The Dean called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. and welcomed all members, especially new members, and visitors. The Dean called for a motion to adjourn no later than 5:00 p.m.

MOTION  (duly moved and seconded)
THAT the Graduate Education Council meeting of November 15, 2011, will adjourn no later than 5:00 p.m.

Seeing no discussion, the Dean called the question.

The motion is CARRIED.

Approval of the Agenda of the Graduate Education Meeting of November 15, 2011

MOTION  (duly moved and seconded)
THAT the agenda of the Graduate Education Council meeting of November 15, 2011 be approved.

Seeing no discussion, the Dean called the question.

The motion was CARRIED.

1  Minutes of the Graduate Education Council Meeting of April 19, 2011
The minutes of the April 19, 2011 meeting were distributed with the agenda.

MOTION  (duly moved and seconded)
THAT the minutes of the Graduate Education Council meeting of April 19, 2011 be approved.

Seeing no discussion, the Dean called the question.

The motion was CARRIED.

2  Business Arising from the Minutes
There was no business arising.

3  Dean’s Remarks

3.1  Introductions
The Dean introduced Council to the following people at the School of Graduate Studies:
Berry Smith, Vice-Dean Students
Liz Smyth, Vice-Dean Programs
Jane Alderdice, Director of Quality Assessment and Governance, and Secretary to Council
Heather Kelly, Director of Student Services
Christy Kim, Director of Support Services
Rodney Branch, Associate Director, Student Systems
Kerri Huffman, Associate Director, Graduate Awards & Financial Aid
Anil Purandaré, Governance and Policy Coordinator
Emma Thacker, Governance and Policy Officer
Lily Yee-Sloan, Communications Officer
Vesna Makarosvska, Student Services Officer (Div. 2 – Social Sciences)
Steve Rutchinski, Student Services Officer (Div. 3 – Physical Sciences)
Victoria Hurlihey, Student Services Officers (Div. 4 – Life Sciences)
Ariana Capotorto, Financial Counsellor

3.2 Orientation for GEC Members

The Dean welcomed everyone to the first full academic year of the new Graduate Education Council. He provided a summary of what’s new.

**Background:** Recent changes relate to new quality assurance processes put in place across the Province last academic year. A new Ontario Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) was approved in 2010, and the new Quality Council replaced OCGS as the body charged with appraising and approving academic programs. The universities report the results of their appraisal processes to the Quality Council for approval or information. Each university produced a process for quality assurance; ours is the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP). The UTQAP defines processes for approval of new programs, major modifications and minor modifications, closure and cyclical review of existing programs. These processes came into effect January 1, 2011. The office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs (Cheryl Regehr) is now responsible for overseeing UTQAP processes, in close consultation on graduate matters with SGS and with the Vice-Provost, Graduate Education (also the SGS Dean).

**Responsibilities for graduate governance:** Governance processes have been adjusted, with Faculty Councils taking responsibility for final approvals for all minor modifications (courses, admission and program regulations, etc.), and playing a more central role in major modifications, new program proposals and reviews of existing programs. Previously this Council was responsible for final approvals for major and minor modifications to programs, and for recommendations on new program proposals, as well as new and existing policies and regulations. The SGS Constitution was amended to reflect new responsibilities effective January 1st; Faculty constitutions are following suit this academic year. SGS still reviews all proposals for new programs and for major and minor modifications prior to Faculty level approval, and provides guidance to Faculty Deans’ offices on SGS policies and regulations as they concern graduate education.

**Role of this Council:** The revised SGS Constitution defines a new role for the Graduate Education Council, one with a focus on University-wide policy, regulations and guidelines affecting graduate studies broadly speaking. New policies and changes to existing policies are presented to the GEC for approval or for consultation, depending on the nature of the policy. We have an example of a request for consultation on our agenda for today. In the case of most SGS regulations, that is, those in the SGS Calendar, Council will have final approval authority. Proposals for new guidelines, and changes
to existing ones, are brought to GEC for information and discussion. The University moved to a model of developing more focussed policy documents which require governance approval, tied to guidelines that are provided to governance bodies for information but do not require approval. You’ll see this new model in operation during our business this year. This differentiation allows for changes to be made in the enactment of policy in a more nimble and timely manner through these guidelines.

