

Meeting Notes  
**Graduate Education Council**

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

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

The Dean began the meeting by acknowledging the land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and study on this land.

**1. Approval of the Agenda of the Graduate Education (GEC) Meeting of October 22, 2019**

**MOTION** (*duly moved by Charmaine Williams and seconded by Jim Hu*)

THAT the agenda of the Graduate Education Council meeting of October 22, as circulated with the agenda, be approved.

The motion is **CARRIED, unanimous.**

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the Graduate Education Council Meeting of April 16, 2019**

The Dean noted that the minutes of the April 16, 2019 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 April 16, 2019, 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**

- **Graduate Education Council (GEC)** is an academic advisory and approval body responsible for developing and implementing academic policy and regulations for SGS and for graduate education at the University of Toronto. New policies and changes to existing policies are presented for consultation and/or approval, depending on the nature of the policy. Council has final approval authority for SGS regulations in the [Graduate Calendar](#). Proposals for new guidelines and documents reflecting best practices or changes to existing ones are also brought to GEC for information and discussion as they are being formulated.

GEC membership includes several ex-officio voting members, including representation from the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU), and the following 35 elected members: five graduate faculty members from each of the four divisions, three graduate students from each of the four divisions, and three graduate administrators (one from SGS and two from graduate units). There are normally two GEC meetings per term, but members are asked to hold 'reserve' dates in the event a meeting is required. Members of the SGS Council of Graduate Deans (CGD) are also invited. The CGD is a key body that includes the Associate and/or Vice-Deans Graduates from all of the University faculties. Priorities of faculties and the administration are discussed at its monthly meetings and it is important that these academic leaders are available to join GEC as needed.

Previously GEC was responsible for approvals of major and minor modifications to graduate programs, and for recommendation on new program proposals, as well as new and existing policies and regulations. With the introduction of UTQAP, each Faculty now has responsibility for final approvals of all minor program modifications and plays a central role in major modifications, new program proposals and reviews of its own units and programs.

It is the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs that now provides governance support to all Faculties for matters related to graduate programs. SGS continues to provide advice on graduate programs matters (major modifications and new program proposals).

Members are elected and are not expected to represent the wishes of their Divisions/Graduate Units. The [GEC website](#) has recently been updated and provides documentation from past meeting, the SGS Constitution, By-Laws and other information. Agenda items normally arise from our work as academic administrators, with support from the senior administrative staff. Members wishing to discuss possible agenda items should email [sgs.dean@utoronto.ca](mailto:sgs.dean@utoronto.ca). Other venues for raising topics of interest are the Advisory Committee on Program Matters (CPM) Chaired by Professor Gretchen Kerr, Vice-Dean, Programs and Innovation, and the Advisory Committee on Student Matters Chaired by Professor Charmaine Williams, Vice-Dean, Students.

- **The Ten-year review of the SGS [Constitution](#)** will take place during this academic term. The SGS Constitution lays out the roles and responsibilities for various actors both within SGS and at the Departmental level, including three By-Laws which describe the functioning of this Council ([#1](#)), the Admissions & Programs Committee ([#2](#)), and the Graduate Academic Appeals Board ([#3](#)). GEC volunteers for a review committee will be identified in the fall, with meetings taking place through the winter. Changes and updates will be brought forward in September 2020. The Constitution review process will be informed by consultation meetings that have taken place from the recent Tri-Campus Review. Recommendations from the Graduate Units Pillar Working Group may have implications on the definition of roles, relationships and governance as found in the SGS Constitution. The Ad Hoc Review Committee will be Chaired by Professor Gretchen Kerr, Vice-Dean Programs and Innovation, and will consist of 4 graduate faculty members of GEC and 2 graduate student members of GEC with support provided by Brian Desrosiers-Tam, Director of the Office of the Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education, and Dianne Heximer, GEC Council Secretary.
- **New SGS Website** - In August 2019, the new SGS Website went live. The main student site now also consists of two sub-sites for Postdoctoral Fellows and Faculty/Staff, it also follows the theme of the Office of the Vice-President and Provost, is AODA compliant and has enhanced file and page security settings. An [Awards Database](#) is searchable through a table that allows filtering by award name, award category, degree type, and eligibility criteria. The Graduate Awards Office will update the award in the database so it can feed into announcements, ensuring consistent communication to graduate students, faculty and staff. [Graduate Programs](#) are now searchable. Each program has a webpage that incorporates Quick Facts plus information taken directly from the SGS Calendar. The direct feed means that updates occur in real-time, ensuring prospective students will always have the most up-to-date information. An [Events Calendar](#) features events across SGS and can be filtered/viewed by category to better serve our constituencies.
- **SGS Sponsorship Funds**
  - i. The **SGS Events Fund** offers up to \$2,000 to support student-initiated activities, planned by students, for students and involving students. For the 2019-20 cycle, SGS invites proposals for activities promoting graduate student mental health awareness. More information is available on this [website](#).
  - ii. The **SGS Innovation in Graduate Professional Development Fund** offers up to \$1,000 for student-led initiatives around professional development. More information is available on this [website](#).
- **Working Group on Working Group on Graduate Student Involvement in Research Opportunities with Industry (WGROI)** - Through the summer, a working group was convened to look at the growing level of activity at UofT where students in research programs are provided opportunities to conduct research in industry as part of their studies. The working group is exploring issues surrounding funding arrangements, non-disclosure and intellectual property agreements,

