Graduate Education Council

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 21, 2014,
3:10 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
The Council Chamber, Galbraith Building
Room 202, 35 St. George Street

Meeting called to order 3:10 p.m.

The Dean introduced himself as the new School of Graduate Studies (SGS) Dean and Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education. He welcomed returning members, new members and guests.

Approval of the Agenda of the Graduate Education (GEC) Meeting of October 21, 2014

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

The motion is CARRIED.

1. Minutes of the Graduate Education Council Meeting of March 18, 2014

The Dean noted that the minutes of the March 18, 2014 meeting were distributed with the agenda.

MOTION (duly moved and seconded)
THAT the minutes of the Graduate Education Council meeting of March 18, 2014 be approved.

Seeing no discussion, the Dean called the question.
The motion is CARRIED.

2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

3. Dean’s Remarks

The Dean introduced Council members to the following people [attending that day] from SGS:
Luc De Nil, Vice-Dean, Students  
Elizabeth (Liz) Smyth, Vice-Dean, Programs  
Reinhart Reithmeier, Special Advisor, Graduate Skills Development and Engagement  
Christy Kim, Director, Business and Operations  
Corey Dales, Director, Information Systems  
Jane Freeman, Director, English Language and Writing Support  
Josie Lalonde, Associate Director, Student Systems and Records  
Michael Godwin, Student Services Officer, Division One  
Steve Rutchinski, Student Services Officer, Division Three  
Scott Moore, Student Services Officer, Division Two  
Emma Thacker, Governance & Policy Coordinator; Acting Secretary, Graduate Education Council

3.1 Orientation for GEC Members

The Dean provided a summary orientation and an introduction to the work of the GEC. GEC’s responsibilities changed in January 2011 as a result of new quality assurance processes within U of T, largely shaped by new quality assurance processes across the province. There have also been some additional changes to quality assurance processes at the University for this academic year, however none of these stem from changes to the actual University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (also known as the UTQAP). The UTQAP defines our processes for approval of new programs, major and minor modification to programs, closure and cyclical review of existing programs. The Vice-Provost - Academic Programs, Sioban Nelson is responsible for overseeing UTQAP processes. This academic year, all quality assurance processes have been consolidated into the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs to streamline efficiencies and to align with undergraduate practices. There remains close consultation on graduate matters between the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs and SGS which includes the role of Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs is also now responsible for the graduate unit calendar entries. The SGS constitution will be amended to reflect these new responsibilities in due course.

The Dean provided an overview of the role of the Graduate Education Council. One of GEC’s responsibilities is the approval of policy, regulation and guidelines affecting graduate studies at U of T. In the case of most SGS regulations, that is, those in the Graduate Calendar, Council will have final approval authority. Proposals for new guidelines and documents reflecting best practices or changes to existing ones are brought to GEC for information, consultation and discussion. GEC provides valuable advice to administrators and the graduate community.

The Dean provided some guidance with respect to the role of each GEC member and commented that each member may exercise their own judgment on matters. Members are not representing their department or division directly. Agenda items normally arise from the work of academic administrators, with support from the senior administrative staff. GEC members
are welcome to bring topic forward to the GEC Secretary. Members are asked to please raise questions on items where information is not clear or to contact the Secretary’s Office before the meeting.

Acting Secretary, Emma Thacker, provided information about where to find council business. The GEC agenda and packages are available on the SGS website and GEC webpage. Agenda packages, and web-links to the package, are sent out via email on the Wednesday prior to the GEC meeting. Items that come before Council for approval will have a motion sheet as cover. Motion sheets provide information about previous governance actions and consultations, and may include other information to provide context for your decision. The GEC website also includes the membership list, Rules of Council, past agendas and minutes.

3.2 Weston Scholarships – Update

The Dean provided an update regarding the Weston Doctoral Fellowship Program. He reminded Council that the Weston is a research travel award, awarded to students for the last two years as part of a pilot. The scholarship program is currently being reevaluated and the award is currently on hold as details and scales are currently being rethought. GEC will be informed as new information becomes available.

3.3 Three Minute Thesis (3MT)

Vice-Dean, Programs, Elizabeth Smyth provided Council with an update on the three-minute thesis competition and advised that the University of Toronto will take part in the province-wide Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition again this year. Student participants have three minutes and one PowerPoint slide to present their research to a panel of non-specialist judges. Dates for the university-wide competition have not yet been posted. The provincial finals will be hosted at Western University in 2015. Further details will be announced as they become available.

3.4 Progress Tracker Update

Corey Dales, Director, Information Systems provided an update regarding development of the Progress Tracker. The Progress Tracker is a tool for assessing research stream Master’s and Doctoral students as they advance through their programs. The goal is to capture basic student information along with an academic history of the student’s annual progress, committee meetings and outcomes. The majority of Phase 1 requirements have been developed. We are now working on integrating the Progress Tracker with university systems (ROSI data). Testing will begin shortly. Feedback is welcome.

