

**Meeting of the GC Academic Policy Committee
Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 12:30pm–1:50pm**

Room 200, Graduate Student Centre, 6371 Crescent Road

Present: Matthew Evenden, Yousry El-Kassaby, Beth Haverkamp, Kin Lo, Natalie Marshall, Gail Murphy, Susan Porter, Max Read, Wendy Robinson, Larry Walker (chair), Ran Xiang, Zhaoming Xu, Josephine Ok (minutes)

Regrets: Thomas Chang, Don Mavinic, Jenny Phelps

Absent: Clive Roberts

1) Introductions and regrets

Departing members: Beth Haverkamp, Natalie Marshall (GSS), and Ran Xiang (GSS)

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 10 February 2016*

<i>All</i>	}	<i>That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2016 be approved.</i>
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Carried

4) Chair's Remarks

Larry reported that the decorative wooden beams surrounding Thea Koerner House are rotting and in need of replacement, but due to scheduling conflicts, construction has been postponed until next summer. This will provide the office with more time to secure replacement rooms for doctoral exams, which are heavily scheduled throughout the summer terms.

Transfer Credit Policy: the Senate has approved this policy, which will allow transfer credits from graduate certificates into designated masters programs.

Appeals on Admission Offers Policy: this newly drafted policy that includes appeals on re-admission and revoked admissions has moved to Senate.

English Language Proficiency Requirements Policy: the Senate Admissions Committee has approved this policy and the policy will move forward to the Senate next week.

Calendar Update: the office is currently updating the UBC Calendar to include the new English language proficiency requirements for each program within the Faculty of G+PS

5) Approval of Candidates for degrees

All

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That the candidates for degrees (May 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.

Carried

6) New Business (for discussion only)

a) Part-time doctoral student status

Currently, UBC does not offer part-time doctoral studies, although there is a part-time option for many masters programs. This topic of part-time doctoral student status is relevant for discussion today due to a few reasons:

- Putting practice into reality: many students are functioning as 'part-time students,' even though they are registered as full-time doctoral students
- Flexibility: a part-time program can benefit both students and departments to utilize part-time programs as needed (but won't be mandatory)
- A part-time program may allow students to by-pass minimum stipend requirements if they are already working full-time in their field
- Part-time doctoral programs may not significantly impact government block grants to the university

A discussion ensued where many good questions were asked, including:

- Who would benefit from part-time studies?
- How can manipulation of the system be avoided?
- What policy guidelines should there be to allow students to make an informed decision to pursue part-time studies? Students must consider whether part-time studies will affect their academic career (i.e., lack of Tri-Council funding, the number of articles they will publish over x-years, etc.)

Some suggestions to these questions included:

- Providing clear guidelines on who would be determined eligible for part-time studies (i.e., those working full-time in their field, new mothers/fathers, etc.)
- Explaining the fee structure clearly and upfront (in principle, the option for part-time studies should cost nearly the same as the cost of full-time studies)
- Students must provide a rationale for selecting part-time studies in their applications

Some members expressed concern that part-time studies may cause doctoral students to graduate more slowly. There was also a divided opinion on whether registered students should be allowed to transfer between part-time and full-time studies. Most members agreed that there should be clear guidelines as to who would be eligible to apply for part-time doctoral studies.

After discussion, Larry and Susan thanked everyone for their thoughtful contributions. Larry will begin working on a draft policy, and Susan will briefly discuss this topic at the next Grad Council / Faculty meeting on Thursday, May 12, 2016.

b) Scope and Structure of the dissertation

Prior to discussing the scope and structure of a dissertation, Larry mentioned that there have been some concerns over current tracking processes in the supervision of doctoral students. Currently, the G+PS office is given information regarding supervision only after a student passes candidacy. This late information prevents the G+PS office from overseeing quality assurance. Some options to improve data gathering on supervision could involve:

- Requesting the names of supervisors to be included in the dissertation document
- Including the names of supervisors in metadata or searchable information (i.e., students can see what papers supervisors have previously supervised)
- Requesting typed signatures from supervisors

Some objections to such data gathering on supervision may include:

- “I don’t want to be associated with this student”
- “Privacy concerns”

A member asked a thought-provoking question – Which information was more important, tracking who directed the work, or who gave the final approval?

Scope and Structure of the dissertation:

Currently, UBC allows students to write dissertations in other languages under certain circumstances. For example, students pursuing a PhD in a language (i.e., French) may submit their dissertation in that language.

At the Faculty of G+PS, one of the aims behind the ‘Reimagining the PhD: Public Scholars Initiative (PSI)’ has been to accommodate or encourage broader types of scholarship. Some PSI scholars have mentioned that there is some resistance from their committees regarding the shift in dissertation types (i.e., policy paper, documentary film, museum presentation). A student had made a request for the Faculty of G+PS to show support for different types of scholarship while still maintaining the same rigour.

A member suggested that the G+PS office should check with UBC Counsel in regards to this topic, as UBC Counsel is also currently debating the same issue as to what forms of community-engaged research is countable for promotions to tenured positions.

Another member noted that there might be backlash from the performance community as to why their work is not a dissertation.

There was also a discussion as to where these alternative forms should be inserted in the dissertation (i.e., data, appendix, body, etc.).

Larry brought this topic for discussion in order to modify some wording on the Faculty of G+PS website, and to draft policy changes.

7) Adjournment: 1:55pm

*Minutes of previous meetings are available here:

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