conflicts with University policy, training, safety, and conflict of interest, to ensure they are managed appropriately while ensuring that students are able to continue through their studies regardless of what happens with the industry partnership. Along with regular meetings, members interviewed campus experts, with the goal of creating guidelines for PIs, supervisors, students, Graduate Unit Chairs and Deans, to engage in these partnerships in a way that protects the interests and values of the University, while also allowing students to take advantage of these exceptional opportunities.

- **Healthy Labs Initiative** – Two areas where graduate students have expressed concerns regarding potential vulnerability are the supervisory relationship and the laboratory environment. Designed to highlight best practices for laboratory practices at UofT and world-wide, the Healthy Labs Initiative will be launched in the new year, in collaboration with the Office of the Vice-President Research & Innovation. It is expected that a Charter will be developed to outline characteristics that a good laboratory at UofT ought to entail, allowing PIs to commit to the Charter. SGS will provide the programming to support graduate students through Grad Room and Graduate Professional Skills, while the new Centre for Research Innovation and Support will provide support to faculty members and PIs. SGS will review issues to help bring transparency to issues such as hours worked, dealing with intellectual property and publication protocols. A Special Advisor with expertise in laboratory management will lead the consultation process across UofT, to find out the key characteristics of a healthy lab. Laboratories, who adopt the elements highlighted in the Healthy Lab Charter, could use this designation for recruitment, recognizing their efforts to maintain a healthy environment for graduate students. A member noted the importance and challenges of ensuring PI “buy-in”.

## 5. Feedback Opportunity Tri-Campus Review (online consultation website)

- i. **Graduate Units Working Group** – Last year the Provost announced a Tri-Campus Review that included five pillars/working groups that met throughout last year: Academic Planning & Academic Change (APAC) Working Group; Graduate Units Working Group (hereafter Working Group); Student Services Working Group; Administrative Structure Working Group; and Budget Relationships Working Group. Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education Chaired the APAC working group. Professor Alan Bewell, then-Special Advisor to the Vice-Provost, Graduate Research & Education and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, led the extensive consultation process of the Graduate Units Working Group which involved an on-line survey of graduate chairs and academic unit chairs, as well as consultative meetings with graduate chairs, deans, and student groups across the three campuses. From the surveys and consultations, we heard that the Tri-Campus relationship, for the units that have graduate education over three campuses, is critical and there are many challenges in managing/governing the graduate unit. Key recommendations were prepared to address the challenges identified and facilitate smoother operation of graduate units. The [Working Group](#) felt it was important to acknowledge the varied composition of graduate units across the University. Sample pie charts were shared highlighting where single department faculties (Information and Social Work) draw their graduate faculty membership from, versus other graduate units (IBBME and Sociology) drawing their graduate faculty memberships from a large number of other units. Going forward, faculty membership data will be distributed to graduate chairs and deans to help inform decision-making.

The Dean summarized top-level draft recommendations, as found on the [Provost’s website](#), and distributed with the agenda, inviting members to share feedback:

- a. SGS needs to establish a process for identifying which graduate units are tri-campus units. In many cases, it is clear whether a graduate unit is mono-campus or tri-campus, but some, through demographic changes in membership, have effectively evolved to become tri-campus.
- b. Graduate units should create a Memorandum of Understanding with their contributing academic units. Some already do this, either in an MOU or in their constitutions, and such agreements have proved to be highly effective in setting shared expectations.

- c. In tri-campus units in multi-department faculties, like Arts & Science, the Working Group also identified important ways in which the chair search process could be streamlined and clarified.
- d. Information sharing and communication are critical to running a smooth operation and to making the most of tri-campus opportunities.
- e. Running a tri-campus operations brings with it unique challenges and it is recommended that dedicated supports be provided to chairs and deans to help them in their work.

