

MINUTES
Meeting of the GC Policy Committee
Wednesday, 12 October 2016, 12:30pm–1:50pm

Room 200, Graduate Student Centre, 6371 Crescent Road

Present: Ljiljana Biukovic, Tom Chang, Matthew Evenden, Cyril Leung, Mark MacLachlan, Max Read, John Ries, Larry Walker (chair), Josephine Ok (minutes)

Regrets: Jenny Phelps, Susan Porter, Wendy Robinson, Jenna Shapka, Zhaoming Xu

Absent: Clive Roberts, Yousry El-Kassaby, GSS representatives (not yet elected for 2016-17)

1) Introductions and regrets

2) Adoption of the agenda

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

3) Minutes of the meeting held 14 September 2016*

<i>All</i>	}	<i>That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2016 be approved.</i>
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Carried

4) Chair's Remarks

Academic Misconduct – Larry reported that student cases of academic misconduct have continued to surface from time to time at G+PS over the years. These cases are troubling for all – staff, faculty and student. The amount of time taken to resolve each case is not only time-consuming, but is also disappointing to see a student required to do remedial work, suspended from their studies for a period, or even to fail to complete his/her program. Associate deans of graduate studies were encouraged to emphasize the importance of scholarly integrity whenever they had the opportunity.

5) New Business: Requirements for direct-entry and fast-track entry into doctoral programs

Larry introduced a new proposal to vote on, regarding direct-entry and fast-track admissions into doctoral programs.

Direct-entry from bachelor's degree

The current requirements for direct-entry allow outstanding students in an honors bachelor's program to enter directly into a doctoral program (given that they have an overall A average and proven research ability, as well as a recommendation from the program and approval by G+PS). However, Larry noted two arising issues with this 'honors' degree requirement' – one being that the requirement has not been monitored at G+PS, and secondly, the 'honors' requirement created problems for student applicants from universities without honors programs.

In direct-entry admissions, students are on probation in their first year, with the requirement that they complete 12 credits with a first-class average standing. This requirement leaves students with limited time for research in their first year, as well as limited choices in courses that they are able to take (depending on what's available that year).

The proposal entailed the following changes:

1. Drop the honors requirement for direct-entry students (but continue to enforce an overall A average).
2. Extend the probationary period for direct-entry students to complete 12 credits with a first-class average from one year to two years.
3. Allow students to fast-track from the master's into the doctoral program after the completion of a minimum of 9 credits of first-class standing (instead of the current 12 credits).
4. Students who have fast-tracked into the doctoral program will be on probation in their second year, being required to attain a first-class average in a minimum of 12 credits of coursework (included the 9 credits used as the basis for transfer).

A discussion ensued, where the following comments and concerns were expressed:

Comments:

- Extending the probationary period will provide greater flexibility for students to choose courses that relate to their interest, rather than taking what is offered in that year.
- Likewise, professors will see an increase in enrollment in those specialized courses that are only offered bi-annually.
- Students in certain faculties, such as Science, may have opportunities to attend off-campus expeditions due to more time to complete their 12 credits over two years instead of one.

Concerns:

- Does removing the honors requirement and extending the probationary period lower the overall standards at UBC?
- Is there any danger of too much flexibility, particularly in delaying cases of students who might otherwise be asked to withdraw from their program?
- Extending the probationary period may increase costs to the university, as students will access services and rooms for longer periods (i.e., libraries, computers).

Larry noted that fast-track and direct-entry admissions are at each program's initiative and are not mandatory. If voted positively at this meeting, Larry will take this policy to Grad Council for voting, then the Senate Admissions Committee, and ultimately the Senate. The entire process will take a few months for the policy to go into effect.

<i>Moved:</i> <i>Matthew Evenden</i>	}	<i>That the proposal regarding changes to the current requirements for fast-track and direct-entry into doctoral programs be approved.</i>
<i>Seconded:</i> <i>Tom Chang</i>		

Carried

Adjournment: 1:19pm

Lunch provided

*Minutes of previous meetings are available here:

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