

Meeting Notes
Graduate Education Council
Tuesday, February 18, 2020

The Dean called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. and welcomed 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 February 18, 2020.

MOTION (*duly moved by Charmaine Williams and seconded by Melissa Milkie*)

THAT the agenda of the Graduate Education Council meeting of February 18, 2020 as circulated with the agenda, be approved.

The motion is **CARRIED, unanimous.**

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Graduate Education Council Meeting of October 22, 2019.

The Dean noted that the minutes of the October 22, 2019 meeting were distributed with the agenda.

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

THAT the minutes of the Graduate Education Council meeting of October 22, 2019, be approved.

The motion is **CARRIED, unanimous.**

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

Two items from the previous meeting have been brought forward for discussion. Professor Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost Students, will provide an update on the Student Choice Initiative, and the Dean will provide an update on the SGS Gym Bursary.

4. Dean's Remarks

- **Presidential & Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health (SMHTF)** – The final report of the SMHTF was released in December 2019, followed by the Provost's Administrative Response in January 2020. The Dean reported that all of the recommendations made by the Task Force have been accepted. Of note, the recommendation to expand the mandate of the task force to include not only issues around mental health service provision, but also to include the broader issues surrounding the culture of caring. The Dean highlighted three items in the Administrative Response that were highly relevant to Graduate Studies:
 - i. The establishment of a new Centre for Graduate Mentorship and Supervision (CGMS) located within SGS;
 - ii. The Healthy Labs Initiative introduced in the last meeting and under development by a Special Advisor, Dr. Reinhart Reithmeier; and
 - iii. A standing advisory board on graduate student mental health.
- **Student Experience Surveys** – SGS participates in two surveys focused on the graduate student experience:
 - i. **Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS)** – SGS first participated in this survey in 2005, and continues to participate as it is run every three years. It is administered nationally with approximately 50 peer institutions involved, providing a good set of comparisons on student satisfaction with their graduate

programs and experience. The survey was last run during the Spring 2019 term; survey results are being collected into a report that will be posted on the SGS website. The Dean reviewed key results which will inform supports provided and identify areas needing additional focus: the supervisory relationship; professional skills development activities; academic and financial advising; and courses. The full report will include comparator information with other participating Canadian institutions.

- ii. **Graduate Student Experience in the Research University ([gradSERU](#))** – SGS has been a member of this consortium of research intensive universities for the last couple of years and has participated in one survey to date, with another to run in the Spring 2020 term. Questions relate to research climate and supervision, allowing SGS a better view of the graduate student experience compared to other research-intensive universities around the world, data not included in the CGPSS survey.
- **Provost’s Postdoctoral Fellowship Program** – This three-year pilot project allows UofT Faculty to hire postdoctoral fellows from under-represented groups, specifically Indigenous and Black. Results from the second cycle have been announced and applications for the third and final cycle are due May 1, 2020. More information is available [here](#).
 - **Parental Leave Grant** – In 2017 SGS created the Parental Grant to provide financial support to doctoral students, within the funded cohort, to help offset the loss of funding as a result of taking an approved parental leave of absence at the time of a birth or adoption. To align with recent changes in the Tri-Agency granting councils, SGS has extended the time that parents are eligible for support, and increased the amount of funds they will receive. In the past, non-birth parents were eligible for one session of support, and birth parents were eligible for two sessions of support. This has been changed to two and three, respectively. The amount of money provided per session is also increasing from \$4,000 to approximately \$5, 833, bringing the amount equal to that of many funding packages. These amendments will be announced soon and will be retroactive to Fall 2019. More information is [here](#).
 - **Summer Gym Bursary** – At the last meeting of Graduate Education Council, a member asked the status of this Bursary. The third year of this three-year pilot project has just completed. Initially intended for research-stream students, it was expanded to include Professional Master’s students last year. SGS is in a position to continue this bursary going forward. More information is [here](#).
 - **3 Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition** – Registration for this year’s 3MT Competition opens February 2020. UofT Finals will take place on April 2, 2020 at the Isabel Bader Theatre.
 - **SGS Data Dashboards** – Over the last few years SGS has been developing resources, both for students and academic leaders, to provide more comprehensive data in the form of [interactive data dashboards](#). Data on the 10,000 PhD Project results and doctoral student funding packages are currently posted; career outcomes of postdoctoral fellows will follow shortly.