## 6. SGS Updates

### i. Vice-Dean Students, Professor Charmaine Williams

**Mental Health Working Group** - The School of Graduate Studies has convened a Mental Health Working Group, chaired by Professor Williams, to identify possible barriers that do not support positive mental health, and to make recommendations for the improvements of graduate student mental health. The group will meet throughout the Winter term, with membership consisting of 50% graduate students. Terms of Reference were distributed with the agenda.

**Committees** - The Advisory Committee on Program Matters (CPM) and the Advisory Committee on Student Matters (CSM) both review, discuss, and make recommendations on matters of University-wide graduate regulation or policy prior to their consideration by the Graduate Education Council. Professor Williams alerted members that the two sub-committees might merge interests in the coming term.

### ii. Vice-Dean Programs and Innovation, Professor Gretchen Kerr

**Professional Development Update** – Stemming from an external review conducted last spring, Professor Kerr reported that she is engaging in a planning process to strengthen the breadth and scope of graduate professional development offerings across all campuses, with aims:

- i. To increase student accessibility to offerings by placing them on-line for those located on other campuses; and to create a centralized hub of professional development offerings currently offered by a number of units across campus;
- ii. To establish an Academic Curriculum Committee to ensure that there is academic rigor and theoretical/empirical grounding to the various offerings; and
- iii. To recognize the Professional Development Program formally through certificates.

**Graduate Education Innovation Fund** – Designed to assist graduate faculty who wish to embark on new and innovative methods of graduate teaching. Paralleling the LEIF Fund, at the undergraduate level, this fund will offer up to 10 grants of \$5,000. A draft document was shared for comment & feedback.

**Working Group on the Dissertation** – As noted with the Terms of Reference for the SGS Working Group on the Dissertation distributed with the agenda, this Working Group will embark on a discussion of the ways in which SGS may broaden the scope and content of the dissertation, while maintaining academic rigor and independent contribution. Membership will be finalized soon with meetings to begin in the New Year.

- ### iii. Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC) – Professor Jane Freeman, GCAC Director, distributed the course and workshop offerings schedule for the Fall 2019 term. As part of SGS, the GCAC offers a range of free academic writing and speaking programs for graduate students through non-credit courses, workshops, Writing Centre consultations. The GCAC is currently located on the first floor of the McMurrich Building at 12 Queen’s Park Crescent West. GCAC was part of the external review last spring and input received is helping to inform their strategic planning. With a grant received from the International Student Experience Fund, GCAC was able to offer an intensive multi-lingual speaking/listening course for new arrivals to campus last August. Saturday courses were also offered to professional masters students to help facilitate their access to GCAC offerings. More information about GCAC is found [here](#).

iv. **Student Academic Services**

**Progress Tracker** - Ms. Josie Lalonde, Director of Student Academic Services announced the imminent launch of Progress Tracker, an online document and data management tool for tracking supervisory committee meetings, progress reports, and project milestones at the graduate level. Ms. Lalonde team is available to accept requests from graduate units who are interested in launching and using the tool, and will work directly with units to arrange user access and assist with customizing instructions and notifications. Graduate Units should email Ed Baluyut, Graduate Unit Advisory Services Representative, at [ed.baluyut@utoronto.ca](mailto:ed.baluyut@utoronto.ca) to get set up in Progress Tracker, or with any questions.

v. **Graduate Awards and Financial Aid**

**Conference Grant** - The SGS Conference Grant provides financial support to encourage eligible students to attend and present their research at an academic conference during the early stages of their graduate studies. Ms. Laura Stathopoulos, Director of Graduate Awards and Financial Aid reported that the SGS Conference Grant underwent a review and has been expanded to offer funds three times a year; to allow students to apply for funds up to 9 months in advance, or 2 months retroactively; and the application window will remain open for three months. More information on eligibility and instructions is found [here](#).

The Graduate Awards Scholarship application process will go live October 31, 2019, and will be housed through the SGS portal. An announcement will follow soon.

**On-line Financial Need Assessments** – SGS is piloting a program with Arts & Science to develop an on-line financial needs assessment tool, developed by enrolment services, to replace the current labor-intensive paper-based process.

**SGS Parental Grant** – SGS will be reviewing the current Parental Grant to better align with Tri-Agency’s decision to increase paid parental leave support for scholarship recipients and those receiving stipendiary support through their supervisor’s research grants.

**7. Motions**

i. **Proposal to Update Entries in 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, content is reviewed to ensure clarity. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has identified a regulation that required further clarification. Circulated with the agenda was a summary of these proposed changes.

