

Meeting Notes

Graduate Education Council

Tuesday, April 16, 2019, 3:10 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Governing Council Chambers, Room 214, Simcoe Hall

The Dean called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. and welcomed all members and visitors.

1. Approval of the Agenda of the Graduate Education (GEC) Meeting of April 16, 2019

MOTION (*duly moved by Charmaine Williams and seconded by Cameron Wachowich*)

THAT the agenda of the Graduate Education Council meeting of April 16, 2019, as circulated with the agenda, be approved.

The motion is **CARRIED, unanimous.**

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Graduate Education Council Meeting of December 11, 2018

The Acting Dean noted that the minutes of the December 11, 2018 meeting were distributed with the agenda.

MOTION (*duly moved by Charmaine Williams and seconded by Les Buck*)

THAT the minutes of the Graduate Education Council meeting of December 11, 2018, be approved.

The motion is **CARRIED, unanimous.**

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Dean's Remarks

- i. **Tri-Campus Review** – The tri-campus review has five pillars, each with its own working group, and guided by a steering committee chaired by Cheryl Regehr. Dean Barker, Chair of the [Graduate Units Pillar Working Group](#), is examining the role of the graduate unit across the three campuses, and the role they play in the Tri-Campus structure. The goal of the working group is to develop principles to guide future decision making; to propose policy and procedural changes (if appropriate); and specific actions arising. In the Fall of 2018 an extensive consultation process took place which included in-person interviews with faculty administrators and students from all three campuses, as well as an on-line survey. Based on feedback received, the Working Group is looking at issues around governance, the graduate chair role and responsibilities, delegated leadership roles in units where the undergraduate and graduate chair is the same individual and graduate faculty memberships. A report will be submitted to the Provost in June.
- ii. **Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowship for Underrepresented Researchers** – This three-year pilot program funded by the Office of Provost and Vice-President, Academic will increase opportunities for hiring postdoctoral fellows from underrepresented groups, specifically focusing on indigenous and/or black researchers. The goal of the program is to have 21 Fellows over three years, providing approximately \$70,000 per year in

salary and benefits support. The first call for applications is complete and a second call will take place in the Fall term.

- iii. **External Reviews** – Reviews are underway for two programs/services of the School of Graduate Studies, namely the Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC) which provides workshops and support to graduate students and the Graduate Professional Development Program (GPD). Reviewer reports will be used to inform the strategic planning process of each group and next steps. SGS will prepare an Administrative Response to the External Reviewers' reports. An update will be shared at the next meeting of Graduate Education Council. **Action: future agenda item**
- iv. **Update to SGS Summer Gym Bursary** – Currently in the final year of a three-year pilot, the SGS Summer Gym Bursary will now be open to all master's and doctoral students in both research-stream and professional programs who are registered full-time in the Summer 2019 session. Students are reimbursed up to \$110 for a full or partial summer membership at Hart House Fitness Centre and Kinesiology & Physical Education (KPE) facilities. At the end of the summer term SGS will review data on participation rates, consult with stakeholders and prepare recommendations for the future of the gym bursary. **Action: future agenda item**
- v. **New Award Opportunities** – The Dean drew members' attention to two new awards, SGS Fellowships and Bursaries for Black and/or Indigenous Students and the Connaught International Scholarship and Ontario Trillium Scholarship, encouraging faculty and staff to make students aware of these opportunities. For more information, please contact Fong Di Caterina, Manager of the Graduate Awards Office at graduate.awards@utoronto.ca.
- vi. **International Student Experience Fund (ISEF) Proposals** –The office of the Associate Vice-President and Vice-Provost, International Student Experience, offers grants to fund initiatives aimed at improving the experience of international students. The Graduate Centre for Academic Communication ([GCAC](#)) applied for, and has been awarded, an impact grant for the initiative, "Early Speaking with Confidence: Early Oral Communication Support for Incoming International Graduate Students". This will allow GCAC to deliver support to international students as they arrive on campus in late August, recognizing the extra oral communication support needed as they get settled.
- vii. **Updates at 63 St. George Street** – SGS collaborated with Gradlife to offer the new *Graduate Student Experience Week*. The week of events provided students in all years of their graduate program with a variety of social and learning events that tackled a range of topics specific to graduate experience. SGS hosted daily coffee chats in the graduate lounge (63 St. George) and invited key staff members (Wellness Counsellors, the Center for International Experience (CIE) International Transition Advisor, GCAC Faculty Member) to have discussions with graduate students. Other events included a career panel and a student-run Leadership for Grads event that helped students understand the value of building transferable skills.

