The Dean called the meeting to order and welcomed all members and visitors. Members were informed that this was likely the last meeting of the year, but were also asked to hold the date of May 17, 2011 for a meeting in case of urgent business arising. Everyone was invited to remain after the meeting for a reception to celebrate the work done this year.

The Dean introduced and welcomed the new SGS Governance and Policy Officer, Emma Thacker. There is now a full staff complement in the reformed Governance and Policy area of SGS.

**MOTION (duly moved and seconded)**

THAT the Graduate Education Council meeting of April 19, 2011 will adjourn no later than 5:00 p.m.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

Approval of the Agenda of the Graduate Education Meeting of April 19, 2011

**MOTION (duly moved and seconded)**

THAT the agenda of the Graduate Education Council meeting of April 19, 2011 be approved.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

1 **Minutes of the Graduate Education Council Meeting of February 15, 2011**

The minutes of the February 15, 2011 meeting were distributed with the agenda.

**MOTION (duly moved and seconded)**

THAT the minutes of the Graduate Education Council meeting of February 15, 2011 be approved.

Seeing no discussion, the Dean called the question

The motion was **CARRIED**.

2 **Business Arising from the Minutes**

The Dean noted that SGS and the Graduate Education Council (GEC) are starting to experience the effects of changes to governance and new program proposals. There are no longer any GEC-approved items moving through governance elsewhere, and so there is nothing to report.
3 Dean’s Remarks

3.1 Quality Assurance Update and New Governance Processes
The Dean reported that after two years of consideration, the University has an approved quality assurance plan, the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP). GEC no longer approves new programs and major or minor modifications of curriculum under this process. New proposals are beginning to go through the new system and program reviews will also proceed under the new process. SGS continues to review all curriculum proposals.

3.2 Policies on Grading, Transcripts and Disruptions
A revised and unified graduate and undergraduate grading practices policy is in development within the University. It is being developed in parallel with revised policies on disruptions and on transcripts. An update will be provided in the fall.

3.3 Recent Decanal Memoranda
All SGS numbered memoranda are available on the SGS website. For reference, the following decanal memoranda were published since the last GEC meeting:
- Offers of Admission to Students Conditional upon Scholarship Support (March 1, 2011).
- Permission for SGS Division I (Humanities) Thesis Written in a Language Other than English or French (March 1, 2011).
- Changes to Regulations on Candidacy (March 8, 2011). This memo advertises changes approved at GEC on February 15, 2011.
- Changes to Regulations on Lapsing (March 8, 2011). This memo also advertises changes approved at GEC on February 15, 2011.
- Ontario Trillium Scholarship Program for International PhD Students (March 9, 2011).

3.4 Joint Degree Programs and “Cotutelles”
Arrangements for these continue to be fine-tuned. It should be possible to sign the first agreements for such joint programs late this spring. They do not require the same kind of governance approvals as other new programs, as they are simply working with existing programs at two different universities.

3.5 Graduate Briefing Session
The Graduate Briefing Session was held on March 8, 2011. Information presented at the session is available on SGS website.

4 Report of the Vice-Dean, Programs
Vice-Dean Elizabeth Smyth reported that SGS has been developing templates for joint degrees along with International Affairs and Student Services. They will be brought forward here in future.

The Collaborative Program Workshop was held on April 13, 2011. Over 50 people attended. There is an information item at the end of the agenda for the Collaborative Program Guidelines. The guidelines use the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) definition for a collaborative program (CP). New CPs do not require external appraisals; the process that is being established sees each CP having a lead Faculty, as always. Periodic reviews are commissioned by the Vice-Provost, Graduate Education, or delegate and in some circumstances those reviews may be bundled with reviews of other units. Criteria for reviews take quality indicators which are a combination of the indicators in the QAF and our own guidelines. Highlights of the revised review guidelines include:
• Demand for the program (section 4.2 in the guidelines): it used to be the case that CPs had to demonstrate a minimum of five students each year overall. In previous discussions, and at the CP workshop, it was noted that for some CPs, capacity would be significantly stressed if that actually took place. On other hand, there may be some years when no students opt for CP enrolment. So the revised guidelines use more flexible language.

• Reinforcing that reviews of CPs are an opportunity to review the MOA (section 4.7).

• Section 5 does not change the structure of CPs but revises wording to draw focus on the fact that CPs have a Program Committee which recommends a Director for appointment by the Dean of SGS, and that the Director must be a Graduate Faculty Member. The term of the Director is normally five years; it used to be three, which was residual from a CP having a review after its first three years; five years now makes more sense. It also clarifies that the role of the Director includes ensuring that there is student representation on the Program Committee, updating content in the Calendar entry for the CP and insuring that transcript notations are given to students who complete the CP requirements.

