

**Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research**

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

2:00 to 4:00 pm

University of Alberta Council Chamber, 2-100 University Hall

**Attendance at FGSR Council – April 12****Department Council Rep**

Biochemistry, David Stuart  
Business- MBA, Michael Maier  
Business – PhD, David Deephouse  
Cell Biology, Thomas Simmen  
Chemical & Materials Engineering, Vinay Prasad  
Chemistry, Mark McDermott  
Computing Science, Jia You  
Dentistry, Pat Flood  
East Asian Studies, Daniel Fried  
Elementary Education, Doug Gleddie  
Humanities Computing, Maureen Engel  
Library and Information Studies, Ali Shiri  
Linguistics, David Beck  
Mathematical & Statistical Sciences, Jochen Kuttler  
Mechanical Engineering, John Doucette  
Modern Languages and Cultural Studies, Carrie Smith-Prei  
Nursing, Pauline Paul  
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Denise Hemmings  
Oncology, Alan Underhill  
Pharmacology, Amy Tse  
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences, Scot Simpson  
Philosophy, Ingo Birgandt  
Phys Ed and Rec, Normand Boule  
Physical Therapy, Mark Hall  
Physics, Richard Marchand  
Physiology, Greg Funk  
Religious Studies, Ryan Dunch  
Resource Ec & Envir Sociology, John Parkins  
Women and Gender Studies, Michelle Meagher

**Ex-Officio Representatives**

FGSR Dean & Vice-Provost, Dean Zwicker  
FGSR Vice-Dean, Debby Burshtyn  
FGSR Associate Dean, Bryan Hogeveen  
FGSR Associate Dean, Suzanne Kresta  
FGSR Associate Dean, John Nychka  
FGSR Assistant Dean (Administration), Amy Dambrowitz  
Vice-Provost and University Registrar, Thomas Hidson  
Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Janice Miller-Young

**Graduate Program Administrators (GPAC)**

Faculty of Extension, Eileen Crookes  
Department of Mechanical Engineering, Gail Dowler

**GSA Representatives**

Sarah Ficko, GSA President /Alternate  
Sasha van der Klein, GSA VP Labour  
Ahmad Al-Dabbagh, ECE  
Clara Fallone, Medical Physics  
Chongdan Luo, Chemical and Materials Engineering  
Sylvia I.C. Madueke, MLCS  
Alleson Mason, Educational Policy  
Jennifer Ann McGetrick, Public Health  
Adam Oel, Bio-Sci  
Dasha Smirnow, Business  
Mostafa Tawfeek, Civil Engineering  
Andrew Woodman, Pharmacology

**FGSR**

Joyce Anderson, Supervisor, Admissions and Program Services  
Deanna Davis, Professional Development Instruction Designer  
Dena Giroux, Executive Assistant to Vice Dean & Assoc Deans  
Andrea Graham, Graduate Prof. Development Project Manager  
Janice Hurlburt, Governance & Policy Coordinator  
Renee Polzbiehn, FGSR PD & CV Program Director  
Andrea Riewe, Executive and Operations Assistant

**Guests/Observers:**

Brent Epperson, Graduate Ombudsperson

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**1.0 Call to Order 2:02 PM**

**2.0 Approval of Agenda for April 12, 2017**

Moved/seconded: David Deephouse/Suzanne Kresta

Approved by show of hands

**3.0 Approval of Minutes for March 8, 2017**

Moved/Seconded: Suzanne Kresta/Tom Spalding

Approved by show of hands

**4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None

**5.0 Report from the Dean (Heather Zwicker)**

The Graduate Student Teaching Awards were presented on April 11. The Professional Development team organized an excellent, student-focused event, including a number of teaching overviews from the award winners.

The Ministry of Advanced Education has approved the new PhD in Indigenous Studies, offered through the Faculty of Native Studies. First admissions will be to Fall 2017.

The Graduate Program Manual (GPM) section on Maintaining Registration (section 6.16) has been updated as a link to the relevant information in the University of Alberta Academic Calendar. The statement on the registration requirement for Research Ethics Board remains in the GPM since it is not found in the Calendar. At the May Council meeting, a Governance report will outline changes to the GPM in more detail.

The format of the FGSR E-Bulletin has been updated and we would welcome your feedback. Please note that the e-bulletin is created for staff and faculty, and should not be forwarded to students without mediation. The key student-oriented messages are also included in the weekly Graduate Students Digest.