**The role of individual GEC members:** The Dean invited members to exercise their own judgment on matters—members are not representing their department or division directly, but are independent members exercising their judgment. Members are asked to raise questions on items where information is not clear. This can be done at a Council meeting, but members should feel free to contact the Secretary’s office before the meeting as advance notice is always helpful. There are policies and guidelines of various sorts coming before Council; if members are wondering about the regulatory environment affecting a given proposal, they should not hesitate to ask. If members wish to discuss possible agenda items for the future, the Dean asked that they contact one of the SGS deans or administrative staff, particularly the secretariat, well in advance of a meeting so a response can be arranged and an item possibly added to the agenda. Agenda items normally arise from the deans’ work as academic administrators, with support from the senior administrative staff. There are venues for discussion which may be more appropriate for some topics than a Council meeting; for example, both Vice-Deans have advisory committees which meet once or twice a term. Members should not hesitate to contact any of the deans.

**Documentation and Resources for GEC:** Jane Alderdice, Secretary to Council, summarized information for members about meeting documentation and useful resources for members. Document packages are sent out via email on the Wednesday prior to the GEC meeting. The default is for electronic distribution. Members should let the secretariat know if they wish a paper copy; these are sent out via courier also on Wednesday. Members are expected to read the materials before coming to the meeting. Items that come before Council for approval will have a motion sheet as cover page. In addition to providing the motion wording, the motion sheet gives members information about previous governance actions and consultations, and may include a summary of discussion points that occurred to date. It also shows the route to final approvals so members know whether GEC approval is final or not. The GEC agenda and package are available on the SGS website via the Governance tab found on the homepage [http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/governance/gec/meetings.htm]; there is also a page for GEC and information for members including the GEC membership list and Rules of Council [http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/governance/gec.htm]. Information about graduate governance procedures overall and contact information is also available in summary form on the website [http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/governance/procedures.htm]. She introduced Anil Purandaré and Emma Thacker who work to support the Council and invited members to contact her, Anil or Emma at any time.

There were no questions.

### 3.3 Graduate Academic Appeals Board: Student Member Needed

The Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB) is a standing committee of Council. One of the student member seats on GAAB has become vacant this year. Following established procedures, SGS is working with the student members of GEC to find a suitable replacement. All graduate students are eligible, including GEC student members. A motion for Council to appoint the new GAAB member will be presented at the next meeting. The Dean asked members to please speak with Anil Purandaré, Secretary to GAAB, for information.
3.4 Department of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation: change to Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation

For information, the Department of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation has changed its name to the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation and has changed status from a department to an EDU-A, effective immediately. Final approval for the change occurred at Governing Council on October 27, 2011.

3.5 Faculty of Physical Education and Health: name change to Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education

For information, the Faculty of Physical Education and Health has changed its name to the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, effective immediately. Final approval occurred at Governing Council Executive Committee on October 19, 2011.

3.6 Recent SGS Decanal Memoranda for Information

Periodically, SGS decanal memoranda on notable topics are distributed via email to graduate units and remain accessible on the SGS website. Memos distributed since the last GEC meeting are on the following topics:

- SGS Calendar Print Reduction, published July 5, 2011. There has been no negative response or unexpected requests for paper copies. The change saves money and is an environmentally responsible choice.
- Joint Educational Placement Agreement for Doctoral Students, published September 6, 2011. These are one-off arrangements for doctoral students to be supervised jointly by faculty from U of T and another institution. This is U of T’s version of what are sometimes called “cotutelles”.

3.7 Recent SGS Events for Information

- An orientation for new graduate academic administrators was held on October 4, 2011.
- The General Meeting for Graduate Administrators was held on October 20, 2011 for staff administering graduate studies within units and Faculties.

4 Report of the Vice-Dean, Programs

Doctoral Final Oral Examinations (FOEs): Vice-Dean Smyth informed members that her office handles approvals of the composition of examination committees for FOEs. The FOE online form will be revised in next couple of months. SGS has been discussing this with graduate administrators. One of the features of the new form is that the data on supervisory committees can be populated from ROSI.