In addition to the three mentioned, additional data will be included that will focus on admissions and enrolment numbers, as well as some doctoral time to degree data. The dashboards have been built to align with an initiative established by a consortium called the [Coalition for Next Generation Life Sciences](#), a group of institutions working together to standardized methods of presenting data on time-to-completion for doctoral students, including enrolment trends. The data as it relates to all four of the SGS Divisions will be made public in April 2020. Prior to that, it will be released internally so Principals, Deans and Chairs will have the opportunity to see and understand the data.

SGS has also collaborated with University of Toronto Business Intelligence Service (UTBI) operated through Planning & Budget. This finely-grained data, on admissions and enrolment trends over time, will be used for internal institutional, such as providing support to Graduate Chairs in recruitment and graduate enrolment management activities. SGS plans to incorporate this into internal dashboard offerings.

5. Update: Student Choice Initiative (SCI)

Professor Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost, Students, provided an update on the Student Choice Initiative, in response to a request at the previous Graduate Education Council meeting. Introduced by the Provincial Government in January 2019, with instructions following in April 2019, the SCI involved ancillary or incidental fees that students pay to cover student service costs on each of the campuses, and fees students pay toward student societies. Categories of

ancillary fees were introduced and divided into different categories. The Essential categories, includes Health & Wellness Services, Career Services, Academic and Safety Supports; and the Non-Essential category, or what UofT refers to as optional services, includes a variety of activities like Clubs, Orientation, and other kinds of areas that we not deemed “essential” under the government’s framework. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS), worked with all student societies to help them understand what was required as they amended their budget categories to comply with the directives. The OVPS also complied with the government’s request to have an online opt-out system available for students before they paid their summer 2019 fees. All Ontario universities worked with their student societies and services to ensure compliance with the opt-outs.

In late-November 2019, the Canadian Federation of Students and the York Federation of Students brought litigation to the Divisional Court against the Government and the Student Choice Initiative. On November 21, 2019 we learned that the Divisional Court quashed the SCI, which means, in essence, it did not have any standing. Due to this, OVPS had to suspend access to the opt-out system for students; for the Winter Term fees there would be no opt-out of fees. The Government has filed to appeal the decision, and at this time UofT has assessed full fees for student societies for the Winter 2020 term. Since the University’s opt-out period for Winter 2020 was before the November 21st decision, for the students who opted out prior to system suspension, UofT is awaiting the Court’s decision to decide whether to go back and reassess fees. For other students who had not yet paid their fees before the opt-out system was suspended, they were assessed for the full amounts. There are no plans to collect opt-outs for 2020-21 unless the Courts overturn the decision. The [Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fee Report](#) through the University Affairs Board of Governing Council, provides information on the Fall opt-outs.

6. SGS Updates

i. Vice-Dean Students, Professor Charmaine Williams

Graduate Student Mental Health Working Group (GSMHWG) – The SGS Mental Health Working Group membership consists of faculty, staff and student representatives from across the three campuses, and is focused on developing recommendations for the promotion of graduate student mental health within the SGS portfolio. Through discussions, they have identified how things like policies, best practices, services, and funding through SGS may have an impact on graduate student mental health:

- a. **Onboarding** that decreases stress and promotes mental health – to think beyond orientation and identify points of stress that could be reduced as they join the community.
- b. **Reducing unnecessary stress or barriers** in the standard processes of graduate school – pinpoint actions that every student has to do that are unnecessarily stressful or difficult;
- c. **Proactive intervention** at point of increased demand or pressure – recognize periods of increased stress along the graduate journey, (i.e. comprehensive exams, FOEs, Practicums) and anticipate what types of proactive interventions can be in place;
- d. **Supporting students** experiencing mental illness – Consider supports that are currently in place, and how things like leaves and adjustments/accommodations are available;
- e. **Responding to Crisis** – Within SGS Student Services, and also addressed in the Presidential and Provostial Report, think about how SGS can equip individuals that students interact with, to identify and respond to crisis;
- f. **Identifying key people** who are the points of contact for students that can be resources for students. A wealth of information comes to students and they don’t know if/when they will need it at a future point. SGS can ensure the people they go to for help understand their role included this capacity, and that they are equipped to provide information and support to students.
- g. The Working Group expects to have formal recommendations by June 2020. A different form of the group will continue to meeting and follow-up on recommendations.

Professor Charmaine Williams provided an update on projects under Professor Gretchen Kerr, Vice-Dean Programs and Innovation, who was unable to join the meeting:

- a. **Dissertation Working Group** – are reviewing various formats for the dissertation and how this integrates with the work SGS is doing regarding Truth and Reconciliation.
- b. **Graduate Faculty Membership (GFM) Categories and Processes** – This involves clarifying the requirements and responsibilities associated with the current GFM categories.
- c. **Graduate Professional Development** – Enhancing online offerings for increased student accessibility, planning to expand programming to include research topics and public scholarship. Graduate students have voiced a desire for interdisciplinary engagement in these areas.
- d. **Professional Development Programming for Post-Doctoral Fellows** – planning is underway to provided programming for postdoctoral fellows in the 2020-2021 term.

ii. **Student Academic Services, Josie Lalonde, Director**

- a. **Extended Hours at SGS** – In August 2019 SGS began offering graduate students extended hours of service from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays. This includes Front-line Student Academic Services, Financial Counselling, Wellness Counsellors and consultations with the Accessibility Advisor.
- b. **Recruitment Initiatives** – SGS has undertaken two major recruitment initiatives:
 - **CALDO** – UofT joined the CALDO consortium in Fall 2017. Named after the first members of the consortium (Calgary, Alberta, Laval, Dalhousie and Ottawa), this consortium of nine Canadian research-intensive universities focuses on graduate student recruitment and institutional collaboration between Canadian and Latin American universities. Working closely with the Office of the Vice-President, International (OVPI), SGS has engaged in recruitment activities, speaking with prospective students at EduCanada fairs, and both public and private institutions. SGS has seen an increase in applicants from Latin America since joining this consortium. SGS has also reached out to CALDO to initiate prospective student webinars for units interested in Latin America recruitment.
 - Together with OVPI, SGS participates in an **International Recruitment Community of Practice**. This involves meeting to share information on SGS recruitment activities and best practices, as well as data that would be most helpful to division. A shared repository of travel schedules and recruitment marketing materials has been created to better coordinate efforts.
 - **International Visiting Graduate Students (IVGS)** – J. Lalonde thanked members for sharing IVGS best practices with Units which has resulted in fewer issues:
 - i. students must be registered in ROSI if they are here for more than one month;
 - ii. try to align visit dates with sessional start and end dates where possible;
 - iii. build in lots of time for Exchange applications and immigration documentation;
 - iv. students should apply for study permits, even for short visit;
 - v. carefully consider funding issues that can affect the documents they need.
 SGS has two [International Student Advisors](#) and an [Immigration Advisor](#), who can provide advice.

iii. **Graduate Awards and Financial Aid, Laura Stathopoulos, Director**

Services within the Office of Graduate Awards and Financial Aid is broken down into three areas:

- a. **Awards Administration and Support** – A team of three Award Officers provide full support and advice to Graduate Administrators through the complete award cycle.
- b. **Financial Aid and Advising** – A team of two individuals assist students and work with Graduate Administrators to assist students to locate funding sources, assist with OSAP applications, create and advise on student budgets, navigate and understand student funding packages, and assist with emergency support through grants and loans; and
- c. **Outreach** for students and staff through workshops, information sessions, 1:1 training, and best practice advice. Sessions are also offered in partnership with Student Life, the Family Care Office and Grad Talks.

