

(Approved October 5, 2011)

BROCK UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of May 18, 2011 Sankey Chamber 2:00 pm

Present: D. Antwi-Amoabeng, K. Arnell, J. Atkinson (also representing S. Rothstein), D. Butz, L. Duhaime, C. Federici, D. Hayes, M. Hennigar, B. Ross (for S. Houghten), A. Johnson (for S. Sekel), H. Junke, R. Kuchapski, I. Makus, J. McNamara, B. Minor, R. Parker, Mary-Beth Raddon (for S. Tilley), M. Rose (Chair), K. Samokhin, D. Samson, C. Santos, C. Ugulini (Admin Support), S. Vint (also representing J. Allard), M. Webber, J. Yuen

Regrets: M. Feldman, F. Fueten, C. Merriam, S. Rothstein

Programs not Represented: Applied Disability Studies, Biological Sciences, Business Economics, Earth Sciences, Philosophy

1. Approval of Agenda - **MOVED** (D. Samson/D. Butz) that the Agenda of May 18, 2011 be approved. **CARRIED**
2. Approval of Minutes of March 30, 2011 - **MOVED** (C. Santos/D. Butz) that the Minutes of the meeting of March 30, 2011 be approved. **CARRIED**
3. Business Arising from Minutes
 - a) In the Minutes of March 30, Dean Rose drew attention to the fact that she had expanded upon her oral report, Item 4(h), on Graduate Growth and issues of government funding in order to provide further clarity.
 - b) The April culminating event in Mapping the New Knowledges 2011 was very successful with an excellent turnout of students for most sessions, a very successful keynote offered by Brock's newest CRC, Dr. Wendy Ward (FAHS), and our first graduate mentorship award (presented to Teena Willoughby, Psychology).

The 14 nomination packages for the mentorship award were outstanding and it was gratifying to hear so many stories from students about their appreciation of their supervisors. Due to the complexity of assessing the nomination packages (given the fact that some supervisors are so much more experienced than others and some have access to doctoral students, while others do not), the Conference Committee is considering presenting two awards in future – a senior award (based on years of supervisory experience and access to doctoral students) and a junior award (based on early career and access to master's students only).
4. Dean's Report
 - a) Dean Rose extended congratulations to the next (and newly announced) Dean of the FGS, Mike Plyley, who comes to the position with a wealth of knowledge and experience in

- Graduate Studies. We welcome him to his new post and wish him every success as he takes up the position on July 1.
- b) The Dean reported that she and Heather Junke have put together a submission for the 2011 CAGS/ETS Award for Excellence and Innovation in Enhancing the Graduate Student Experience based on Mapping the New Knowledges conference activities as an instrument for building graduate culture in a new graduate studies institution.
- c) Convocation note: Brock News is asking for ideas for human interest stories relating to students, faculty and staff involved in graduation for convocation (June 7-11). If you have ideas, please forward to campusnews@brocku.ca – or contact Heather in FGS, hjunke@brocku.ca.
- d) Most of the External Awards have now been announced.
- The OGS awards list has not yet been received by the universities, although students have been informed.
 - SSHRC Doctoral Scholarships: Our quota was 8 and we were awarded 6. (Last year we received a quota of 6 and got 6.)
 - SSHRC Master’s Scholarships: Quota was 27 and we were awarded 27.
 - NSERC : our quota was 16 and 9 were funded: 6 Masters and 3 Doctoral.
 - This felt disastrous to us and our adjudication committee met afterwards to try to analyze the outcome. It had been a very diligent committee in adjudicating, one of the most serious and most hardworking committees of this kind that we have seen.
 - The committee noted that in our case, from the Bachelors group applying to Masters 4/7 were funded; from the Masters to the Masters group, 2/2 were funded; from the Masters to the PhD 1/3 was funded and from the PhD to the PhD 2/3 were funded.
 - In the doctoral category publications seemed to be a huge determinant of success. In the Masters competition it was more difficult to assess the determinants of success. It seemed to be more a matter of the adjudication committees at NSERC making committee-specific decisions.
 - The committee charged the Dean with finding out more about the competition: were there fewer awards this year? Or were some universities not making quotas and others exceeding them? Were there more applications in the system this year (definitely yes, but this need not affect the achievement of quotas – would simply lead to having more unfunded students in the system in the end).
 - It is exceedingly difficult to get info from NSERC on comparative issues like this. Each university gets only its own information.
 - However, the Dean’s polling of her OCGS Colleagues turned up information that virtually all of the medium to smaller graduate studies institutions received a lower percentage of awards this year compared to last year, some falling below a 50% success rate. Larger institutions tended not to divulge – whether out of embarrassment re: their largess or their failure to meet quotas.
 - Digging a little further turned up the following information from one of the OCGS deans, who has sat on the CAGS executive this year and has been in discussions in Ottawa with the granting councils. His information is that this year NSERC decided to adopt the SSHRC practice of allocating awards. In the past, NSERC had over-offered on the basis that there would always be declines. This year they did not over-

offer (thereby reducing the initial offers by somewhere between 10% and 14%, or so he reckons), but created an alternate list of applicants to whom scholarships will be awarded following confirmation of declines from individuals initially offered scholarships. So some of our students may yet be funded when all of the declines are in.