Graduate Faculty Membership (GFM): The office also handles all aspects of GFM, and has been working toward an online form for GFM. It is currently being beta tested and should roll out by the end of the year.

Vice-Dean Smyth also noted that her correct e-mail address is liz.smyth@sgs.utoronto.ca and not elizabeth.smyth@utoronto.ca (that e-mail address belongs to a student).

5 Report of the Vice-Dean, Students

Vice-Dean Smith had nothing to report.
6 Regulation Change: Composition of Examination Committee, Doctoral Final Oral Examination

Members were directed to see the motion sheet for prior discussion on the item. GEC approval is final. The Dean called on Vice-Dean Smyth to present the motion.

MOTION (duly moved and seconded)

THAT Graduate Education Council approve the proposal of the School of Graduate Studies to change the Doctoral Final Oral Examination section of the SGS General Regulations (SGS Calendar 2011-12, clause 9.3.4) as follows:

- Increase the required number of voting members of the examination committee who have not been closely involved in the supervision of the thesis from at least one to at least two.
- The change is effective July 1, 2012.

Vice-Dean Smyth noted that there had been ongoing discussion of the issue at GEC over the past year. At present, the composition of the committee includes four voting members, one of whom must be external to the supervisory committee. This proposal does not change the number of members required for quorum, i.e., four voting members, but changes the requirement so that there must be two individuals not closely associated with the thesis. The Vice-Dean’s office clears about 1,000 requests per year. Statistics from last week are typical: there were 29 requests for FOEs; three had four voting members, 20 had five voting members, and six had six voting members. Of the 29 processed, 26 would be in compliance with this proposed regulation. This change acknowledges current practice in the vast majority of FOEs, and is not a major change. In fact, it is a return to an earlier practice.

A member asked if an FOE would go ahead if there were five members on the committee including two external members, but one of the external members went missing (so that the quorum of four was met, but not the proposed requirement of two external members). Vice-Dean Smyth replied that the section says that no more than three members may be on the supervisory committee; SGS guidelines will make it clear that at least two of the voting members must be external.

A member asked whether “external member” meant someone external to the University or merely external to the supervisory committee. Vice-Dean Smyth clarified that it only meant someone external to the supervisory committee.

A member noted that this was a return to previous practice, and asked what had prompted the change to requiring only one external member. The Dean replied that it was hard to understand why the practice had been changed. The reason for reverting to the older practice was to ensure that the FOE has academic integrity. Anecdotally, SGS has heard about dissatisfaction with the current practice. The University invests significant resources in FOEs, and we have an obligation to ensure a high standard. Vice-Dean Smith added that other countries put greater emphasis on having external representation on FOEs, so this change would make the University’s standards more competitive internationally. A supervisor has often already signed off on a thesis before the FOE, so if the FOE does not go well, it can create awkwardness. It is healthier to encourage objectivity with people who are at arm’s length from the thesis.

A member asked whether the FOE could still be held if the examination committee did not have two external members. Vice-Dean Smith replied that SGS is committed to having the external appraiser (who is external to the University) be present at the FOE either in person or electronically. The external appraiser’s opinion is one of the most important opinions to take into account. However, there may be good reasons why the external appraiser cannot attend the FOE; in that case a replacement must be
found, but it can be problematic to find someone qualified outside the University in a timely fashion. Nevertheless, it is rare that the external appraiser is not part of the examination committee; in the last week there was one committee where this was the case, out of 29. The Dean added that it is not a common problem, but one that does occasionally happen. The preference remains to have the external appraiser present in person or by telephone. However, the manner in which the external appraiser attends the examination is not the problem being addressed by this proposal.

A member asked whether the supervisor should ensure that the examination committee have additional people available as backup in case one of the external members cannot attend at the last minute, and whether this actually means that a slate of six people will need to be recommended. Vice-Dean Smyth replied that this is what SGS recommends as best practice. She repeated that most FOEs processed currently would be unaffected by the proposal. She also added that a proposal to allow the use of video conferencing in FOEs may be brought to Council later this year. Vice-Dean Smith added that, even if the external examiner does not attend in person or electronically, the external appraisal document is an important document that must be addressed in the FOE.