In an effort to recognize the many graduate student parents and caregivers who use our building, a baby change station was installed in the first-floor washroom at 63 St. George Street.
- viii. **Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition 2019** – A record number of students registered for the 3MT Competition this year due to the fact that the competition was open to include all master's and doctoral students in the research-stream and professional programs with a major research project. Students' ability to disseminate their research in publically accessible ways, in 3 minutes, was tested, as was their resilience

as the power in the GTA Downtown Core went out half-way through the competition! Gretchen Kerr is to be commended for her calm leadership during the unexpected power outage. [Shane Saunderson](#) from the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering is this year's winner.

At a recent meeting of the Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools (NAGS), Meghan McGhee, the 2018 3MT winner, was up for the competition and received an honorable mention.

- ix. **SGS Data Dashboard** – The Dean provided an update on the SGS Data Dashboard that will soon be posted on the SGS website. Visitors to the website will be able to access Tableau dashboards of both the PhD Funding Data (formerly on the Understanding Your Funding page) and 10K PhDs Project data. This will allow students, faculty, staff and visitors to filter the data on Average and Net Incomes and to see results dynamically. The Understanding Your Funding page has displayed this data in static form. This basic data will be helpful to graduate units during the UTQAP review process. A member suggested that a user guide be provided to inform users in navigating through the data. **Action – User Guide**

- x. **Looking Forward**
 - a. The President has announced a [Presidential & Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health](#) to consult with students and other community stakeholders to review existing services and programs related to student mental health, and to explore potential new solutions in this area. The SGS Dean is an Assessor on the Task Force. Nominations have been requested for students, staff and faculty to join the task force. The Task Force will:
 - i. Review mental health service delivery at the University and make recommendations for strengthening such services, particularly with regard to students with mental illness;
 - ii. Review the coordination of student supports related to mental health across the University's three campuses and make recommendations for improving internal coordination;
 - iii. Review partnerships with community-based organizations and hospitals and make recommendations for strengthening such external partnerships; and,
 - iv. Consider the physical spaces in which mental health services are provided on all three campuses and recommend improvements as necessary.

In addition to the Presidential and Provostial Task Force, the Dean has asked Professor Charmaine Williams, to spearhead a group to review the current landscape of SGS' mental health supports with a view to develop an SGS mental health strategy. The [SGS Wellness Portal](#) developed with UTGSU highlights resources for Graduate Students.

 - b. **SGS Decennial Constitution and By-Laws Review** – The SGS Constitution mandates that the Graduate Education Council reviews its Constitution and by-laws every ten years. Next year, 2019-20, will be our constitution review year. With the work of the Tri-Campus Review ending, it is timely that SGS embark on this review of the constitution. It is possible that recommendations from the Tri-Campus Review will impact discussions.

5. SGS Updates

- i. **Student Academic Services** - Distributed with the agenda was the Report on Graduate Admissions, Registration and Graduate Trends. Josie Lalonde, Director of Student Academic Services reviewed highlights for each. The report of the Admissions and Programs Committee for 2017-18 was also included

with the agenda. This Committee is responsible for making decisions on non-standard cases submitted to SGS for approval, i.e. admissions, leaves, extensions. Josie Lalonde reviewed the types of cases approved and trends. A member asked for reasons for the increase in nonstandard leave requests and retroactive leave requests. A member asked if information could be provided regarding deferral trends. **Action: Josie**

Testing of the **Progress Tracker** tool continues and identified bugs are being resolved. Phase 2 of internal testing by the Decanal testing will begin soon, followed by Phase 3 involving students and graduate administrators.