• Section 8 is new, and discusses CP reviews; these will occur on a cyclical basis; no external appraisers will be needed. Efforts are being made to simplify and streamline the process.

In response to a member’s question, the Vice-Dean affirmed that Directors’ terms are renewable, and that this will be made more explicit in the final version of the guidelines.

A member asked if it is a new requirement that the CP supervisory committee must includeing the student’s home program supervisor; the Vice-Dean replied that this is not a new requirement.

Another member asked whether sufficient demand would be demonstrated if only one student entered a CP every few years. The Vice-Dean replied that demand is one of the core indicators that the Program Committee would be asked to consider. As a field of study evolves, a CP might no longer be the best way to provide appropriate learning outcomes. Some CPs might have so many participating programs that even one student entering every year from each could overstress the CP. The Dean added that these are guidelines only, and that SGS is aware that some CPs are very small but provide good value at virtually no cost. The Vice-Dean noted that the Program Committee will have an opportunity during program reviews to say whether resources are being allocated in the best way for students to derive value from the CP; she invited further suggestions or clarifications after the meeting.

5 Report of the Vice-Dean, Students
There was no report.

6 Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB): Terms of Reference Revisions
By-law revisions have been discussed within SGS and have been reviewed by the chairs of GAAB, the Provost’s Office and the Office of the Governing Council. GEC approval is final. The Dean called on Vice-Dean Berry Smith to present the motion.

**MOTION (duly moved and seconded)**

THAT Graduate Education Council approve the proposal to amend the By-laws of the School of Graduate Studies and policies in the SGS Calendar as follows:

• Amend By-law #3, Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB), Terms of Reference
• Amend the Academic Appeals Policy in the General Regulations section of the Calendar
• The changes are effective September 2011.

A member asked whether the jurisdiction is restricted to PhD or all doctoral degrees. The Dean replied that the intent is to cover all doctoral degrees, including non-PhD (e.g. professional) doctoral degrees.
Another member asked for a summary of the substantive changes; Jane Alderdice, SGS Director of Quality Assessment and Governance, replied that the responsibility for administering graduate academic appeals falls within her office; Anil Purandaré is the Secretary to GAAB. The main substantive change is around timelines for appeals. At the moment, GAAB has eight weeks to deliver a decision from the time a student files an appeal; this has not proven feasible. The revision provides a more realistic deadline, and clarifies that the time to the deadline begins when the student files a complete package of materials accompanying the notice of appeal. The rest of the changes are proposed in order to clean up the language and provide more clarity.

Seeing no further discussion, the Dean called the question.

The motion was CARRIED.

7  Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB): Approval of 2011-2012 Membership

The Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB) is a standing committee of GEC. GEC appoints all members of GAAB. Members were directed to see the motion sheet for more details. GEC approval is final. The Dean called on Vice-Dean Smith to present the motion.

MOTION (duly moved and seconded)
THAT Graduate Education Council approve the appointments of a Chair, three Alternate Chairs, four faculty and three student members to serve on the Graduate Academic Appeals Board for the 2011-2012 academic year as follows:

Chair: Ralph Scane, Faculty of Law (renewed)
Alternate Chair: Edward Morgan, Faculty of Law (renewed)
(five-year term) Kate Hilton, Faculty of Law (new)
Hamish Stewart, Faculty of Law (new)

Faculty Members: Paul Thompson, Division I (new)
(three-year term) Greig Henderson, Division I (renewed)
Lynne Howarth, Division II (renewed)
Sandy Welsh, Division II (renewed)
Chris Damaren, Division III (renewed)
Jane Phillips, Division III (renewed)

Student Members: Jason Grenier, Division III (renewed)
(one-year term) Behnam Nowrouzi-Kia, Division IV (renewed)
Kimberley Radmacher, Division I (renewed)

A member asked whether GEC was approving five-year terms for the renewing members. Ms. Alderdice clarified that according to the terms of reference of GAAB, new appointee terms for Chairs and Alternate Chairs are five years; once those terms are up, they can be renewed for one year each year. Seeing no further discussion, the Dean called the question.

The motion was CARRIED.
8 Appointment of Hearing Officer for Code of Student Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct requires that the Graduate Education Council (GEC) appoint a Hearing Officer for Code of Student Conduct cases; nominations are made by the Dean. GEC approval is final. The Dean called on Vice-Dean Smith to present the motion.