A member asked how much notice an external appraiser must provide if they find themselves unable to attend the FOE. Another member expressed concern that the external appraiser’s replacement might not have enough time to read the thesis and other documents as required to act as an examination committee member. Vice-Dean Smyth replied that regulations require all committee members to have a copy of the dissertation and other necessary documents six weeks before the FOE. At the time of striking the FOE, situations such as the external appraiser not attending should be taken into account; this is best practice under the both the current and proposed systems. Regulations also say that the external appraiser’s report must be received two weeks before the FOE. A member commented that two weeks is sufficient time to read a thesis. Vice-Dean Smith noted that many institutions do not even include the supervisor on the examination committee.

Seeing no further discussion, the Dean called the question.

The motion was CARRIED.

7 New Hood: Global Professional Master of Laws (GPLLM)
Members were directed to see the motion sheet for information about prior approvals. The proposal was approved by the Faculty of Law on August 30, 2011. If approved by GEC, the proposal will be brought to the Ceremonials Committee of Academic Board for final approval. The Dean called on Vice-Dean Smyth to present the motion.

MOTION (duly moved and seconded)
THAT Graduate Education Council approve the proposal of the Faculty of Law for a new hood for the Global Professional Master of Laws (GPLLM) degree offered by the Global Professional Master of Laws program.

Vice-Dean Smyth noted that there are very specific regulations regarding hood colours, width of the various silk linings, etc., right down to description of what the cords look like. There is not really an opportunity for design choice.

A member expressed the hope that hood measurements might someday be available in metric.

A member asked why Council approves hoods, when the program has already been approved. Jane Alderdice, Secretary to Council, replied that a new hood is required for a new degree, and Council
had been approving hoods since 1924. The authority comes from Governing Council, delegated to this Council.

In response to a question about the availability of a picture, Vice-Dean Smyth replied that SGS would inquire about a digital image in future, noting that new hoods are not made until after they have been approved.

Seeing no further discussion, the Dean called the question.

The motion was CARRIED.

8  Items For Discussion:

8.1  Graduate Grading Practices Policy

The Dean informed members that a memo from the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, to Principals, Deans, Academic Directors and Chairs (PDAD&C) about the review of the University’s Grading Practices Policy was distributed with the agenda, along with a draft University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy (GPP) and a document summarizing the changes from current policy in the draft. A Transcript Policy and a Policy on Academic Continuity are also being reviewed; drafts of these were distributed at the start of the meeting for discussion after the GPP is discussed. All these documents are also available on the Provost’s website; members should refer to the URL in the memo.

A summary of the chief edits accompanies the GPP. The Dean highlighted changes that are most pertinent for graduate studies, including some changes not in the documents that are being considered as a result of feedback thus far. GEC is one of many bodies being consulted. The Provost has requested feedback by December 1, 2011. When all comments have been received, the policy will be revised as appropriate and will proceed through University governance bodies. GEC will not be asked to vote on it, but there is a desire for as much response as possible before the final version goes through governance. The highlights for graduate studies are:

- The meanings associated with grades are now gone. However, the Provost’s office advises that not everyone is happy with this change. As a result, there is a proposal that Divisions may assign their own meanings to grade scales.
- It is also suggested that the Grade Point Average (GPA) be differentiated between A and A+.
- In the graduate scale, percentages are now formally recognized in association with the letter grades.
- It is now proposed that alternate grade scales be consolidated and available across the institution, and include: HH (High Honours), H (Honours), P (Pass), LP (Low Pass), F (Fail); this would be incorporated in the policy if there is enough support for it.
- A section for graduate studies under Multiple Assessments (1.4.2) has been added indicating that participation should not exceed more than 20% of the final grade in a course; subsequent discussion has urged changing “should” to “must” in recognition that this should be the maximum.
- There is no requirement that work be returned prior to the drop date for graduate courses (this does not affect undergraduate courses).
  - A member asked what the impact would be on 500-level courses which are approved for graduate credit. The Dean replied that SGS will look into this.
- Procedures for re-reading examinations have been clarified.
- In section 2.1, access to exemplars, concerns have been expressed that in some courses it will become increasingly difficult over time to examine core concepts. The concerns apply mainly to undergraduate courses, but it appears that a final decision has not been made about what the policy will say.
- Two graduate non-grade symbols (LSR & WDR) have been integrated as WDR.
- The grades to be recorded for graduate students taking undergraduate courses and undergraduate students taking graduate courses have been clarified according to practice.
- There is an expectation that guidelines be prepared by the divisions after final approval of GPP.

