



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Graduate Education Council
Tuesday, May 20, 2025
1:00 - 3:00 p.m., Microsoft Teams

The Dean opened the meeting with a brief welcome.

1. **Approval of the Agenda of Graduate Education Meeting of May 20, 2025**

MOTION (*duly moved by Professor Vina Goghari and seconded by Professor Deepa Kundur*)

THAT the agenda of the Graduate Education Council meeting of May 20, 2025, as circulated with the agenda, be approved.

The motion is **CARRIED, unanimous.**

2. **Dean's Remarks (Joshua Barker)**

- i. **Working Group on Civil Discourse** – The [Final Report of the Working Group on Civil Discourse and Administrative Response \(PDAD&C #38\) – Communications for Academic Administrators](#) was recently shared in the Provost's Digest.

The Dean highlighted three key recommendations relevant to SGS:

- Making an institutional commitment to civil discourse across research, teaching, co-curricular, and workplace activities.
- Providing ongoing support for initiatives that foster civil discourse.
- Promoting familiarity and experience with civil discourse in the classroom

During the discussion, a member raised concerns about the term civil discourse itself, emphasizing the importance of allowing students to critically examine its historical context and implications.

- ii. **Continuity of Supervision: Editorial Change – SGS Calendar** – The Dean introduced an editorial update to the [General Regulations 8.2 Doctoral and Master's Supervision](#) in the SGS Calendar to clarify expectations when supervisors plan to take a leave. The revised language emphasizes the importance of ensuring supervisory continuity for students during such periods. The update aligns with existing guidelines, web resources, and practices, reinforcing current expectations and enhancing transparency for students. It is recommended that SGS draft a minimal template form, create a repository of exemplary forms, publish a best practices guide following feedback from graduate student focus groups or surveys.

- iii. **Mentor Meeting Project** - Wes Brunson, PhD, Research Assistant at SGS, presented findings from his environmental scan of annual mentoring meetings across 28 graduate units. His research revealed significant diversity in both practices and documentation formats. He emphasized that structured annual meetings are critical not only for improving graduate student completion rates but also for supporting faculty well-being.:

- Key Finding #1 – Wide variation in practices and forms
- Key Finding #2 – Variation in final evaluations and missing follow-up guidance
- Key Finding #3 – Timing gaps and peer benchmarks

Next steps include drafting a minimal model form, building a central repository of exemplary forms, publish a best-practices guide, conduct student focus groups/surveys and to pilot with select units and gather feedback. A full report with final recommendations is forthcoming.

3. **Report of Vice-Dean, Research and Program Innovation – Vina Goghari**

- i. **Final Oral Examination (FOE) Review: Consultation Update** – Professor Goghari provided an update on the [Final Oral Examination Review Working Group Report](#) which is currently in the consultation phase. She emphasized the importance of feedback from faculty, staff, and students. She outlined guiding principles of the review, particularly the need to clearly distinguish regulations from best practices. The group discussed proposed changes to the FOE calendar and guidelines, focusing on streamlining processes and increasing flexibility for graduate units. Feedback remains essential during phase two, and contributions are welcome via this [form](#).

- ii. **Promoting Teaching Opportunities for Doctoral Students: Guidance for Graduate Units** – Professor Goghari presented a document on promoting teaching opportunities for doctoral students, emphasizing importance of career outcomes and preparation, academic growth, and professional development. Graduate units are encouraged to offer a diversity of teaching opportunities, provide mentorship, and review unit data on teaching-related experiences. A list of central resources and teaching opportunities at the university was shared [here](#). The Dean encouraged feedback and collaboration on this report.
- iii. **Graduate Education Innovation Fund (GEIF) Report** - Professor Goghari provided a brief report on GEIF, which supports innovation in graduate education outside of research. She explained the priority areas for funding, including professional development, decolonizing, anti-racist pedagogies, and civil discourse. Funded applications from the last cycle were shared, including projects on AI, simulation learning, computations linguistics, and onboarding. The GEIF Pilot Project report from March 2024 is posted [here](#).
- iv. **GenAI & Graduate Studies: Document & Update** - Professor Vina Goghari introduced the *Generative AI in the Context of Graduate Education* document distributed with the agenda and intended as an appendix to the final UoT AI Task Force Report. She highlighted the need for AI literacy and skills development, assessment strategies, and access to secure, institutionally supported tools. Professor Goghari emphasized the unique elements of graduate education such as the role of supervisors and supervisory committees – and the importance of peer review in academic development. To guide feedback and discussion, the following questions were posted: Are there additions or changes? What opportunities and challenges exist in your divisions? What kinds of training or professional development activities would benefit graduate students across different programs and disciplines?

