

( Approved April 25, 2012)

## BROCK UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Meeting of March 28, 2012 2:00 - 3:30, Sankey Chamber

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**Present:** K. Arnell, J. Atkinson, U. Brand, R. Dimand, L. Duhaime, C. Federici, M. Hennigar, H. Junke, N. Klentrou, R. Kuchapski, I. Makus, H. McGarrell, C. Merriam, G Pepper, M. Plyley (Chair), M. Richards, K. Samokhin, D. Samson, C. Santos, S. Sekel, C. Sheridan, A. Smith, C. Tardif-Williams, C. Ugulini (Admin Support), A. Van Der Est, J. Yuen

**Guest:** B. Alexander (Faculty of Mathematics & Science)

**Regrets:** M. Berman, J. Mercier, S. Vint

**Programs not Represented:** Applied Disability Studies, Computer Science, Critical Sociology, English, Geography, Philosophy, Popular Culture, Social Justice and Equity Studies

1. **Approval of Agenda** - **MOVED** (C. Merriam/H. McGarrell) that the Agenda of March 28, 2012 be approved.

**CARRIED**

2. **Approval of Minutes of February 29, 2012** – The following change was requested to the last sentence in Item 8 a): Following consultation with the Deans, BUFA Executive and GPDs/faculty, the revised proposal, along with any feedback received, will be sent back to the Senate Graduate Studies Committee for consideration.

**MOVED** (J. Atkinson/M. Hennigar) that the Minutes of the meeting of February 29, 2012 be approved as amended.

**CARRIED**

3. **Business Arising from Minutes** - none

4. **Dean's Report – Questions on circulated material**

The Dean's Report, circulated prior to the meeting, provided details of the upcoming Mapping the New Knowledges 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Student Conference, and updates on admissions, the professional skills development workshops, graduate program reviews, and budget/planning.

5. **Director's Report – Questions on circulated material**

The Director's Report, circulated prior to the meeting, provided an update on the electronic application/admissions project, the graduate record form, converting offers to acceptances, the 2012-13 Graduate Calendar and the FGS website.

- G Pepper requested that any further changes to the Graduate Calendar be forwarded to her as soon as possible, noting that the SGSC meets twice more this year.
- A problem with GradeBook was reported – grades have to be re-released in order to add more grades.  
**ACTION:** C. Sheridan will address this issue with ITS.
- A workshop on the use of GradeBook can be arranged if necessary.

6. **GSA Report** - no GSA report was presented

The Dean reported that the GSA election has taken place and the new President is Kiel Ormerod, a PhD student in Biological Sciences.

## 7. New Admission Screen Demonstration + Q/A

Two new screens under Phase 2 of the Electronic Application/Admission Project have been released to assist with admission processing and were demonstrated by Charlotte Sheridan, using data from Biological Sciences as an example. The Grad Applications Selection screen provides access to all the student applications with a decision or no decision for specific entry points. The Grad Application GP screen provides application details, document status and FGS comments. The next phase of the project will be the Assessment Screen (formerly the audit screen).

The question of authenticity of reference letters was raised. G. Pepper has been in contact with University of Waterloo and they do not feel that there has been an increase in fraudulent activity with electronic submissions.

**ACTION:** G. Pepper will check again with other universities regarding authenticity checking and online references.

It was requested that an automatic email be sent to GPDs if applicants have submitted changes.

**ACTION:** The following questions/issues were brought forward; C. Sheridan will look into these, and report back to Grad Council.

- a) Scores migrated to the new academic background screen from the Application
- b) Browser question re Referee Reports downloads
- c) Possible addition of a URL to view a referee's CV (it was noted that this is being done by universities abroad)
- d) GradeBook question - workshops to be scheduled
- e) Email notification to the GPDs from student responses (noted that this is a complex process for ITS to implement)
- f) Approvals sorted on the Course Authorization

## 8. General Discussion Items

- a) **Assessing/reviewing applications** – The Dean asked the GPDs about what is needed in the way of supplementary information to make admissions decisions. Are the supplementary materials received useful to the Committee (if not, should they be eliminated)?

G. Pepper asked whether the descriptor as to what programs are looking for/want in the letter of intent is clear to the applicant; she indicated that she can provide a form to include for them to click on.

Comments/concerns that were expressed during the ensuing discussion included: eliminate the letter of intent as it plays no role in the decision; what are the implications if there are forged documents at the other end?

Gail indicated that her colleagues at other institutions haven't noticed an increase in this activity; it was requested that more detailed information be requested on the referee's report.

**ACTION:** Gail will send a Word version of the Referee's Report to GPDs for comments/suggestions.

- b) **GPD Issues** – GPDs were encouraged to email Dean Plyley if there are any issues they would like addressed.

One member was under the impression that the issue of Membership in the Faculty of Graduate Studies was on the Agenda for today's meeting and expressed disappointment that it was not.

## 9. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.