Other updates: a new application/portal for students and administrators was launched to administer the Ontario Graduate Scholarships; OGS quota has been released to institutions with UofT allotments higher than last year; A third offering of SGS Conference Grants will be launched this summer; the Online Financial Need Assessment pilot with A&S has been well received; Enrolment Services is launching Phase 1 of Award Explorer. Questions should be addressed to the [Graduate Awards Office](#).

7. Motions

i. Creation of Doctor of Nursing Degree Regulations

The Dean called on Professor Charmaine Williams to present the first motion.

MOTION #1

THAT the Graduate Education Council of the School of Graduate Studies approve the proposed new Doctoral Degree Regulation for the Doctor of Nursing, to be included as section 12.5 under the School of Graduate Studies Degree Regulations (section 12 in the SGS Calendar), effective September 1, 2020.

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

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.

The motion was distributed with the agenda package. A member asked what the equivalent program is at other schools. Professor A. Tourangeau replied that there is no other program like this in Canada. The University of Toronto will be the first Canadian university to have such a program. Following discussion, the Dean called the vote.

The motion was **CARRIED, 1 abstention**.

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 with the agenda provides details regarding one new faculty member appointment to serve on GAAB from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2023. GEC is the final approval level for this committee.

The Dean called on Professor Charmaine Williams to present the second motion.

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

THAT Graduate Education Council approve the appointment of one faculty member to serve on the Graduate Academic Appeals Board for the 2019-2020 academic year as follows:

Graduate Faculty Members (Division 4)

Peter Donnelly, Exercise Sciences (*New – January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2023*)

There being no discussion, the Dean called the vote.

The motion was **CARRIED, unanimous.**

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Closing Remarks

There being no further discussion or questions, the Dean thanked Council members for their participation and adjourned the meeting.



Appendix to the Minutes
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL
Record of Attendance – February 18, 2020

Present

(Voting & Non-Voting Members)
Barker, Joshua (Chair)
Bertrand, Jacques
Buck, Leslie
Burnes, David
Domloge, Hanan
Dubber, Markus
Evjen, John
Hu, Jim
Jenne, Amy
Kamaleddin, Amin
Katz, Chaim
Labrie, Normand
Lam, Ernie
Milkie, Melissa
Mou, Leping
Murphy, Jennifer
Quinonez, Carlos
Ratto, Matt
Rossini, Adriana
Shantz, Coleen (*ex-officio*)
Tourangeau, Ann
Van Lieshout, Pascal
Williams, Charmaine (*ex-officio*)

Guests and SGS Staff

Bautista-Hodgson, Victoria
Desrosiers-Tam, Brian
Heximer, Dianne (*Secretary to Council*)
Hurlihey, Victoria
Lalonde, Josie
Musisi, Lwanga
Phillips, Jules
Reichold, Kristen
Stathopoulos, Laura
Wagschal, David
Welsh, Sandy

Absent

Alford, Larry (*ex-officio*)
Audet, Julie
Ball, Christopher (*ex-officio*)
Benjamin, Dwayne
Boon, Heather
Brummell, Alice
Chang, Samantha Chiu-Yang
Cote, Stephane
Desrosiers, Nathalie
Gertler, Meric (*ex-officio*)
Goel, Vivek
Gu, Yi (Evie)
Harrison, Timothy
Kaplan, Allan
Kerr, Gretchen (*ex-officio*)
Lee, Chi-Guhn
Levit, Robert
Lyons, Kelly
Mabury, Scott
MacGregor, Robert
Mandhan, Sneha
Packer, Jeremy
Packman, Jeff
Pirvulescu, Mihela
Qiu, Lingling
Schmitt, Cannon
Sebastian, Agnes
Sepielli, Andrew
Silcox, Mary
Silverman, Brian
Simpson, Andre
Steeves, Craig
Stevenson, Siobhan
Stirling, Ashley
Regehr, Cheryl
Thorburn, Malcolm
Von Schütz, Konstanze