The 3MT finals are tomorrow (April 13) in Convocation Hall. If you cannot attend, the event will be livestreamed and on-line voting is available. The recording will also be available on the FGSR website after the event.

FGSR will host Mentorship Mondays in May. The workshops are especially for graduate coordinators, Associate Chairs of graduate programs, Academic program leaders, and professors interested in learning more about mentorship, who we hope might potentially share that learning with others. Council members should sign up - and bring a friend. This is an opportunity to seed a culture of mentoring in your unit. The themes are: What is a good mentor? (May 1), How to create a supportive mentorship environment (May 8), How to most effectively work with your graduate students on writing projects (May 15), and the art and science of healthy communication with our graduate students (May 29). Lunch will be served after for discussion and networking opportunities.

Presented by D. Burshtyn: The University of Alberta Learning Outcomes Retreat will take place on May 2, 2017, led by Dr. Sarah Forgie, Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives). Participants will discuss learning outcomes at the University of Alberta, with a goal of identifying the necessary conditions for effectively implementing and

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sustaining learning outcomes at a program level, and connecting learning outcomes with assessment. Invitations have been extended to those Graduate Coordinators who have new programs in development and those whose programs will be under review in the 2017-18 academic year.

Invitations to the FGSR Doctoral Reception to be held on June 14, 2017 will be distributed shortly.

The next FGSR Council Meeting has been rescheduled to **May 17, 2017**.

*QUESTION: Do you have any comments on the Naylor report? Reply (H. Zwicker): On the one hand, the report makes a strong argument for restoring stability to investigator-initiated research programs. However, I was disappointed that the report emphasized spending more money on oversight.*

**6.0 Student Presentation: Kathleen (Kat) Danser (PhD candidate and principal instructor in the Department of Music; recipient of the GSTA (2017) and GSA Principal Instructor Awards (2017))**

Kat presented "Disruptive Innovation: The Baby in the Tech Waters." Kat described her considered decision to ban phone and computer technologies from her classroom. Seeing students as both learners and audience, she seeks to increase human interaction during class time by limiting interaction with technology. To achieve this, she focuses class time on high-value activities and uses technology in other parts of her course. Through this approach, Kat has found that her students are more connected, more comfortable in the classroom and achieving higher grades.

**7.0 Exam Policy - Notice of Motion (Deborah Burshtyn)**

Preamble: The conduct of graduate examinations holds extremely high stakes for individual students and presents significant reputational risk for the faculty, program and institution. A major revision to the Supervision and Structure of Examining Committees section in the Graduate Program Manual was approved by FGSR Council in May 2012. Subsequently, in May 2013, the authority for approval of supervisors, supervisory committees and examining committees was delegated to the disciplinary department and/or Faculty of the program. The change to the Calendar sections governing examinations was approved by FGSR Council October 2013, subsequently appearing in the 2014-2015 Calendar. Since then, a number of areas have come to light where simplification has caused problems, including: lack of clarity about exam outcomes, roles and responsibilities, and conflict of interest guidelines. Issues include apparent contradictions, gaps and/or language that is confusing. The FSGR Policy Review Committee (PRC) has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Supervision and Examination regulations in 2016-17, and the result is the proposed omnibus motion that will be brought to the May 2017 council meeting for approval.

Consultations to date have included discussion with Associate Deans FGSR, FGSR program services staff, Graduate Program Administrators Committee (GPAC), Faculty Graduate Committees (or Equivalents), and FGSR Council. Students had representation through their GSA representative on the PRC and elected representatives at FGSR Council. We are still planning one further round of consultation with students, which is being coordinated with Firouz Khodayari (GSA VP Academic). The proposed motion will return to the PRC on April 25, 2017 for final review.

Topics of discussion are **boldfaced**. D. Burshtyn confirmed that all topics would be summarized and considered by the PRC and that submissions prior to the May council meeting would be welcomed.

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**Committee meetings:** D. Burshtyn confirmed that committee meetings are required even when a student is working away from campus for an extended period. If students do not respond to requests for meetings, that should be documented.

**Arm's length examiners:** (1) It was suggested that the standard should be that these examiners be knowledgeable in the field of the exam, rather than expert. (2) D. Burshtyn confirmed that friendship constitutes a non-arm's length relationship.