- However he added that he does wonder if the new method, even if it only reduced the number of scholarships by 10% or so, fell disproportionately on smaller schools (and his own, which is larger but did poorly as well).
- e) Exchanges with University of Ghana-Legon: A note from John Kaethler providing an overview of the changes to the Brock University/University of Ghana-Legon Student Exchange Agreement was circulated. UG-Legon would now like to send one or two graduate students annually to Brock for one term. So far, John has heard from 7 GPDs confirming their willingness to participate. Others are asked to contact John immediately to let him know of their interest in participating.
- f) The Dean's Office is organizing a Celebratory Event on June 22 at 2:00-4:00 pm in Pond Inlet. The occasion is to celebrate the past decade in Graduate Studies at Brock, to mark the departure of the incumbent dean, and to welcome the new dean. Electronic invitations will follow shortly.
- g) In Gail Pepper's absence, the Dean was asked to share the following information with Graduate Council:
- The office is working on an electronic applications process with IT. An electronic referees system will be implemented in the fall, and some program forms are moving to electronic submission hopefully by the fall. These processes take a long time and dedicated effort to implement.
 - There will be a slight application fee increase. The Dean noted that application fees are the only source of revenue for our Faculty, and this goes directly into recruitment.
 - With regard to admissions, Programs are asked to keep trying to process stale officers. Tammy Woodhouse-Gilby is available to assist with this.
 - The E-thesis submission pilot project with the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences went very smoothly. In 2 years, all theses will have to be submitted electronically. In the Fall we will need to decide whether to pilot another smaller group, or to involve everyone.
 - The GPDs are asked what kind of workshops or training for new Graduate Program Directors they prefer? Should these include Administrative Assistants? Please let Gail know.

5. GSA Report

Daniel noted that GSA is involved in planning and meetings with regard to next year.

6. Discussion Items

A worksheet was distributed for feedback/suggestions on the following items. Feedback may assist the new Dean in discussions of these issues (at CAD, Senate Committees, etc.), and in planning future meetings of Graduate Council.

- Course Outlines: Statements re: Academic Integrity - The Dean noted the importance of producing proper course outlines for Graduate courses showing mark breakdown. These are an important resource in student appeals cases. The Dean also noted that the bulk of academic misconduct cases she has handled involve International students who do not have a clear understanding of citation. Dean Rose will be meeting with committee members June Corman, John Lye and Anna Lathrop to discuss the Academic Integrity Policy. Please forward any information you would like the Dean to pass on to the committee.
 - Oral and Written Comments were as follows:
 - - GPDs were in agreement that every graduate course, including independent study courses, should provide a written course outline to the student, including marks to be distributed for each kind of activity that will be graded. I.e. marking schemes should be provided to students prior to the start of the course.
 - This is essential, since these outlines become part of the academic review process.
 - It is also essential since these are contracts, and depending on verbal agreements between instructors and students is asking for trouble in the long run, should there be disagreements.
 - Every program needs to undertake due diligence by providing careful orientation regarding academic integrity for incoming students and many of the submissions argued that academic integrity must be reinforced repeatedly throughout the program, especially if there are areas that students, it would seem, just “don’t get.” E.g., points need to be made in every class repeatedly, as well as in the MA program handbook, at graduate student orientation, etc., etc.
 - Some programs reported little or no problem with academic integrity at the graduate level. Is it more of a program-specific, or cohort-specific problem?
 - There should definitely be extra attention paid to Visa students and their problems in navigating AI requirements that may be different from their home cultures.
 - Could CTLET hold special workshops for international students on AI?
 - One program argued for using turnitin.com for grad courses. It works.
 - There should be a process by which a grad student found guilty of academic misconduct should not be able to become or continue as a TA. Could we make this part of a TA application process?
 - As far as altering the AI policy is concerned, there should be deference to the program’s recommended penalty.

- There should be a workshop to orient GPDs re: the process, and especially the hierarchy of reporting (e.g. role of FGS – things don't stop at Faculty Associate Dean as with UG cases of academic misconduct).
- Graduate Degree Level Expectations – There are six requirements, outlined by OCAV (Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents) for use when a graduate program is reviewed. The Dean noted that there are no models for this in the Ontario system and suggested that CTLET could be approached on this topic.
 - Some programs are building these into their program handbooks for clarity in terms of expectations for students and faculty.
 - The Faculty of Social Sciences has begun to develop a document that will guide programs in the development of their DLEs. There should be a template made available soon for programs to start working on their DLEs. The FSS is likely to be willing to share its document when it is ready.
 - CTLET should offer workshops to programs within which the program's GDLEs could be worked out. Programs need to take some initiative in getting this done so that the IQAP process will not be a "shock" in requiring it at program review time.
 - Clearly the first few programs to go through Academic Review will struggle with this, but then the models will be in place for others to follow. Related problems with reviews can be ironed out in successive years. This is a self-limiting problem not to agonize over.
 - One program argued that going to the trouble of creating GDLEs for the purposes of an external review is frustrating if the result is (as seems to be the case) extraordinary indifference at the ARC level. Can't be expected to do what is not going to be received as meaningful in subsequent processes.
- Annual Progress Reviews: Proposed FHB language - SGSC held discussions re: the following proposed language, and Dean Rose suggested seeking the advice of Graduate Council.

Annual Progress Reports

A formal report of a graduate student's progress in a research-stream graduate program must be completed at least once per year (by April 30 for programs of 2 or 3 terms in length and by August 31 of each year for programs of lengths greater than 3 terms) by the graduate program and filed with the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

- It was noted in ensuing discussion that several programs already have a mechanism in place for tracking annual progress of students.

- In written comments, it was noted that more clarity about the nature of the report that would be required is needed: FGS needs to circulate a proposed model for discussion.
 - In the written responses, some felt that the annual report to the FGS should occur in May, when final grades for the Winter term are entered.
 - It was noted that students are making suitable progress in a particular 4-term program -- no concerns as to TTC or to reporting to FGS on same.
 - One program noted that this would not be a problem in the GPD's point of view. However, it would be good if the form, as developed, asked for some information about progress towards the thesis (i.e. not just yes/good progress or no/insufficient progress but something a bit more nuanced than that).
 - Seems a good idea provided it can be done easily and electronically.
 - Another program saw this reporting as unnecessary, since their program reviews and reports on students' progress internally in routine and satisfactory ways. Leave it to individual programs to do this in their way, but a minimum of once per year seems a reasonable requirement.
- Suggestions re: Graduate Council: Feedback was requested on the effectiveness of Graduate Council. Should the current format be retained? Are there ways of improving agendas or discussions? Would moving towards a Faculty Council model be a good idea? Written responses included the following observations:
 - The Wednesday time slot will work or not work depending on individuals' schedules – not really possible to get around this.
 - Hard to make discussions relevant to all programs: (home-) Faculty level discussions will always be more pertinent and effectual.
 - The more information that can be put into writing in advance the better. Graduate Council advice could then be more effectively expressed and provide the dean with more clear support when dealing with issues with the Senior admin. A report subsequent to general discussion is not as effective as a concerted decision on the part of GC.
 - How about strictly-enforced time limits for each agenda item. Otherwise o.k. Suggestion: keep dean's/directors/GSA reports to 30 minutes in total to leave more time for discussion.
 - Ad hoc committees work but need a regular meeting time built into the year. Could schedule regular GC meetings for the entire year, but then use some of them (when not needed for a meeting of the whole and especially early in the year) for ad hoc committee meetings instead of GC meetings.
 - Grad Council should be an advisory body in meaningful way. Major policy changes, including funding, should be brought to GC as proposals well in

advance of implementation. This would anticipate and avoid problems, which is not the current case. GC should be a truly deliberative body.

- Using more of a Faculty Council approach would make sense – could create mechanisms whereby we could undertake the serious work of looking at where we are and how we are growing, thinking about how we can improve on what we are doing, figuring out how to support grad programs better in their plans for change and improvement, and look at ways of working together at improving reputation of Grad Studies inside and outside of Brock.

7. Other Business: The Dean noted that Brock's IQAP was approved and will go to Senate next week.

- The GPD for the MA program in Classics, the first and only graduate program undergoing a review currently, expressed a strong opinion that the new Academic Review system is not working well, stating that the program has not received sufficient support from the Academic Reviews office. He did, however, note that the Dean of Graduate Studies had been helpful to the extent possible during the development of the self-study.
- Dean Rose noted that this was the first graduate review, and that the ARC committee was working under the new, not-quite-finalized IQAP at this time. For a number of reasons the site visit for Classics has been postponed until fall. She is confident things will work smoothly for the upcoming graduate reviews.
- Dean Rose will take the complaint to ARC for discussion at its annual retreat next week. *[Note: this was done at the ARC retreat/review meeting of May 25 and the issue received, in the Dean's view, a good hearing.]*

8. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.