The Dean and Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education (Graduate Education Council (GEC) Chair, Professor Locke Rowe) called the meeting to order. He welcomed all members and visitors, and gave a special welcome to new members on the Council.

Approval of the Agenda of the Graduate Education Meeting of November 17, 2015

MOTION (duly moved and seconded)
THAT the agenda of the Graduate Education Council meeting of November 17, 2015 be approved.

The motion was CARRIED.

1. For Approval: Minutes of the Graduate Education Council Meeting of April 21, 2015

The minutes of the April 21, 2015 meeting were distributed with the agenda. Professor Elizabeth Smyth presents the motion.

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

The motion was CARRIED.

There was one abstention to the motion.

2. Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

3. Dean’s Remarks

3.1 Introductions, School of Graduate Studies (SGS)

The Dean provided introductions of the SGS staff in attendance. Emma (GEC Secretary) provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of Council members.
Report of the Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education

4.1 School of Graduate Studies – Building Renovations
The Dean provided an update on the plans to renovate 63 St. George. During the renovations, Student Services will be relocated 702/704 Spadina Avenue. Relocation is scheduled for mid-December 2015, and renovations will begin early in the New Year. The renovations will service students and staff better, increase efficiencies, provide a welcoming new space for students, and develop stature for graduate studies.

4.2 SGS Staff Changes
The Dean advised that there have been a number of staff changes. Don Macmillan, Director, Student Services has moved to the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science. SGS is rethinking Student Services with an innovations and systems focus. The Vice-Dean’s roles are also changing. A new position has been created for a Communications Officer. Emma Thacker now has the role of Associate Director, Graduate Affairs.

4.2 Mental Health Initiatives
The Dean advised that SGS now has an embedded counsellor dedicated for graduate students. The counselling services are currently offered 3 days a week at 65 St. George. The Graduate Conflict Resolution Centre is a collaborative project with Student Life, GSU and SGS that will work to address conflicts early through peer-to-peer coaching. The Peer Team will be hired in December 2015, and begin training in January 2016. SGS is also offering mental health workshops, with student driven workshops offered in graduate units and coping skills workshops for graduate students hosted by SGS.

4.3 Graduate Student Experience
The Dean advised on a number of projects currently underway. SGS is working with the GSU on several initiatives. Other projects include revised Supervision Guidelines, graduate recruitment, dissertation
writing groups, graduate professional development, IT enhancements, and a review of regulations to eliminate redundancies and ease processes.

4.4 International Students
The Dean advised that SGS is rethinking student services for International Students and Post-Doctoral Fellows. International students make up 15% of the graduate population, and 50% of the Post-Doctoral population. SGS aims to map the opportunities, challenges and gaps that exist for these students. SGS will look at three spheres: academic, social, and services to investigate ways to attract and retain students, while enhancing the existing systems and resources. Consultations have begun, and will be ongoing.

4.5 Doctoral Program Completion and Funding, Time to Completion
The Dean advised that SGS is working to increase graduate funding transparency, and develop best practices for funding transactions. SGS is engaged in data driven analysis to better understand factors impacting time to completion, researching best practices, and is about to begin the consulting stage on the project. The goal is to develop strategies to decrease time to completion and better support student progress and experience. The Dean provided an explanation for why Time to Completion matters, as well as a number of graphs illustrating the types ongoing research that has been happening. The Dean highlighted and explored some of the key factors that impact Time to Completion. These factors were: student selection, supervision, financial support, program culture, research mode of the field, and program processes and procedure.

4.6 Questions
The Dean closed his presentation by opening the floor to questions. A student member asked about the job market, and whether this is a factor on completion rates. The Dean responded that this was a factor, but that in some cases it works to keep the student in the program longer. The Dean mentioned that this is something that can be learned by exist surveys. Vice-Dean Reisz asked if these data included professional programs. The Dean responded the data is only doctoral programs.