**Close collaborators/conflict of interest:** It was suggested that 6 years since the last close collaboration is too long a standard and that 2 years would be more appropriate.

**The Neutral Chair:** Having a chair who is not an examiner and is solely responsible for ensuring that the exam is managed according to the required protocols may place undue hardship on departments with smaller numbers of faculty members. Workarounds included the creation of a college of chairs, and having professors emeriti act as chairs.

**Thesis distribution:** It was suggested that the student provide a copy of the thesis to the individual delegated by the program to distribute the thesis to the examiners (ex. chair of the examination committee, program administrator, supervisor). The individual would then be responsible for distributing the thesis to the committee, with a copy to the student.

**Public dissertation seminar:** Council requested that the regulations be expanded to allow for public seminars, and for "open" defenses where all department members can attend. It was noted that this is made possible through the content of the "Conduct of Thesis and Candidacy Examinations" section. Those approved by the Dean or the Chair may attend the defense (see "Attendance at Examinations"), so all department members can be approved, and the decision documented.

**Time limit on pass with revisions:** It was discussed that changing the consequence of missing the pass with revisions deadline to "required to withdraw" from "fail" might reduce the seriousness of the situation in the minds of students. D. Burshtyn explained that this approach creates a mechanism for FGSR to be informed and reach out to the student to support program completion.

## 8.0 Discussion: Questions to be Asked Before Going to Grad School (Sarah Ficko, GSA President)

Sarah Ficko, 2016-17 GSA President, has developed a document to guide graduate students (as junior colleagues) in asking questions to potential supervisors. On behalf of the GSA, the council was asked to consider whether the questions are suitably framed to: (1) help potential graduate students to access sufficient information to make informed decisions about graduate studies, and (2) begin the process of building a collaborative relationship between student and supervisor.

The council worked in small breakout groups and discussed Section III of the document: "Questions to ask a potential advisor/supervisor." Council members agreed that creating these questions was a great idea and provided the suggestions to improve the document, including:

- Prioritizing the questions, for example selecting a top ten ("if you ask nothing else, make sure you ask these...")

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- Separating into pre- and post-interview questions, or those to be asked before and after arriving on campus
- Adding value by making the questions discipline-specific
- Separating the questions for course- and thesis-based students
- Softening the language in the hard-edged questions
- Not assuming that every program has financial support available

**9.0 UAI Presentation: Internship Conditions (Caroline Lawson)**

Caroline reviewed the regulations for International Graduate Students working in Canada. Students must be enrolled full-time in order to be eligible to work. The limits are 20 hours per week off campus or 40 hours per week on campus. One exception to this rule is made for students with co-op work permits. To be eligible, the co-op must be a degree requirement that is integral to completion of the degree. In this case, students can work full time for one term, as long as the co-op terms do not comprise more than fifty percent of the degree. Typically, graduate students are not eligible for co-op work permits.

Many international students will work in Canada after graduation under the terms of a post-graduate work permit. These students are allowed to begin full-time work with a Letter of Completion as soon as the application for the permit is submitted.

*QUESTION: So, there is no access to internships for international/visa students? Reply (C. Lawson): Students are allowed to work full time while on a scheduled break - this would correspond to the spring and summer terms for course-based Master's programs.*

*QUESTION: So, there is no access to internships for thesis-based international/visa students? Reply (C. Lawson): We have not found an option. We want to protect their long-term immigration prospects and eligibility for a post-graduate work permit.*

*NOTE (A. Graham, FGSR): Employers hiring through the Graduate Student Internship Program are often willing to adjust their postings to allow for a 20-hour work week.*

**11.0 Best Practices Corner (deferred to next meeting)****12.0 GSA Monthly Report (Sarah Ficko)**

The GSA report was submitted as distributed with the meeting minutes. Sarah invited members of council to attend the improv event being hosted by the GSA on April 25th.

Sarah thanked the council members for their hard work on behalf of graduate students.

There were no questions or comments.

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**13.0 Farewell to 2016-17 GSA (Heather Zwicker)**

Heather bid farewell to Sarah Ficko and Ali Talaei on behalf of the council. All other members of the 2016-17 executive have been re-elected and will be serving again next year.

Heather thanked Sarah and her team for operating with integrity and concern for graduate students. They will be missed!

**14.0 Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM