

(Approved May 16, 2012)

BROCK UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of April 25, 2012 2:00 - 3:30, Sankey Chamber

Present: K. Arnell, G. Betts, B. Butryn (for S. Sekel), D. Butz, D. Cho, R. Dimand, M. Feldman, N. Klentrou, R. Kuchapski, I. Makus, J. Mercier, B. Minor, K. Ormerod, G Pepper, M. Plyley (Chair), M. Richards, D. Samson, C. Santos, A. Smith, C. Tardif-Williams, S. Tilley, C. Ugulini (Admin Support), M. Webber, M. Winter, J. Yuen

Regrets: J. Allard, M. Berman, U. Brand, L. Duhaime, C. Federici, H. Junke, H. McGarrell, C. Merriam, S. Sekel, S. Vint

Programs not Represented: Applied Linguistics, Biotechnology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, English, Interdisciplinary Humanities, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Popular Culture

1. **Approval of Agenda** - **MOVED** (S. Tilley/D. Samson) that the Agenda of April 25, 2012 be approved.

CARRIED

2. **Approval of Minutes of March 28, 2012** – **MOVED** (C. Santos/R. Dimand) that the Minutes of the meeting of March 28, 2012 be approved.

CARRIED (3 abstentions)

3. **Business Arising from Minutes**

a) ***FGS Membership*** – N. Klentrou, Chair of SGSC, reported that feedback on the proposal for FGS membership had been received from across the University. After lengthy discussion, and due to considerable opposition to the idea at this time, it was decided that the proposal should be withdrawn and reconsidered in the future.

I. Makus noted that two issues came up which SGSC will pursue: (1) provide more presence for Graduate Studies and (2) addressing graduate supervision. The graduate student representatives on the Committee were very disappointed that the proposal had been dropped. The students would like a policy to be developed similar to the University of Waterloo's document on graduate students' rights. An *ad hoc* committee will be struck over the Summer to work on the supervision issue.

ACTION: Dean Plyley will forward to members of Graduate Council for information an email he received from University Affairs regarding supervision. Two students have been successful in taking their universities to court due to lack of supervision and delay in getting their degrees, and resulting in a significant loss of income. The Dean would welcome feedback on this. The following is the url to the University Affairs article - <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/court-rules-students-may-sue-universities-in-some-cases.aspx>

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

The Dean's Update, circulated prior to the meeting, provided an update on Mapping the New Knowledges Conference, Convocation, and applications for the Spirit of Brock medals, recipients of the 2012 Graduate TA Award, and details of the annual FGS Graduate Student Awards and Donor Reception on May 15.

- The Faculty of Graduate Studies is exploring the possibility of holding a full-day professional skills workshop in late August or early September for incoming students to our graduate programs. A survey concerning program-specific orientation events was sent to GPDs earlier this week. Responses to Heather Junke would be appreciated by May 1. Thanks to those who have already responded.
- Invitations have been sent for the FGS annual Awards and Donor Recognition Reception to be held on May 15 in Pond Inlet. Please let us know if you have not received an invitation. The RSVP date is May 1.

5. Director's Report

- G. Pepper reported that we are still tweaking the e-thesis submissions process. Programs are encouraged to join the pilot project. All graduate programs will be required to use the e-thesis submission process as of Fall 2012. SGSC will be reviewing the revised Faculty Handbook policy regarding E-thesis submissions. One implication in moving to a complete e-process is that binding services will no longer be available through the Library. We will provide a list of services available if hard copies are desired.
- C. Sheridan has asked IT to move the thesis grade from the comment section to an actual grade in GradeBook. We are also working with IT to implement changes on referee's reports and on e-mail notification to GPDs.

6. GSA Report - no GSA report was presented

The Dean introduced and welcomed Kiel Ormerod, the incoming GSA President.

7. General Discussion Items

a) Admissions to date – If you have a better than expected applicant pool, please let us know. Perhaps we can discuss some support for re-thinking your 2012-13 intake target. As of the last count, we appear to be heading to being 20+ Master's students of last year's numbers (which was 49 short of Ministry funded spaces), and 18 over on the PhD side. Several GPDs indicated a better applicant pool than last year. In response to a question as to how we compare with other universities, the Dean indicated that as only a few universities use OUAC as their application centre, there is not a central analysis of application numbers, and most universities are reluctant to share this information, noting that at a recent OCGS meeting it was suggested that applications were down overall. He will attempt to find out where numbers are when he attends the OCGS Retreat in early May.

G. Pepper reported that C. Sheridan is testing the amalgamation of admissions and registration reports.

b) GPD issues

- Graduate Research Fellowships - The question was raised concerning to what extent are these to be attached to employment or are they solely meant to support student training? G. Pepper indicated that the design of the program was to be able to offer matching funds to a supervisor to provide augmented funding to attract the best domestic students. The differences between the Research Fellowships (RF) and Research Assistantships (RA) were discussed. While TAs and RAs are employment categories handled by Human Resources, an RFship is not, and is funding to the student to support them in the research that will appear in their thesis.
- We are working with Marketing and Communications to survey those who have accepted and declined offers. In the meantime, any GPD with information/feedback from applicants that have declined our offer would be welcome.

c) Steps/procedures in the development of an MRP/thesis

A short discussion took place concerning best practices in planning for an MRP or thesis. GPDs indicated that program handbooks have such guidelines in place; timelines have been clearly set out, but that students do not always follow them.

d) Academic probation and withdrawal

G. Pepper referred to the Faculty Handbook regulation on academic probation and withdrawal. With voluntary withdrawal (student decides), the word "withdrew" is noted on the transcript. When withdrawal is actioned by the GPD/Associate Dean and forwarded to FGS, "withdrawn" is noted on the transcript. Students can be withdrawn for lack of progress in completing program requirements in a timely manner (failure to thrive). If a student's grade falls below 70%, they are placed on probation.

8. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.