The Dean invited discussion.

A member asked when the change will take effect, and whether it would apply to all students. The Dean replied that since this discussion began well over a year ago, the University will want to avoid further delays, so it is likely to be in effect next academic year. The policy will apply to all courses that are offered at the time the revised policy takes effect, perhaps as early as courses starting July 1, 2012, but more likely by September 2012.

A member asked how past practice will be reconciled with the new policy. The Dean replied that an annotation on the transcript is common practice when such changes occur.

A member asked for the meaning of “should” in the context of the policy. The Dean replied that it introduces a choice and offers a guideline, in contrast with “must” which provides a directive with no choice available. Vice-Dean Smith added that, though the policy may use the word “should” in places, this does not prevent a division from using the word “must” within its own guidelines. So if a more directive approach is desired within a division, it is possible.

A member asked what the impact would be on seminar series courses where the only requirement is attendance. Vice-Dean Smyth replied that SGS has established guidelines for seminar courses, differentiating between the use of CR/NCR and letter-grades. Vice-Dean Smith added that the concern in the policy was not with seminar series courses, but with the use of a participation component of greater than 20% in letter-graded courses. SGS will look into this point.

A member asked whether an undergraduate student taking a graduate course would fall under the graduate provisions in the policy. Heather Kelly, SGS Director of Student Services, replied that the grading practices will depend on whether the student, not the course, is graduate or undergraduate. Vice-Dean Smith added that the contentious issue here has to do with requirements to return graded work to the student by the course drop date. The current Graduate Grading Practices Policy is silent on this, so it is assumed not to be required for graduate students; however, there is a rider that says that if no work will be returned before the drop date, this should be clearly stated in the course outline. A member asked whether adding that rider would not confuse the issue further, since students might get work back by the drop date in some courses but not others. Vice-Dean Smith replied that the policy requires all courses to have a clear outline. Best practice would be to have multiple assignments in the course, some of which are returned by the drop date. But if a course is such that no graded work will be returned by then, it should be stated in the outline. The member further asked what might change if a unit currently offers a course where a mid-term is held before the drop date but marks are not returned to students until after. The Dean replied that the policy does not change current practice with respect to when graded work is returned to the student; it only changes the requirements for what is communicated to the student. Vice-Dean Smith added that divisions or units should develop guidelines on this since practices can vary among disciplines. Another member said she supported the proposed clause, since in her discipline the courses are all half-courses, making it difficult to return work to students by the drop date; a requirement to keep students informed instead seems like a good change.
A member expressed surprise at the fact that a course can have evaluation components worth 100% of the final grade, and asked whether that was current practice or a change. Vice-Dean Smith replied that this was current practice in some courses. The Dean added that divisions should develop guidelines to decide whether such practice is appropriate in their programs.

A member asked whether the policy addresses who is performing the grading. It is understood that oversight is at level of one professor who is the instructor of record, but in actuality TAs decide on some grades. Vice-Dean Smyth replied that the guidelines on Graduate Faculty Membership clearly state that anyone involved in the assessment of grades must hold a Graduate Faculty Membership and that she would be happy to discuss the matter further.

A member asked whether units are expected to have or introduce a repository of exams, and whether that would create unfeasible levels of new bureaucracy. The Dean replied that this change centralizes current practice at the division. Looking at the final sentence of clause 2.1, exemptions can be done divisionally or departmentally. Vice-Dean Smith added that this is another area where the policy uses the word “should”, so this has force similar to a guideline. The Provost is still soliciting comment on the draft policy and this is an opportunity for discussion within departments regarding current practice and what is being proposed. The Dean encouraged departments to send comments, if any, to the Provost, noting that it will be much easier to make changes now rather than after the policy is approved.