5 Report of the Vice-Dean Elizabeth (Liz) Smyth
Vice-Dean Elizabeth Smyth noted that Vice-Dean Luc De Nil is on administrative leave this session, but will rejoin at the Spring GEC meeting. The Vice-Dean commented that SGS has many new and exciting student-focused initiatives going on at SGS, and that the committee of student matters has not yet met this session. The Vice-Dean advised that at the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) conference this year many of the issues Dean Rowe addressed were central topics. The conference was focused on rethinking the PhD. The Vice-Dean advised that there was a memo sent out from the Director of Student Services, noting to please be careful of the language you use when you are inviting students from abroad into your program for research (IVGS program). The language of ‘work’ rather than ‘study’ can deny entry into the country.
5.1 Changes to Collaborative Program Director Appointments

The Vice-Dean advised that Collaborative Program Guidelines have been revised, effective September 29, 2015. The Guidelines are now produced by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, and are housed on their new website. The SGS Collaborative program website has also been updated to reflect the new guidelines. The Vice-Dean noted that there are a couple of changes to the previous guidelines. First, that each Collaborative Program now has a lead Faculty Dean who approves the appointment of the Collaborative Program Director. Previously the SGS Dean appointed the collaborative program director. Second, that the UTQAP Collaborative Program reviews are now administered out of the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, and commissioned by the lead Faculty Dean associated with the collaborative program. Previously the reviews were administered by SGS and commissioned by the Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education. The Vice-Dean noted that SGS will continue to provide feedback on the UTQAP review assessment. The Vice-Dean advised that since the lead Faculty Deans are now responsible for quality assurance, governance, and academic oversight of the collaborative programs, it made sense for the Director appointments to also be included.

5.2 SGS Regulations Working Group – Updated

The Vice-Dean reminded GEC that SGS struck a working group earlier this year to review all of the SGS Calendar regulations. The Vice-Dean advised that it has been a slow process as SGS is also looking at the associated registrarial practices, forms, manuals, and website language to ensure all our communications are aligned, clear, and meaningful. The goal of the working group is to eliminate redundancies and scale down any unneeded transactions for units and students. The Vice-Dean advised that one of the regulation sections currently under review is looking at combining the two admissions policies into one. There will be no change in the content, however it will be merged and the language made consistent throughout. The Vice-Dean advised that research and preliminary consultation with the Provost’s Office is currently underway.

6 Report of Reinhart Reithmeier, Special Advisor to the SGS Dean, Graduate Skills Development and Engagement

The Special Advisor to the SGS Dean provided an update on the Graduate Professional Development (GPD) and Graduate Professional Skills (GPS). He mentioned that SGS has partnered with the GSU to talk about some of the resources available. There is a website for the workshops where information is being added on the programs all the time, and lots of outreach is happening. GPD has made appearances in 60 of the graduate units during orientation. The GPS program currently has over 100 offerings (professional development module courses), which is made possible through over 20 UofT partners that help to deliver and provide resources. Liam O’Leary, the Grad Room Programming Coordinator, maintains an email distribution list about offerings, and has doubled the number of students subscribed in the past year. Many of the GPS program offerings are at capacity. Last year there was a pilot program called the ‘Summer Institute’ that focused on career transitions, and this year the program is already at capacity. There is a new program where students can make 3 minute pitches for funding to support student driven initiatives, and the winners will be announced next week. There was incredibly diversity and participation from across campus. Overall, students want more
graduate professional development opportunities. GPD also engaged with the Conference Board of Canada and held an event at Massey College.

7 Updates from the School of Graduate Studies

7.1 Student Services
Josie Lalonde, Associate Director, Student Systems and Records, provided an update about some of the changes in Student Services. The renovations are proceeding, and the Student Services section of SGS will be moving on Friday, December 11/15. Student Services will be ready to serve students and staff throughout the transition to its new location. Josie advised that SGS has developed a communications plan about the renovations and the upcoming move, and will be sending out more information in the upcoming weeks. Josie also advised that Student Services will be rebranding itself as ‘Student Academic Services’. The goal is to provide a more accurate representation of the services provided, with an emphasis on front-line services for students. Josie introduced Ian Marquez, the new Frontline Assistant at SGS. Ian is from Arts & Science and will work to provide students with immediate support. Victoria Hurlihey has shifted into a new role as Manager, Frontline Student Academic Services, and will be providing support on policy and regulation questions involving students, including supervisory issues. Hasmik Sargarsyan has also returned from her leave to the position of Recruitment and Admissions Officer. Hasmik’s portfolio includes general application and admissions questions, in addition to Joint Educational Placement and international credential assessment. Josie also advised that Don MacMillan, the former Director of Student Services, has moved on to his new role as Registrar at the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering. With Don’s departure Josie advised on who will be overseeing the various aspects of the Director’s portfolio for the time being. Josie’s office will be handling operational issues, which includes admissions, FIPPA, records retention, recruitment, registration, enrollment, nonstandard issues, leaves of absence, and student progress. Lisa Haley, the Postdoctoral Advisor, will be handling thesis submissions, final oral examinations, and convocation. Laura Stathopoulos, the Associate Director Graduate Awards and Financial Aid, oversees awards but also provides programs to support students financially. Her office has a dedicated Financial Counsellor, emergency loan program, and accessibility grant program.