The EASI Team recently released an enhancement to ACORN where students are able to pay tuition online using a credit card. Currently students pay by mail using a Canadian dollar bank draft. Not all graduate units are able to receive funds in this way, i.e. Rotman fees are in US dollars. A request has been submitted to EASI to exclude graduate units with their own process.

- ii. **Postdoctoral Office** – The Report on Postdoctoral Fellows for 2017-18 was distributed with the agenda. Lisa Haley described the services offered to postdoctoral fellows - assistance with health coverage enrolment, provide advice on services, offer workshops, outreach and community building, “Coffee with the Dean” to learn about issues of concern. She reviewed enrollment trends and noted that 76% of postdoctoral fellows are covered by the Collective Agreement. Two categories are: *employee*, covered by the Collective Agreement where postdoctoral fellows are paid entirely through Principal Investigator (PI) grants or University funds, and *trainee*, where postdoctoral fellows received award and may or may not be processed through the University. Postdoctoral enrollments at UTM and UTSC speak to the fact that these campuses are growing as centres of research activity. A member asked if information was available comparing Postdoctoral Fellows and PhD students.
- iii. **Graduate Awards and Financial Aid** - Distributed with the agenda was the report on Federal and Provincial Awards for the 2018 calendar year. Fong Di Caterina, Manager of the Graduate Awards Office provided an overview of services offered to students – Student Financial Advising, Emergency Grants & Loans, Financial Aid/OSAP and Funding Support, Payment & Support for Award Holders, SGS Central Adjudication, Conference & Travel Grants, and Award Promotion Outreach and Application Support. The report of New Internal Awards for the 2018 calendar year was also distributed with the agenda for information. This highlights the tremendous fundraising efforts within the graduate units. A member asked if it would be possible for the Graduate Awards Office to provide feedback on unsuccessful funding applications. The Dean noted that it would be a matter of the Office having the staff resources to organizing such feedback.

6. Motions

i. **Proposal to Revise Entries in the SGS Calendar Regulations**

The SGS Calendar outlines the policies and regulations for graduate students entering a program. The wording of this ‘contract’ is significant as it governs their program and is the point of reference during the academic appeals process. As a matter of practice, SGS reviews content to ensure clarity. During this process, several regulations were identified that required further clarification. Circulated with the agenda was a summary of the proposed changes to four guidelines.

The Dean called on Gretchen Kerr to present the motion.

MOTION

THAT Graduate Education Council approve changes to the SGS Calendar for the 2019-20 academic year.

Jan Marht-Smith expressed concern with proposed wording for Section 1.15 ([University-Mandated Leave of Absence Policy](#)) and proposed an amendment to replace the text with the Preamble from the June 27, 2018 copy of the Policy:

The University is committed to providing students with the opportunity to pursue their educational goals. It is also committed to maintaining a safe environment for study and work. Pursuant to the University's commitment to providing supports and accommodations for students and its obligation under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the University provides accommodative resources through a number of services, each involving specialized attention by experienced and qualified staff to the specific needs of students.

In most circumstances, these resources, combined with the engagement and cooperation of the student, will allow a student to obtain their educational goals. However, on a small number of occasions, this approach may not be successful, or a student, for whatever reason, may not engage with the supportive resources, and the result may be an impact on the health and safety of the student or others, or on the ability of the student to engage in the essential elements of the educational activity.

In these infrequent circumstances, the potential application of the Code of Student Conduct will not be suitable, since it entails a disciplinary approach. Similarly, it may not be consistent with the duty to accommodate to merely let the student confront significant negative academic consequences in these situations. This Policy, therefore, sets out additional options to better reflect the needs and the situation of the student.

This Policy will be applied in a manner that fully complies with the Ontario Human Rights Code including (where applicable) the duty to provide reasonable accommodation to the point of undue hardship.