3.5 eMarks Update

Josie Lalonde, Director, Associate Director, Student Systems and Records provided an update on the eMarks initiative. eMarks is a web-based system that allows authorized users to view,
enter, amend, submit and approve final marks. The system helps ensure that grades are in ROSI by the submission deadline. The system sends automatic e-mail reminders and overdue notices to course instructors and approvers. Once approved, grades get loaded to ROSI at the click of a button. eMarks is an NGSIS (Next Generation Student Information Services) project. The system was initially developed at UTM in 2006. Now currently used by Arts & Science (u/g), Applied Science & Engineering (u/g), UTSC, and UTM. We are now moving towards an SGS implementation.

This summer (2014), eMarks was piloted with three Applied Science & Engineering departments and the Institute for Management & Innovation at UTM. The pilot gave SGS the chance to test new enhancements, including the option to indicate that a student has or will be applying for a coursework extension. Based on feedback from the pilot, EASI is adding further upgrades to the system. We are now inviting the broader graduate community to begin using eMarks for the Fall 2014 session. Feedback is welcome.

4 Report, SGS Dean and Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education, Locke Rowe

The Dean provided some background on the recent changes at SGS. In May of 2014, a Review of SGS was completed, following the SGS Decanal term of Professor Brian Corman. The Review made some recommendations. The SGS Dean role is associated with the Vice-Provostial role, and the Vice-Provost title has now changed to Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education. The new title and its implications are still unfolding and evolving. Also unfolding are considerations regarding the SGS Dean’s role and responsibilities.

The Dean shared some of the recent and upcoming changes to the School of Graduate Studies. Several administrative redundancies will be eliminated, including program degree audits. There will be a stronger focus on front-facing graduate student experience and engagement. There will be focus on bringing about a cultural change and to make SGS an agent of innovation - an advocate and home for graduate students. Further to this, there will a working group with respect to graduate recruitment. There may also be changes to the non-standard admissions process. SGS is looking to streamline processes for graduate units by rethinking regulations and easing SGS’s role in administrating regulations.

A graduate student member asked what would be the role of GEC, specifically graduate students on GEC, in some of the upcoming changes at SGS. The Dean responded that he will share some of the initiatives that will affect graduate students. SGS is looking at Student Services to sort out how administration can be more efficient. We have started to build a collaborative relationship with the Graduate Students’ Union (GSU) and to open up communications. GSU will be involved in the development of best practices. SGS is currently discussing a project with Student Life, regarding providing conflict resolution, peer-to-peer mediation services, and also enhancing access to mental health services. The Dean would like SGS to be a place where students can go to, after their graduate units, when they need help. There will also be new student professional development and engagement programs – an enhancement of the existing Graduate Professional Skills (GPS) program. SGS currently has
these programs, but they are oversubscribed and not well known. The Dean asked that members be in touch should they have any questions about the current issues and changes in graduate studies.

5 Report of the Vice-Dean, Students, Luc De Nil

Vice-Dean, Students, Luc De Nil commented to members that his office is working on several initiatives, however many of them are still in the development and planning phase.

Supervision Workshop and Guidelines

The Vice-Dean mentioned that the SGS Supervision Guidelines were revised and re-published in 2012. SGS has been collaborating with the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, GSU, and the Ombudsperson to offer workshops in support of the best practices in supervision. Another workshop is planned for the end of November that will run for 2.5 hours. Workshops will also be hosted on the UTM and UTSC campus. SGS is considering some revisions, including the development of two versions – one for students, one for supervisors.

6 Remarks from Reinhart Reithmeier, Special Advisor to the SGS Dean, Graduate Skills Development and Engagement

Professor Reinhart Reithmeier discussed his new role at SGS as Special advisor to Dean for Graduate Professional Development and Engagement. He shared results of a recent study that he completed after his time as Chair in the Department of Biochemistry. He shared that only 15% of PhD graduates become Faculty members. The model where the current professor trains their replacement professor is obsolete. The study shows a much different career path of graduates today. Professor Reithmeier indicated he will be looking at graduate pathways with a focus on skills development and networking, expanding the student network beyond the graduate coordinator and supervisor. Professor Reinhart is currently surveying the graduate studies landscape with respect to Graduate Professional Skills (GPS). He is looking at best practices. SGS has just promoted the new initiative - mygradskills.ca. He will share more as the Graduate Skills Development (GPD) unit develops.

A GEC member shared that during her experience as a graduate student, exposure to business cases helped her see different options beyond graduation. Professor Reithmeier discussed the graduate alumni engagement initiatives and the opportunities at the School of Continuing Studies for graduates to broaden their learning experiences.