A member noted that on a transcript, when a graduate student receives a final mark of 68% or 69%, this would show as a grade of FZ. The member asked whether there was any way to capture marks of 65% and above, such as including the percentage on the transcript. The member further noted that transcripts from some other institutions also include the percentage, and that this can be useful information. Vice-Dean Smith replied that the member was correct and that the FZ grade covers the range of marks from 0% to 69%, and that percentage marks are not recorded on the transcript. Vice-Dean Smyth added that this was a useful comment that SGS could provide the Provost, and that there was some support within the University for having numeric values along with the letter grade.

A member asked how the diversity of approaches to grading across disciplines and units would be accommodated by having one policy across the University, and expressed concern that a universal policy might generate more academic appeals due to that diversity. The Dean replied that the tendency within the University of late has been to produce a general policy and allow divisions to establish more rigorous guidelines to handle local variations. This approach should reduce the number of appeals. The policy has precedence over all divisional guidelines, but is written in such a way as to allow variety within guidelines where appropriate. Vice-Dean Smith gave as an example the SGS requirement that students have at least a mid-B in order to qualify for admission (exceptional admission is possible for students with a lower average grade); graduate units can set the minimum required grade for admission to their programs higher than the SGS minimum if they want, but they cannot set it lower. The member thanked the Vice-Dean for the example and noted that it is important for faculty, coordinators, administrators, and others, to know where the final authority lies on a particular piece of policy.

In closing discussion, the Dean repeated his encouragement to convey any further comments to the Provost’s office.

8.2 Doctoral Completion Award

The Dean noted that last year’s change from a Doctoral Completion Grant (DCG) to the current Doctoral Completion Award (DCA) has been unpopular. There is no consensus on an ideal solution; however, there seems to be consensus that the current system is not the best option. The Provost has a proposal that is likely to be implemented unless significant concerns emerge. The proposal is to take the current funds for the DCA and devolve them to graduate units. The units would distribute the funds in
ways they see fit to support doctoral students who are in the first year beyond the funded cohort, whether year five or six. Students would be eligible for the award only once. Feedback has shown a huge difference of opinion among graduate units. The conclusion, for moment at least, is to allow the graduate units to determine how distribution of funds is done. Money per unit would continue to be determined by the kind of formula that SGS established last year. It is based on a three-year rolling average, so there is some flexibility in the handing out of funds. This proposal is obviously a compromise based on a sense that no single proposal will make anyone happy, so as many variances as possible should be allowed in the framework. SGS will perform an audit to ensure that the money is used for its intended purpose. It will be up to units to distribute funds.

A member asked if the amount of funding had changed since the DCG became the DCA, and if it would include a cost-of-living adjustment. The Dean replied that the fund had been raised to a flat $4 million. There is no cost-of-living adjustment planned, so the real value of the fund is expected to shrink.

In response to a question about the history of the fund, the Dean replied that the original idea was to allow students who had gone beyond the funded cohort but were nearly finished to have sufficient support to graduate. The actual impact may have fallen short of that goal, but it is nevertheless welcome support for students who are beyond their funding package. There was a lot of unhappiness about the DCG and concern that the amount per student, given the number of eligible students, was very small and not an effective way to distribute the funds. The change from the DCG to the DCA was intended to address that by providing a greater amount of funding to a smaller number of students. What emerged is that support remains for distributing the funds democratically (to everyone). So the change to the DCA addressed unhappiness in one direction but generated unhappiness in another. When the fund was created by the Provost in 2001, there was a provision that it be reviewed after four years. That review never happened, so the question of how much it helps graduate students is difficult to answer other than anecdotally.