For section 6.1.12, Joint Educational Placement (JEP) for Doctoral Students, Les Buck suggested that the word collaborator consistently be replaced with the word partner throughout the document.

Following discussion, the Dean called the vote.

MOTION *(duly moved and seconded)*

THAT Graduate Education Council approve the friendly amendment to incorporate the Preamble into section 11.15 of the SGS Calendar for the 2019-20 academic year.

One in abstentia. The motion was **CARRIED**,

Further to the discussion, the Dean called the vote.

MOTION *(duly moved and seconded)*

THAT Graduate Education Council approve the amendment to section 6.1.12 of the SGS Calendar for the 2019-20 academic year, to make the language consistent.

Unanimous. The motion was **CARRIED**,

The Dean called the final vote.

MOTION

THAT Graduate Education Council approve changes to the SGS Calendar for the 2019-20 academic year.

Two in abstentia. The motion was **CARRIED**,

7. Other Business

A number of Graduate Education Council members' terms will be ending June 30, 2019. Council Secretary will be in touch with members who are eligible for renewal. The Dean thanked all members for their service and participation over the past years.

8. For Information

Full reports were distributed with the agenda for information. Feedback is welcome to sgs.dean@utoronto.ca.

- i. Graduate Award Report on Federal & Provincial Awards 2018-19
- ii. Graduate Award Report on New Internal Awards 2018
- iii. Report on Postdoctoral Fellows 2017-18
- iv. Report on Graduate Admissions, Registration and Graduation Trends
- v. Admissions & Programs Committee Executive Summary and Report 2017-18

9. Closing Remarks

There being no further discussion or questions, the Dean thanked Council members for their participation and called the **MOTION** (*duly moved and seconded*) that the Graduate Education Council meeting of April 16, 2019 be adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.



Appendix to the Minutes
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL
Record of Attendance – April 16, 2019

Present

(Voting & Non-Voting Members)

Aqrabawi, Afif
Audet, Julie
Ball, Christopher (*ex-officio*)
Barker, Joshua (Chair)
Brummell, Alice
Buck, Leslie
Dalrymple-Fraser, Charles
Gu, Yi (Evie)
Harrison, Timothy
Hu, Jim
Kaplan, Allan
Katz, Chaim
Kerr, Gretchen (*ex-officio*)
Lee, Chi-Guhn
Lyons, Kelly
Mahrt-Smith, Jan
McDougall, Doug
Pietropaolo, Nelly
Pirvulescu, Mihela
Quinonez, Carlos
Shantz, Coleen (*ex-officio*)
Silcox, Mary*
Stirling, Ashley
Stremmler, Robyn*
Van Lieshout, Pascal
Von Schütz, Konstanze
Wachowich, Cameron
Williams, Charmaine (*ex-officio*)

* Members joined meeting
via teleconference

Guests and SGS Staff

Cayley, Rachael
Desrosiers-Tam, Brian
DiCaterina, Fong
Haley, Lisa
Heximer, Dianne (*Secretary to
Council*)
Hurlihey, Victoria
Kenzie, Alison
Lalonde, Josie
Plata, Angelique
Stathopoulos, Laura
Stinchcombe, Kristen

Absent

Alford, Larry (*ex-officio*)
Bascia, Nina
Baxter, Nancy
Benjamin, Dwayne
Boon, Heather
Cairney, John
Cresswell, Jesse
Corts, Ken
Craig, Shelley
Dubber, Markus
Gertler, Meric (*ex-officio*)
Goel, Vivek
Harvey-Sanchez, Amanda
Koga, Midori
Lam, Ernie
Mabury, Scott
MacGregor, Rob
Markovic, Melanie
McCahan, Susan
Mou, Leping
Murphy, Jennifer
Packer, Jeremy
Prado, Marianne
Qudrat, Anam
Ratto, Matt
Schmitt, Cannon
Schuman, Boaz
Segal, Hugh
Simpson, Andre
Steeves, Craig
Stevenson, Siobhan
Regehr, Cheryl
Versace, Carmela
Williamson, Shane
Wright, Robert
Zhang, Johnny