4. **Centre for Graduate Professional Development (CGPD) - Rachael Cayley**

The Centre for Graduate Professional Development (CGPD) is the University of Toronto's Tri-Campus hub for graduate professional development. Professor Rachael Cayley, CGPD Director, presented highlights from the 2024–2025 Annual Report. Key programming includes workshops such as the Three Minute Thesis, Connaught PhDs for Public Impact Fellowships, Doctoral Completion Cohort, and the Healthy Research Teams & Labs Initiative. CGPD also supports students and supervisors in navigating the professional development landscape by promoting Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and organizing institutional offerings into four strategic strands: Research, Communication, Leadership & Collaboration, and Career Planning.

5. **Motions**

i. **Graduate Academic Appeals Board Membership 2025-2026**

The Dean called on Professor Vina Goghari to present the motion.

MOTION THAT the Graduate Education Council approves the appointments of Professor Peter Benson and Catherine Valcke as alternate chairs; Professor Michele Peterson-Badali, Laurent Bozec, and Luc de Nil as faculty members; and Rouhollah Ayazian, David Jacks II, and Naaz Sibia as the three student members to serve on the Graduate Academic Appeals Board from the 2025-2026 academic year.

MOTION (*duly moved and seconded by Professor Nana Hyung-Lee*)

GEC approval is final. There being no further discussion, the Dean called the vote. The motion was **CARRIED, unanimous**.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 6. **Report of the Previous Meeting: Graduate Education Council – March 18, 2025** – The report of the previous meeting was distributed with the agenda package. No members requested to discuss items. The report is accepted/approved.
- 7. **Business Arising from the Previous Meeting** – There was no business arising from the report of the previous meeting.

8. **Reports for Distribution** – The External Awards Report: 2024-2025, New Graduate Award Records: 2024-2025, Non-Standard Admissions and Programs Committee, Annual Report: 2024-2025, and the Center for Graduate Professional Development, Annual Report: 2024-2025 were distributed in advance of the meeting. Feedback is welcome to sgs.dean@utoronto.ca.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

9. **Date of Next Meeting: Fall 2025**

10. **Other Business** – No new business was brought forward. Congratulations to graduate student member Anne-Katherine Dionne who has accepted a faculty appointment in the Department of Music at Mount Allison University.

11. **Adjournment**

The Dean called on Professor Vina Goghari to present the motion.

MOTION that the Graduate Education Council meeting of May 20, 2025, be adjourned.

There being no further discussion or questions, the Dean thanked Council members for their participation and adjourned the meeting. (2:44 p.m.)



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Appendix to the Minutes
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL
Record of Attendance – May 20, 2025

Present

(Voting Members)

Abdolhosseini, Mohaddeseh
Atkinson, Michael
Barker, Joshua (Chair, *ex-officio*)
Dionne, Anne-Katherine
Dockery, Myles
Ensminger, Beate
Gniadek, Melissa
Goghari, Vina (*ex-officio*)
Jacks II, David
Klassen, Pamela
Kundur, Deepa
Lee, Nana (Hyung Ran)
Milkie, Melissa
Miller, Michael
Muscat, Meagan
Ossher, Lynn
Schuurmans, Carol
Sibia, Naaz
Silver, Nicholas
Tokmakjian, Levon

Present

(Non-Voting Members)

Attridge, Michael
Baluyut, Ed
Brunson, Wesley
Cayley, Rachael
Cummings, Carolyn
Desrosiers-Tam, Brian
Elliot, Robin
Flessa, Joseph
Freeman, Jane
Hampton, Brenda
Handley, Antoinette
Harrison, Rene
Heximer, Dianne (*Secretary to Council*)
Julian, Stephen
Kishen, Anil
Lee, Eunjung
MacPherson, Ellen
Peake, Sarah
Plata, Angelique
Smith, Natasha
Stathopoulos, Laura
Widger, Kimberley

Absent

(Voting Members)

Alford, Larry (*ex-officio*)
Arhonditsis, George
Bussmann, Markus
Gertler, Meric (*ex-officio*)
Jerrard, Robert
Kim, Junchul
Kohn, Peggy
Kugamoorthy, Brenaven
Kushner, Paul
Miller, Jeannie
Nickel, Julian
Peever, John (*ex-officio*)
Psarianos, Thomas
Reke Avikpe, Ferdinand
Ross, Jill
Ruocco, Anthony
Ssali, Henry
Wakefield, Sarah
Wane, Njoki
Wells, Brandon
Young, Trevor (*ex-officio*)