The Dean and Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education (GEC Chair, Professor Locke Rowe) called the meeting to order. He welcomed everyone to the last scheduled Graduate Education Council (GEC) meeting for the 2014/2015 academic year.

Approval of the Agenda of the Graduate Education Meeting of April 21, 2015

MOTION (duly moved and seconded)
THAT the agenda of the Graduate Education Council meeting of April 21, 2015 be approved.

The motion was CARRIED.

A student member asked if graduate funding is included on the agenda. Professor Elizabeth Smyth (Special Advisor to the Dean, Graduate Policy) responded that the item is included under Dean’s Remarks.

1 For Approval: Minutes of the Graduate Education Council Meeting, October 21, 2014

The minutes of the October 21, 2014 meeting were distributed with the agenda package. Professor Elizabeth Smyth presents the motion.

MOTION (duly moved and seconded)
THAT the minutes of the Graduate Education Council meeting of October 21, 2014 be approved.

The motion is CARRIED.

2 Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

3 Report of the School of Graduate Studies Dean and Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education

3.1 School of Graduate Studies (SGS) - Building Renovations

The Dean provided an update on the plans to renovate the two SGS Buildings (63/65 St. George Street). The Dean advised that the renovation timetable is not yet complete and that approvals are still ongoing. It is likely that the Student Services Building (63 St. George) will be vacated in the Fall of 2015 for renovations. It is undecided if 65 St. George will also be renovated. A temporary space would be selected for Student Services to provide continuous service to graduate students and units during the renovations.
3.2 **SGS Staffing Changes**
The Dean advised that Professor Elizabeth Smyth will be returning to SGS as the Vice-Dean, Programs on July 1, 2015 for a one year term. Professor Luc De Nil, Vice-Dean, Students will be taking a sabbatical leave from July 1 – Dec 31, 2015 and then will return to SGS for a three year term. He advised that the Graduate Professional Development (GPD) Office welcomed Ms. Karen Williamson as the new Administrative Coordinator, GPD and Engagement and Graduate Programming. Professor Suzanne Akbari has been appointed the Special Advisor to the Dean, Graduate Program Innovation.

3.3 **Conflict Resolution Support Centre for Graduate Students**
The Dean advised that SGS has been working with the Office of Student Life on a pilot project to open a Conflict Resolution Support Centre. The Dean will be meeting with the Graduate Students’ Union to discuss further in the coming week. A manager for the Conflict Resolution Centre will be hired and once in place, the Manager will build a peer group of graduate students. The aim of the pilot project is to provide peer support for graduate students specific to conflict resolution coaching and the referral to appropriate support resources. The one year pilot will also develop a training program for graduate units in supporting and referring students. The plan is to train the peer team over the summer for a Fall 2015 start.

3.4 **Counselling Services, situated at SGS for Graduate Students**
The Dean advised that SGS has embedded Counselling Services at 65 St. George Street. Graduate students have distinct needs and issues. SGS is hoping to partner with the GSU to help advertise the service. There will be a counsellor available in 65 St. George St. one full day a week (each Friday). If there is demand for more services, more days will be added. Starts May 1, 2015.

3.5 **Graduate Skills Development and Engagement**
The Dean reminded GEC members that Professor Reinhart Reithmeier was introduced at the last meeting as the new SGS Special Advisor to the Dean, Graduate Skills Development and Engagement. The Dean provided a brief update on activities in the new Graduate Professional Development (GPD) Unit at SGS.

Since the Fall of 2014, Professor Reithmeier has been surveying the landscape of our students and graduates and assessing the current offerings for students to develop their professional skills. He has completed a survey of the existing GDP offerings across the university and identified key areas for future GDP programming. Programming such as networking events, professional communication and leadership training, and the development of an event with the Conference Board of Canada to discuss ‘Enhancing Skills Formation and Career Planning in the PhD Curriculum’ with members of the U of T graduate community. This workshop is planned for late June, 2015. Professor Reithmeier has produced a draft report which includes several recommendations. One such recommendation is the creation of a central survey to engage graduates and alumni in discussions of innovative ideas to enhance U of T with professional skill opportunities (e.g. experiential learning opportunities). You will hear more about these initiatives in the Fall 2015 and we welcome your thoughts and feedback.

4 **Updates from the School of Graduate Studies**

4.1 **Luc De Nil, Vice-Dean, Students**
Vice-Dean De Nil shared highlights of the best practices in **graduate supervision workshops**. He commented that there has been very positive feedback and positive discussions in the units. Topics for the workshop will expand. Smaller breakout topic oriented meetings will be planned in the new academic year. In addition, we will continue to offer workshops for students in which graduate supervision issues are being discussed. The Graduate Supervision Guidelines will be reviewed in consultation with the GSU to ensure they are user friendly
and meet with graduate student needs. A graduate student member asked about the workshop attendance. Vice-Dean De Nil responded that most are full with a waiting list. There is discussion of the possibility of the workshop becoming mandatory for incoming new Faculty.