A member pointed out that some doctoral programs admit students with a bachelor’s degree and these programs thus have students who effectively receive one less year of funding. The member asked whether anything could be done with the DCA to address this. Vice-Dean Smith noted that when SGS established the formula used last year, the University’s funding data “cube” was used to look at how many students exist in each program who are past the funded cohort. The rolling average was used to try and predict future numbers. The result was a rough estimate, but one that was as fair as possible based on the average enrollment of post-funded students and the rough measure of each unit’s ability to fund those students themselves, which varied enormously. Some adjustments were made to deal with a variety of individual graduate unit situations; for example, some units have a commitment to fund all students to program completion.

A member asked how many students complete their programs within the funded period. Vice-Dean Smith replied that hard figures are not readily available, but clearly a minority finish in four years. The average time to completion across the University is typically around five years, so the majority of students do go beyond the funded period.

Another member suggested that since funding is inconsistent with the time it takes students to complete programs and finding additional funding is unlikely, there should be discussion about how to get students to complete in an appropriate timeframe. Further, the member noted that perhaps the existing time to completion expectations are unrealistic. The Dean replied that, across the University, explanations and analyses of this issue vary greatly from one sector to the next. A huge range of opinion exists, often based on local conditions, which makes it hard to find a global answer. The concerns about graduate students and timely completion are widespread, and in fact U of T is doing better than most
institutions in North America. The $4 million in this fund are not going to solve the problem. However, the question of the moment is how best to spend these $4 million.

A member reported having sat on the committee adjudicating the DCA last year and said that it had proven very difficult to compare students across departments. The member concluded that giving the money to the graduate units and allowing them to decide how to spend the funds is a better solution.

A member noted that the DCA is only available for students during the first year after the funded cohort. Some supervisors are able to find funding for an extra year after the funded cohort, but if the students still does not complete the program after that, they are no longer eligible for the DCA. The member asked whether it was possible to amend the eligibility rules to deal with this issue. The Dean replied that it might be easier for supervisors to review how much funding they give their students, and when. If supervisors hold some of their own funds back in the first year and instead use the DCA, they could then make up the additional year of funding themselves. He added that there is also a view held by some that encouraging a student to continue for two years beyond the funded cohort is not a good idea. This is a recurring question.

A member asked whether there are any labour relations issues associated with the DCA. The Dean replied that while the teaching assistant union local had shown interest in the issues around the DCA, there is nothing in the collective agreement that says it is a topic relating to them.

A member said that the proposal of putting the money into the hands of the units is a good idea, but offered two caveats. First, given the recent flurry of changes, it is important to ensure commitment to the proposed model consistently over the next few years. Second, units should be encouraged to use the money creatively; for example, finding matching grants or creating a fund within the department. The Dean agreed on both points, and added that the Provost would likely agree as well.

The Academic Commissioner of the Graduate Students’ Union (GSU) said that the GSU had consulted and had not received many negative responses to the proposed structure; overall, the change is viewed positively. He added that there were a number of requests to allow DCA eligibility for sixth-year students as an exception, since those students have been disadvantaged for the upcoming year. The Dean replied by asking whether any questions had been raised whether students in their fifth year next year would be disadvantaged if funds were diverted to sixth-year students under such an exception. The GSU representative said that no such concerns had been heard but would have to be considered next year.

The Dean thanked everyone for their comments.

9 Other Business
There was no other business.

10 For Information:
The Dean deferred discussion of the items for information, to the next meeting, so as to allow the meeting to adjourn at 5 p.m. as previously moved.

10.1 External Awards Success Rate Report
The report was distributed at the start of the meeting. SGS will hold an International Credentials workshop on Friday, December 9; the focus will be on the UK. SGS has announced the results of the Fall Conference Grant completion. This term approximately 600 applications for the SGS Conference Grant were received, and approximately 500 applicants were funded for a total of just under $200,000.
10.2 Fall 2011 GEC By-election Report
There were six GEC member positions vacant in fall 2011. A by-election was held in September and October to fill them. There now is a full membership on Council. The report distributed with the agenda provides more details.

10.3 Academic Integrity Annual Report 2010-11
The report was distributed with the agenda.

10.4 Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB) Annual Report 2010-11
The report was distributed with the agenda.

11 Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 5 pm.