**MOTION (duly moved and seconded)**

THAT Graduate Education Council approve the appointment of Professor Jim Phillips (Law), as the SGS Hearing Officer for the Code of Student Conduct, for a three-year term commencing July 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2014.

The Dean noted that this was not a high activity area. A member asked whether Professor Phillips’ candidacy had been solicited and/or how the Hearing Officer was chosen. The Dean replied that someone with legal knowledge was sought; there is a pool of experienced people at the University to draw from. Professor Phillips is part of this pool, as he has experience as a Hearing Officer in another area of the University. The Vice-Dean further explained that the Code of Student Conduct is different from the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. The Code of Student Conduct involves a two-step process, starting with an investigation; only when a matter is not resolved at that level does it proceed to hearing. He added that it is quite rare at the graduate level for cases to proceed to hearing as they can and usually are resolved at the earlier investigative step.

Seeing no further discussion, the Dean called the question.

The motion was CARRIED.

9 Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) Presentation

The Dean reminded members that it had been announced at the last meeting that the data from the last survey has been collected. SGS has received real enthusiasm from various offices in the University to learn more about the survey; therefore, Dr. Helen Chang, the SGS Graduate Education Research Officer, is presenting information to GEC today. Members received two versions of the slides: the one made available today corresponds with Dr. Chang’s presentation; a slightly altered and expanded one was distributed earlier with the agenda.

Dr. Chang explained that students who registered in fall 2009 were invited to participate in this survey; the respondents numbered 4,815. There were two versions of the survey, the regular one for doctoral-stream students, and a new, alternative version for those in professional programs.

A member commented that the results represented an amazing data set; it seems one could correlate the answers to find suggestions on how programs could be improved in the future. Dr. Chang responded that student-level data is available, but analysis has not been done at that level.

Another member asked whether it was possible to tell from the survey how the University fared in comparison to the best and worst of the “G13” (thirteen other graduate schools in Canada which participate in datasharing). Dr. Chang replied that there might be some difficulties in identifying comparison data due to protocols, but it might be possible to compare the top and bottom five institutions.

A member asked whether data is anonymous within the G13 dataset. In response, Dr. Chang said that data is available at the discipline level. She further clarified that the G13 data includes U of T on some slides (those that show all the G13), but does not on others (those that include “peers”).

Another member remarked that the University consistently appears to do relatively poorly on student life issues, and asked whether the data could provide insight on these. Dr. Chang explained that the granularity of the data is not that fine. The focus of the quantitative data (the only thing analysed so
far) is on academics. It is possible that some information on student life can be gleaned from the qualitative data, which has not been analysed yet.

A member said that the survey’s number of respondents seems low and asked whether it is appropriate to develop policy from it given the self-selection of respondents, and if it might be possible to make it mandatory in some way. Dr. Chang replied that the response rate has historically been around 36%. The Dean noted that this level of response is extraordinarily high in comparison to, say, student elections. The response is not ideal, but much information and many reminders were sent to students. This is a challenge faced by all surveys; given that the University’s participation rates are on par with those in other institutions, it is at least possible to use the data for comparisons. Another member noted that 30% is considered a pretty good response rate for surveys, and that this is higher than the response to alumni surveys.

A member remarked that some of the data indicates improvements between 2005 and 2007, but deterioration in 2010. Dr. Chang responded that the report shows the trend in the data over three years; the member further wondered if any policy recommendations might emerge from this. The Dean replied that, as with the earlier comments about correlating the answers to find trends, a University-wide discussion is needed. SGS does not have a mandate to tell divisions or units how to improve, but SGS would welcome a discussion about what can be made of the data; the advice of members on how to pursue this discussion is welcome. Another member asked whether it is possible for SGS to provide Faculties with line-by-line data for their students. Dr. Chang replied that this has never been done before; the Dean added that students are guaranteed anonymity. The member added that no names or other personal identifiers are desired, only the rest of the data. Another member noted that, in an ideal world, people would not feel threatened with sharing this kind of data, and that the point is not to form comparisons but to look at performance within the University. It would be wonderful for units to learn things from other units, but this may not be possible given the constraints on what data can be shared with whom. The Dean noted that it is not the intent of SGS to use this data to rank units.

A member asked what further analysis or follow-up can be expected. Dr. Chang responded that this depends on the time available. Analysis at the unit level is not something that has been done in the past. The data has been provided, but not compared. It might be a good thing to mine the qualitative data, but this is a huge job.

In response to a question from a member, Dr. Chang noted that a substantial number of students provided qualitative data, and that sharing it with units raises the same questions as had been raised in the previous discussion about sharing the quantitative data. Ms. Alderdice added that qualitative data was provided in the past but dealing with it is labour-intensive as every comment has to be reviewed to ensure anonymity.