An **SGS Regulations Working Group** has been struck to review the SGS Calendar Regulations. The goal is to make sure all regulations are relevant, required, and clear. Any revisions will be brought forward to Council next year for discussion and approval. There will be consultation throughout the process. In addition, SGS will be developing guidelines to explain processes to students and administration.

Vice-Dean De Nil is a member of the **Working Group on Academic Continuity**. At a recent meeting the Provost recommended flexibility for changing grades. This applies primarily to undergraduate courses. There will be a notation placed on the transcript regarding the labor dispute so that in future years those reviewing transcripts will be aware. One issue that has arisen is that undergraduate courses required for admission to a graduate program require a numeric mark or grade. Credit/non-credit (CR/NCR) is not sufficient for admission to a program. A graduate student commented that this issue can cause problems for students down the road when applying to graduate programs. Professor Sandy Welsh (FAS, Vice-Dean, Graduate Education & Program Reviews) responded that the University Registrars are all involved. A notation will be on the transcript to explain the labor disruption. The Universities do communicate with each other and they may be in touch with us with questions.

Vice-Dean De Nil shared the results of the **3MT competition**. Stephen McCarthy (Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology) won the U of T 3MT with his presentation, ‘Towards an Ebola Cure.’ Elissa Gurman (Department of English) placed second with her talk on ‘Consent and the Love Plot in Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Fiction.’

4.2 **Don MacMillan, Director, Student Services**  
The Director of Student Services, Don MacMillan, provided an update on the **International Visiting Graduate Student Study Abroad (IVGS)** program. He advised GEC members of recent immigration changes that have required a revision to the IVGS program information and forms. The revisions now clarify that the visiting student is completing research at U of T and not working. Using language such as ‘internship’ has been confusing. Graduate units and faculty members completing these forms and making visiting student arrangements are asked to contact SGS Student Services to ensure the correspondence has the appropriate language going forward.

Don MacMillan provided an overview of the **SGS Registration Statistics Report** presentation that was included with the agenda package. He noted that this is the Fall 2014 snapshot and that admissions are up 4.2 percent. The largest growth segment is the professional master’s programs.

4.3 **Corey Dales, Director, Information Systems**  
Corey advised GEC members that SGS email is migrating to the **UTORExchange** email addresses. This means that the ‘sgs’ portion of the email address will be dropped. There is no action required for units or students at first. There may be some mild disruptions. A schedule will be posted on the SGS website. The old email addresses will forward for one year.

SGS is continuing work on the **Progress Tracker** and **Online Forms Project**. Both projects are planning to go live for September of 2015. A member asked if the ‘OSAP Continuation of Interest-Free Status’ form would also be online. Corey responded that he will look into this form to see if it can be reviewed for inclusion and be made available online.
5 For Approval: Standing Committee Business

5.1 Graduate Academic Appeals Board - Membership: 2015-2016

The Graduate Academic Appeals Board is a standing committee of the Graduate Education Council and is governed by a by-law. The motion documentation provided details regarding appointments to GAAB. GEC is the final approval level for this Board.

MOTION (duly moved and seconded)
THAT Graduate Education Council approve the appointment of one faculty member and three graduate students to serve on the Graduate Academic Appeals Board for the 2015-2016 academic year as follows:

Student Members
Rusty Soulemanov, Social Work, Div 2 (Renewal - July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016)
Michael Donnelly, English, Div 1 (Renewal - July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016)
Jessica Arsenault, Psychology, Div 4 (New - July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016)

Graduate Faculty Member (Div 4)
Don Jackson, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (Renewal - July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018)

The motion was CARRIED.

5.2 Admissions & Programs Committee - Membership: 2015-2016

The Admissions and Programs Committee is a standing committee of Graduate Education Council and is governed by a by-law. The motion documentation provided details of the committee responsibilities, powers, and membership composition. GEC is the final approval level for this committee.

MOTION (duly moved and seconded)
THAT Graduate Education Council approve the renewal appointment of four faculty members and two new graduate students to serve on the Admissions and Programs Committee for the 2015-2016 academic year as follows:

Faculty Members/Unit/Term:
Div 1 - Pascal Michelucci, French Language and Literature (September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016)
Div 2 - Anna Korteweg, Sociology (September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016)
Div 2 - Markus Bussmann, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering (Sept. 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016)
Div 4 - Howard Mount, Institute of Medical Science (September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016)

Graduate Student Member:
Bogdan Smarandache, Medieval Studies, Division I (September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016)

Alternate Graduate Student Member:
Jessica Arsenault, Psychology, Division IV (September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016)

The motion was CARRIED.
6 GEC Consultation Topic

6.1 Graduate Student Recruitment – Role of SGS

The Dean advised that SGS Vice-Dean Luc De Nil is currently Chair to a Working Group that is discussing issues related to Graduate Student Recruitment. Vice-Dean De Nil would like to consult with GEC regarding some questions that have arisen.