Open Discussion

A GEC member shared that she would like to see SGS remain involved with collaborative programs and also to become more involved with international students and students with disabilities. The SGS Dean responded that developing international partnerships is a focus for graduate studies. The Vice-Dean, Programs responded that SGS would be very supportive with respect to accessibility initiatives that support graduate students.
The Vice-Dean, Students discussed the Graduate Professional Skills (GPS) workshops and English Language & Writing Support (ELWS) courses that are free for all graduate students. A graduate student member asked whether there is a committee formed or a group of administrators that may look into why students drop out of their programs. The Dean responded that this question is asked across the University as there are many contributing factors that vary across disciplines.

A graduate student member asked if there is any consideration towards the graduate supervision guidelines including a contract. The Vice-Dean responded by saying that some units use a contract system which works well for their students/program. A variety of local approaches work across the University of Toronto. Best practices are environment specific and/or location specific. Contract templates that work for the entire university often make the contact challenging for individual units. All suggestions are welcome. Best practices are not imposed, just serve as guidance.

A council member asked about the status of international student funding. The Vice-Dean, Programs responded saying that provincial funding varies by province. This is an increasingly popular topic. There was a recent article in the Globe and Mail. U of T is not alone in this. It is partly an equity issue. There is a funding commitment, depending on how a division is defined. Support for international students is political and discussions are happening.

7 For Approval: Standing Committee Business

7.1 Graduate Academic Appeals Board – Membership: 2014-2015

The Dean commented that the Graduate Academic Appeals Board is a standing committee of the Graduate Education Council and is governed by a by-law. The motion documentation provides details regarding appointments to GAAB. GEC is the final approval level for this Board. Vice-Dean, Elizabeth Smyth presented the motion.

MOTION (dually moved and seconded)
THAT Graduate Education Council approve the appointments of one alternate Chair and faculty member in Division 1 the Graduate Academic Appeals Board for the 2014-2015 academic year as follows:

Alternate Chair:
Markus Dubber, Faculty of Law (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015) (new member, 1 year term)

Faculty Member:
Keren Rice, Division I, Department of Linguistics (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017) (new member) (three-year term)
Seeing no discussion, the Dean called the question. The motion is **CARRIED**.

### 7.2 Admissions and Programs Committee – Membership: 2014-2015

The Dean commented that the Admissions and Programs Committee is a standing committee of Graduate Education Council and is governed by a by-law. The motion documentation provides details of the committee responsibilities, powers, and membership composition. GEC is the final approval level for this committee. Vice-Dean, Luc De Nil presented the motion.

**MOTION (duly moved and seconded)**

**THAT** Graduate Education Council approve the following appointments to the Admissions and Programs Committee:

- Pascal Michelucci, French Language and Literature (Sept 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015)
- Markus Bussmann, Mech. & Industrial Engineering (Sept 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015)
- Howard Mount, Institute of Medical Science (September 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015)
- Fady Shanouda, Graduate Student, Division IV (September 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015)
- Bradley Evoy, Graduate Student, Division II (September 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015)

Seeing no discussion, the Dean called the question. The motion is **CARRIED**.

### 8. Other Business

None.

### 9. For Information:

The Dean commented that there are several attachments for information. He invites comments or feedback.

- **9.1** Graduate Education Council Membership: 2012-2013
- **9.2** Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters – Annual Report
- **9.3** Graduate Academic Appeals Board – Annual Report
- **9.4** External Awards Report
- **9.5** SGS Audit of Student Files Report and Summary 2013-2014

No comments or discussion.

**Closing Remarks**

The Dean announced that the next meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2014. Although this is a reserve date, SGS is open to having the meeting. The next formal meeting is scheduled for
March of 2015. There will be much more activity to discuss at that time. Please bring forward ideas for discussion.

Seeing no further discussion or questions, the Dean moved to adjournment.

**Adjournment**

The Dean thanked the Council members for their attendance and contributions. The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Emma Thacker, Acting Secretary, GEC

Date: April 6, 2015
Appendix to the Minutes
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL
Record of Attendance - October 21, 2014

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
Hill, Jenny
Hsieh, Amanada
Hu, Jim
Jia, Charles
Kaplan, Allan
Mahrt-Smith, Jan
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
Williams, Charmaine

In Attendance (Guests & SGS Staff)
Dina Brooks (for Katherine Berg)
Dales, Corey
Godwin, Michael
Kim, Christy
Lalonde, Josie
MacMillan, Don
Moore, Scott
Reithmeier, Reinhart
Rutchinski, Steve

Absent
Alford, Larry
Berg, Katherine
Campbell, Elizabeth
Faulkner, Guy
Gagne, Marie
Gertler, Meric
Gough, William
Gunz, Hugh
Halpern, Rick
Julian, Stephen
Lewis, Peter
Little, Jeffrey
Livak, Leonid
MacKay, Gillian
Mabury, Scott
Lynne Magnusson
Nelson, Sioban
Reisz, Robert
Ross, Seamus
Segal, Hugh
Watson, Jeanne
Yip, Christopher