were raised, and whether they are legal for students doing research work. It is a bit of a grey area, but it can be risky as the decision to accept the visa is entirely at the discretion of the border staff, and there have been instances where students have been turned away.
- There was a lengthy discussion on the different types of visas, work and study permits, and how they are awarded.
- One of the issues with the visiting scholar mechanism is that students brought in via this process do not have access to student services, including student housing, health, counselling, transit passes.
- The working group has looked into liability issues, and we have been assured that UBC's insurance covers anyone doing work in a UBC facility. However, for a student with no formal student status we might not have the authority to deal with instances of academic misconduct.
- The committee discussed the possibility of charging the fee to the research supervisor instead of the visiting graduate student.
- The University of Toronto has implemented a set fee for all international visiting graduate students. Apparently compliance has been an issue, and they've had to put in place some incentives.
- The possibility of having particular fee structures for different programs, and the ability to be flexible in accommodating those students that are only here for a short time was raised.

Jenny commented that it sounds like there is room for two models: one for government sponsored initiatives and the other for the one-off cases. Jenny reiterated that a student coming for a month or less wouldn't have to pay fees, but they also wouldn't have student status. We would however still expect the hosting Faculty of these short term visiting students to submit the necessary forms so that they can be tracked.

The committee discussed possible benefits to encourage compliance with this new mechanism, including certificates signed by supervisors.

Jenny moved on to introduce the fee concept to the committee, and circulated a draft proposal. We have a variety of scenarios based on how long the student would stay. The budget team from the Provost's office was asked to estimate the cost of providing administrative and support-based assistance for a student. The team concluded that assuming we have 150 new visiting students (as an example) that are here for a year, it would take a 0.7 FTE to provide this service. This works out to be \$340 per student, and is lower than the University of Toronto's fee (\$500). Students would also have to pay other mandatory fees, including

the AMS fee, and Connie commented that this doesn't include the GSS fee. In total the mandatory fees would be close to \$1400 for one year.

Further discussion ensued. Highlights were as follows:

- Creating the possibility of being able to opt-in or opt-out to the AMS, GSS, U-Pass and extended health fee package.
- There were concerns about the effect this fee structure will have on the short term (1-3 month) stays.
- The group discussed the possibility of charging for credits, and by adding this academic component the fees may seem more reasonable (the signed certificate could come in to play here).
- Discussion on whether we should be charging the academic resource fee, although the provost's budget group thinks this covers things like library access, IT access, and other infrastructure that supports academic work at the university.
- All agreed it was of benefit to students if they had access to student resources.

Jenny then asked the committee's advice on how and when to bring this forward for broader consultation, although first Jenny would like to take this feedback to the working group in order to refine the proposal further. The concept of a voluntary buy-in was raised, as well as asking leaders to advocate for the process. Jenny commented that we haven't done a good job yet of articulating the value to the student or the program.

Jenny concluded the discussion by stating that we need to do a better job of identifying what the fees cover, how they will improve the student experience and support services better, and how they could assist the graduate program administratively. We'll also follow up on the student fees and whether an opt-out is possible. In terms of consultation we need to take this draft back to the working group for more shaping and polishing, but we would like to start talking to the graduate advisors and department heads to get their thoughts. Dan suggested an open house forum.

Jenny will bring an update back to the first meeting of the Policy Committee in January.

5. Adjournment of the meeting

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| <i>All</i> | } | To adjourn the meeting. |
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Carried.

6. Next meeting: January 15, 2012