Vice-Dean De Nil leads a discussion on graduate recruitment and requests the members input. The Vice-Dean provided an overview of the mandate of the working group which is to review involvement, determine the needs and to recommend further directions if needed. Currently, SGS provides recruitment in the form of online and print materials, responses to phone and email inquiries, and we also organize online chat sessions and webinars. SGS participates in information sessions and fairs, local and abroad. A student member asked if there are students on the working group. The Vice-Dean confirmed there are, and he welcomed others who may be interested. Another student asked if there is any data collection to assist with decision making. Vice-Dean De Nil responded that there is not (yet).

Vice-Dean De Nil asked the group what the needs are for graduate studies recruitment, or is this best done at the local level? He asked members to consider if SGS should have a significant role, and if so, what activities would be most helpful. A faculty member shared that aligning award competition timelines would be helpful when recruiting students. The Dean responded that the issue of aligning awards and recruitment will be brought to the Council of Graduate Deans (CGD).

A guest asked about duplicating recruitment efforts with the graduate units. Vice-Dean De Nil responded that this is a central question and that SGS currently has a limited role in recruitment for the programs, however SGS can promote graduate studies overall. SGS could provide local resources for graduate units to promote their own programs. There is a question as to if SGS should attend fairs, as it is the graduate units that are the experts. It is suggested that SGS and graduate units coordinate efforts at public recruitment events. A student member asked about recruitment of diverse groups. Vice-Dean De Nil responded that this is also a priority. Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo (Director, First Nations House) is on the Working Group.

A student member asked if the entire University recruitment should be looked at as a whole, instead of just SGS activity. Vice-Dean De Nil agreed, saying that it cannot be looked at in isolation and that graduate and undergraduate have differing needs. We do not want to duplicate resources.

A faculty member mentioned the high cost of living in the City of Toronto. She suggested that letting students know that a car is not needed, we are a city of neighborhoods and students can walk around campus is helpful. It is important to advertise the more practical perks of being a student in Toronto. The Dean agreed that these are important issues to consider. This may be an area where the GSU could assist.

A faculty member asked about the relationship between funding and recruitment and also the tracking of this relationship. The Dean confirmed this information would be useful and if this data is being collected in the graduate units, it would be good to transfer up. Funding is a complicated process and can cause issues for recruitment with regards to communicating. The Dean confirmed that the communication of funding practices is indeed an issue that is well known to the Provost’s Office and is being addressed.

7.1 Suzanne Akbari - Special Advisor to the SGS Dean, Graduate Program Innovation
The Dean introduced Professor Suzanne Akbari and mentioned that she has joined SGS as Special Advisor to the Dean, Graduate Program Innovation. Suzanne Akbari is Professor of English and Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto. The School of Graduate Studies intends to play a leading role in facilitating innovations in graduate programs that enhance the education, experience and outcomes of our graduate students. Suzanne’s work will build on current graduate programs within departments and divisions, helping to ensure that graduate programs deliver effective teaching and connecting students with research initiatives.

Professor Akbari introduced herself and discussed the nature of innovation at the University of Toronto. She shared that her role is to look at alternatives and facilitate conversations. She has been working with the Humanities units and is a member of the Jackman Humanities Advisory Board. She went on to say that there are several innovative interdisciplinary initiatives going on across the University. For example, working with digital scholarship in the humanities. She has participated in a large scale research proposal with other partners across the university and across divisions. Locally, working groups of students and faculty have met to find ideas of how to ensure that students are supported along the way during their degree program, especially during the dissertation writing process. This kind of communication at the local level facilitates innovation. There are also innovative conversations are happening surrounding alternative models of a PhD program.

Professor Akbari asked GEC what kind of innovation they would like to see in graduate studies. The group discussed time to completion (TTC) rates and its relationship to funding and incentives to complete. The group also discussed innovations in programs and interactions between programs. A member shared that, in her experience, there are patterns with graduate student completion. She would like to see SGS involve the graduate unit staff in a more meaningful way – there are very few formal consultation routes for administrative staff. The Dean agreed this is a good point. She also shared that she thinks there is a correlation between completion and the quality of graduate supervision. She inquired about TTC data. The Dean confirmed there is a TTC Working Group forming in the near future. The group will look at hard data and consult with administration and graduate units across the divisions. Some unit administrative practices help TTC and some hinder TTC. Best practices may help more generally. The Progress Tracker will also give insight to the issues. Professor Sandy Welsh commented that Arts & Science has been looking at TTC. Faculties are welcome to contact her if they are interested in the data and how it was compiled.