The Dean thanked Dr. Chang and expressed his desire to continue having the survey results brought before GEC in future years.

10 Other Business

A member noted that the Doctoral Completion Award (DCA) still seems to be facing challenges and requested information. The Dean replied that SGS is in the process of implementing the award for the coming year. A committee chaired by the Vice-Dean, Students, has looked at the distribution and adjudication of awards and come up with principles and guidelines, application procedures, and more detailed allocations for the award for the coming year. Krista Steeves, SGS Assistant Director of Student Services, added that applications are due on April 27, 2011 from graduate units, and that these should be adjudicated in late May. The Dean further commented that the DCA remains a work in progress, but that he has confidence that transparency and clarity concerns have been addressed. The committee has spent considerable time directly on these issues. That will not address the fundamental concerns of people
A member said that the survey’s number of respondents seems low and asked whether it is appropriate to develop policy from it given the self-selection of respondents, and if it might be possible to make it mandatory in some way. Dr. Chang replied that the response rate has historically been around 36%. The Dean noted that this level of response is extraordinarily high in comparison to, say, student elections. The response is not ideal, but much information and many reminders were sent to students. This is a challenge faced by all surveys; given that the University’s participation rates are on par with those in other institutions, it is at least possible to use the data for comparisons. Another member noted that 30% is considered a pretty good response rate for surveys, and that this is higher than the response to alumni surveys.

A member remarked that some of the data indicates improvements between 2005 and 2007, but deterioration in 2010. Dr. Chang responded that the report shows the trend in the data over three years; the member further wondered if any policy recommendations might emerge from this. The Dean replied that, as with the earlier comments about correlating the answers to find trends, a University-wide discussion is needed. SGS does not have a mandate to tell divisions or units how to improve, but SGS would welcome a discussion about what can be made of the data; the advice of members on how to pursue this discussion is welcome. Another member asked whether it is possible for SGS to provide Faculties with line-by-line data for their students. Dr. Chang replied that this has never been done before; the Dean added that students are guaranteed anonymity. The member added that no names or other personal identifiers are desired, only the rest of the data. Another member noted that, in an ideal world, people would not feel threatened with sharing this kind of data, and that the point is not to form comparisons but to look at performance within the University. It would be wonderful for units to learn things from other units, but this may not be possible given the constraints on what data can be shared with whom. The Dean noted that it is not the intent of SGS to use this data to rank units.

A member asked what further analysis or follow-up can be expected. Dr. Chang responded that this depends on the time available. Analysis is currently done at the unit level, but a comparison between units is not something that has been done in the past. The data has been provided, but not compared. It might be a good thing to mine the qualitative data, but this is a huge job.

In response to a question from a member, Dr. Chang noted that a substantial number of students provided qualitative data, and that sharing it with units raises the same questions as had been raised in the previous discussion about sharing the quantitative data. Ms. Alderdice added that qualitative data was provided in the past but dealing with it is labour-intensive as every comment has to be reviewed to ensure anonymity.

The Dean thanked Dr. Chang and expressed his desire to continue having the survey results brought before GEC in future years.

10 Other Business

A member noted that the Doctoral Completion Award (DCA) still seems to be facing challenges and requested information. The Dean replied that SGS is in the process of implementing the award for the coming year. A committee chaired by the Vice-Dean, Students, has looked at the distribution and adjudication of awards and come up with principles and guidelines, application procedures, and more detailed allocations for the award for the coming year. Krista Steeves, SGS Assistant Director of Student Services, added that applications are due on April 27, 2011 from graduate units, and that these should be adjudicated in late May. The Dean further commented that the DCA remains a work in progress, but that he has confidence that transparency and clarity concerns have been addressed. The committee has spent considerable time directly on these issues. That will not address the fundamental concerns of people
who disagree with this change overall; that is a different issue, not under SGS control, and not one which we are prepared to revisit until we have had more time to study the effect of this change.

A member returned to the question of a mandatory survey, but in particular one that might be conducted when people are exiting their programs. Dr. Chang replied that there used to be a Survey of Earned Doctorates, but it was ended in 2004 for financial reasons. The Dean noted that, in addition to the question of cost, there is also the question of over-surveying. Nevertheless, suggestions on ways to increase feedback participation are welcome. Another member suggested that increasing the number of surveys risks decreasing the quality of the survey results. A member replied that an exit survey might be more likely to get results from satisfied people. The Dean noted that there has been interest expressed about finding out what makes unhappy students unhappy, and seeking results from happy students might not be consistent with this. A member noted that his unit does an exit interview with all their students, whether they graduate or not. Another member remarked that there must surely be expertise within the University in conducting surveys. The Dean replied that such expertise exists at SGS, mostly within Dr. Chang’s office, and elsewhere in the University. He thanked the members for their suggestions and welcomed additional thoughts after the meeting.