The Dean called on Professor Gretchen Kerr to present the first motion.

**MOTION #1**

*THAT* the Graduate Education Council of the School of Graduate Studies APPROVE the proposed changes to the School of Graduate Studies Calendar – Degree Regulation 13.1.4 Master of Education (MEd) effective September 2020.

**MOTION** (*duly moved and seconded by John Evjen*)

THAT the Graduate Education Council of the School of Graduate Studies APPROVE the proposed changes to the School of Graduate Studies Calendar – Degree Regulation 13.1.4 Master of Education (MEd) effective September 2020.

Seeing no discussion, the Dean called the vote.

The motion was **CARRIED, unanimous**.

## **MOTION #2**

### **ii. Graduate Academic Appeals Board Membership**

The Dean advised that the Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB) is a standing committee of the Graduate Education Council. The motion documentation distributed at the meeting provides details regarding nominations and appointments to GAAB of the Alternate Chair (renewal), four faculty (renewals) and three student members (two new, one renewal), to serve on GABB. GEC is the final approval level for this committee.

The Dean called on Professor Gretchen Kerr to present the second motion.

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

*THAT Graduate Education Council approve the membership of the Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB) for the 2019-2020 academic term.*

There being no discussion, the Dean called the vote.

The motion was **CARRIED, unanimous**.

## **8. Other Business**

A member requested information on the Student Choice Initiative; the Vice-Provost Students will be invited to provide an update at the next meeting.

A member requested information on the Gym Bursary Pilot Project; this will be reported at the next meeting.

There was no other business.

## **9. For Information**

Full reports were distributed with the agenda for information.

- i. **Graduate Education Council Election Report: Spring 2019**
- ii. **Graduate Education Council Membership: 2019-2020**
- iii. **Code of Behavior on Academic Matters – Annual Report 2018-2019** - A member questioned the calculations for Table 1 versus Table 2. Table 1 does not include total number of cases referred to the Provost's Office, where Table two does include this information. This report will be amended to clarify this.
- iv. **Graduate Academic Appeals Board – Annual Report 2018-2019**

## **10. 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 October 22, 2019 be adjourned.



Appendix to the Minutes  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL  
Record of Attendance – October 22, 2019

**Present**

(Voting & Non-Voting Members)

Audet, Julie  
Ball, Christopher (*ex-officio*)  
Barker, Joshua (Chair)  
Bertrand, Jacques  
Brummell, Alice  
Buck, Leslie  
Burnes, David  
Chang, Samantha Chiu-Yang  
Desrosiers, Nathalie  
Domloge, Hanan  
Dubber, Markus  
Evjen, John  
Hu, Jim  
Jenne, Amy  
Katz, Chaim  
Kerr, Gretchen (*ex-officio*)  
Lee, Chi-Guhn  
Lyons, Kelly  
Mandhan, Sneha  
Milkie, Melissa  
Murphy, Jennifer  
Packer, Jeremy  
Jeff Packman  
Prado, Marianne  
Ratto, Matt  
Sebastian, Agnes  
Sepielli, Andrew  
Shantz, Coleen (*ex-officio*)  
Von Schütz, Konstanze  
Williams, Charmaine (*ex-officio*)

**Guests and SGS Staff**

Cuckovic, Biljana  
Desrosiers-Tam, Brian  
Di Caterina, Fong  
Dion, Nicholas  
Freeman, Jane  
Heximer, Dianne (*Secretary to Council*)  
Hurlihey, Victoria  
Kenzie, Alison  
Lalonde, Josie  
Plata, Angelique  
Reichold, Kristen  
Stathopoulos, Laura

**Absent**

Alford, Larry (*ex-officio*)  
Bahar, Nilgoun  
Benjamin, Dwayne  
Boon, Heather  
Cairney, John  
Cote, Stephane  
Gertler, Meric (*ex-officio*)  
Goel, Vivek  
Gu, Yi (Evie)  
Harrison, Timothy  
Kamaleddin, Amin  
Kaplan, Allan  
Labrie, Norman  
Lam, Ernie  
Levit, Robert  
Mabury, Scott  
McCahan, Susan  
Mou, Leping  
Pirvulescu, Mihela  
Quinonez, Carlos  
Rossini, Adriana  
Schmitt, Cannon  
Silcox, Mary  
Silverman, Brian  
Simpson, Andre  
Steeves, Craig  
Stevenson, Siobhan  
Stirling, Ashley  
Regehr, Cheryl  
Tourangeau, Ann  
Van Lieshout, Pascal