A graduate student member commented that most PhD students will not end up working in academia and shared that this is not always acknowledged within graduate units. Students are interested in links with external partners and opportunities such as GPD and the mini-MBA. The Dean responded that this is exactly what SGS is looking at right now. Professor Akbari commented that SGS is also looking at what expectations students have while in a PhD program and do they think they are walking into academia, or career uncertainty. A graduate student member suggested replacing TAships with alternative experiential learning opportunities that are meaningful.

The discussion continued and touched upon varying constraints of finishing the PhD program and incentives offered at other institutions, such as funding in upper years and financial incentives. The Dean responded that SGS could consider these types of incentives. There are both pros and cons to incentivizing with many factors to consider, especially the optimal time across disciplines to complete.

7.2 Graduate Student Funding

The Dean discussed some of the current issues within graduate studies and student funding. He commented that the University is working towards best practices in all financial transactions with students, with a high level
of transparency. Students need to understand where the funding is coming from, how funding relates to TTC and the expectations for program length. The University is looking at funding across all programs, and there may be an opportunity to have more heterogeneity.

The Dean commented that SGS is thinking about the culture of graduate programs. Programming has expanded with a shrinking market, and we have programs that are aimed at creating academics. A goal is to align programs with real outcomes. Graduate Professional Skills programming is a driving element. The Dean clarified that new initiatives are not about increasing professional master’s student enrolment – it is about facilitating PhD students, whose outcomes are not in academia, and to provide training for the needed skills. We need to embrace these students and the reasons they are here.

Professor Sandy Welsh commented that some programs have PhD students going into both academia and into the workplace. In Sociology students go to both places. What is needed is the ability for students to have this conversation with their Supervisors, and with their graduate units. A graduate student member commented that structural problems exist with regards to encouraging programs to expand when there are no academic positions available. The Dean responded to say that he would like to see a culture that embraces all students, no matter what they choose.

7 Other Business

None

8 For Information:

The Dean commented that there were several reports included with the agenda for information and he invited questions and/or comments.

8.1 Graduate Education Council Spring 2015 Election Report
8.2 Admissions and Programs Committee, Annual Report 2013-2014
8.4 Hood Approval Confirmations (MScSM and MEngCM) February 25, 2015
8.5 Name and/or Status Changes to Graduate Programs – Summary
8.6 SGS Registration Statistics Report (PPT)

10 Adjournment

The Dean confirmed this meeting as the last meeting of the academic year and gave thanks to the members for their attendance and contributions. Professor Elizabeth Smyth presents motion to adjourn the meeting.

The motion is CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

_______________________________           Date: October 13, 2015
Emma Thacker, Acting Secretary, GEC
Appendix to the Minutes
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL
Record of Attendance – April 21, 2015

Present (Voting & Non-voting Members)
Rowe, Locke (Chair)
Thacker, Emma (Acting Secretary to Council)
Arsenault, Jessica
Bancheri, Salvatore
Bussmann, Markus
Coyle, Tom
De Nil, Luc
Everett, Nicholas
Evoy, Brad
Fisher, Andrew
Gagne, Marie
Gunz, Hugh
Hill, Jenny
Jia, Charles
Julian, Stephen
Kaplan, Allan
Little, Jeffrey
Mahrt-Smith, Jan
Milicevic, Mario
Magnusson, Lynne
Matkar, Pratiek
Plata, Angelique
Quinonez, Carlos
Rodd, Helen
Shams, Saoleha
Shanouda, Fady
Skira, Jerry
Simpson, Andre
Smarandache, Bogdan
Smyth, Elizabeth (Liz)
Szymanski, Karolina
Welsh, Sandy

In Attendance (Guests & SGS Staff)
Akbari, Suzanne
Dales, Corey
Godwin, Michael
Kim, Christy
MacMillan, Don
Pask-Aube, Corinne
Rutchinsky, Steve
O’Leary, Liam
Williamson, Karen

Absent
Alford, Larry
Berg, Katherine
Campbell, Elizabeth
Faulkner, Guy
Gertler, Meric
Gough, William
Halpern, Rick
Hsieh, Amanda
Hu, Jim
Lewis, Peter
Livak, Leonid
MacKay, Gillian
Mabury, Scott
Nelson, Sioban
Reisz, Robert
Ross, Seamus
Segal, Hugh
Watson, Jeanne
Williams, Charmaine
Yip, Christopher