11 For Information:

All documents were distributed with the agenda except for the revised Collaborative Program Guidelines for item 11.5.

11.1 SGS Student Services Annual Audit of Graduate Units: Report

A member noted that the report says in one section that grades were entered incorrectly 17% of the time, and asked how things can go wrong. Ms. Steeves replied that the data also captures grades entered after the deadline, and not merely incorrect grades; this will be clarified in future reports.

Another member remarked that the report does not make it clear regarding supervisory meetings, whether the issue is a lack of meetings or a lack of those meetings being recorded in ROSI; he added that entering this data in ROSI is considered a very onerous task and not one that is highly valued; it is probable that people track this on their own systems rather than ROSI. The Dean replied that SGS is charged with pushing graduate units to enter this information in ROSI. Ms. Steeves added that SGS will be doing some training with units around this in the fall, including sharing information from units that are routinely entering this information in ROSI. The Vice-Dean, Students, added that every year he encounters a handful of students who, when asked, report that they have not had a supervisory committee meeting in over two years. He added that this is purely anecdotal and perhaps represent extreme cases, but they still represent instances of this happening. A member asked what the consequences are if SGS detects that meetings are not happening in a unit. The Dean replied that this would be reported to the unit; SGS is not in a position to force these meetings to happen. He added that there is general agreement on the principle of having these meetings annually; however, there is a gap between principle and practice. A member noted that in his unit, a letter is generated if there is no meeting during the year, and if the meeting still does not happen, the student is not registered in the fall; however, when things are busy, the process may not be properly followed through. Another member stated that about 90% of students have these meetings in his unit; he reported dealing with people at another institution who were extremely impressed when they learned about this system. Yet another member expressed surprise that this information was being tracked in ROSI at all, and asked whether it might not be helpful to provide this information to students. Rodney Branch, the SGS Director of Information Systems, explained that at the moment, the ROSI module exists largely for administrative tracking. There is a desire among many to allow supervisors and students to record meetings on the system.
11.2 SGS Graduate Education Council: Spring 2011 Election Report  
Per the report, only three vacant seats remain (one each for students from Divisions I, III, and IV); there will be a by-election in fall to fill these vacancies.

11.3 New SGS Awards Annual Report  
There were no questions or comments.

11.4 Draft Principles for Governance Review of Minor Modifications  
The Vice-Dean, Programs, explained that SGS is developing this document to try and help Faculties and graduate units with the new governance process, not aggravate them. It outlines the principles used by Faculty Graduate Office and SGS to review curriculum proposals; the principles help graduate units distinguish between editorial versus substantial changes requiring governance approval. SGS hopes these assist the work of graduate administrators in particular.

11.5 Collaborative Program Guidelines, revised  
The revised guidelines were e-mailed to members in advance of the meeting and paper copies were available at the start of the meeting. See Report of the Vice-Dean, Programs, item 4 above.

11.6 Adjournment  
The Dean thanked everyone for the good work done this year, and especially thanked those whose terms are ending in June. Everyone was invited to stay and enjoy the reception.  
The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY JANE ALDERDICE]   
Jane Alderdice, Secretary   

November 9, 2011   
Date
Appendix to the Minutes

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Record of Attendance

GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL

April 19, 2011

Present (Voting & Non-voting Members)

Corman, Brian (Chair)
Baker, Robert
Bayat Movahed, Hanif
Bina, Bardia
Bondy, Susan
Campbell, Malcolm
Capotoroto, Arianna
Damaren, Chris
Daniere, Amrita
De Nil, Luc
Gaitana, Gianina
Joseph, Jenny
Julian, Stephen
Keil, Charlie
Mount, Howard
O’Hogan, Cillian
Orwin, Donna
Papangelakis, Vladimiros
Piccardo, Enrica
Sheikh, Shamim
Smith, Berry
Smyth, Elizabeth
Stiles, David
Tsao, Eugenia
Williams, Charmaine
Williams, David
Yip, Christopher

Alderdice, Jane (Secretary to Council)
Purandaré, Anil (Assistant to Secretary)

In Attendance (Guests & SGS Staff)

Branch, Rodney
Chang, Helen
Steeves, Krista

Absent

Crapo, Adleen
Keith, Alison
Knight, Keith
Labrie, Normand
MacKay, Gillian
Tannock, Rosemary