7.2 Information Systems
Corey Dales, Director, Information Systems gave an update on the accomplishments, progress, and future goals underway at SGS. The recent major accomplishments include fully migrating SGS Email to UTORExchange. Corey advised that the old accounts are forwarding to the new accounts, however everyone is encouraged to update their materials and switch to the new addresses. A list of all the new addresses are on the SGS Staff Directory website. Corey advised all the production / development SGS servers have been migrated a new VMWare solution that reduces risk of down time and data loss, and lowers costs while improving reliability and integration with University central services. SGS has also adopted a web help desk that provides the graduate community with a single point of contact for support. Other changes to Information Systems include increased efficiency, such as a live feed from ROSI so there are no longer data updates that need to happen, as well as the automation of some manual tasks. Corey advised that that Information Systems is still working on the Progress Tracker, an optional web-based tool to assist graduate students, supervisors, and units with tracking the progress of research-stream students. SGS is currently working on implementing the Progress Tracker. Corey
advised that work is ongoing on the Forms Tool, which will allow all paper/PDF forms to be made into web forms. The goal is to move all our paper-based forms online, which will allow for SGS to respond to changes faster, add and remove data requirements, integrate the information with existing data sources, eliminate re-entry of data, and export data easily. The Forms Tool is currently in limited testing within SGS, and next steps include moving to production, training graduate administrators, and implementing more complex forms such as leave of absences, extension to complete coursework, and change of campus affiliation. Corey also noted that with the renovations happening, SGS wants to modernize things. SGS will be moving to VOIP and has partnered with the University to do this. Phone numbers will not change. SGS is enhancing its partnerships with UofT Information Technology Services and wants to keep expanding this. SGS has been working with the Provost’s Office to share resources and improve experiences while reducing costs and risk. SGS has also been working with the graduate units to pilot some enhancements to the Ontario Admissions Application (OOA). Corey noted that the OOA has been around for ten years and is not modern, and needs to be refreshed and updated. SGS will need to review and consult with the graduate community for input as this progresses. Corey also advised that SGS will be joining Enterprise Active Directory to simplify access to systems and files.

A faculty member commented that they are trying to figure out how to track student with student engagement. Corey suggested looking into the Co-Curricular Record.

8. GEC Discussion and Consultation Topics

8.1 The Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Reinhart Reithmeier, Special Advisor to the Dean, Graduate Skills Development and Engagement, asked who had heard of the IDP. Two students responded that they had. Reinhart provided an overview of what the IDP is, namely that it prompts a conversation for students to have with their supervisors. Reinhart mentioned that there are efforts to develop IDPs for the humanities, and some universities want to develop them for all disciplines. Professor Reithmeier suggested that the University may wish to consider the IDP as a tool, but it will need support to develop it into the best IDP in the world.

Master Hugh Segal, Massey College, noted that he sometimes hears that students are giving up on teaching careers, and that it is happening more often than is desirable. Dean Rowe responded that one of the elements driving the work in the GPD program is what we think of as a mismatch between the student, the outcomes, and the idea that programs may be designed to make academics, is a bit of false advertising. The Dean mentioned that the school needs to address students who want a PhD, but also do not want to pursue a career in teaching.

A student member mentioned that last year they were approached about the criteria for conference funds, and the number of times a student can apply for a conference fund. The student member mentioned that they would not promise anything, but had surveyed and collected responses from students on the issue. The student member mentioned that currently a student in a program can apply only once for conference funds. Conferences enhance the CV and graduate experience. There was a consensus in their survey that money for conferences was a problem. The student member suggested increasing the total number of times a student can apply for conference funds from one to two. The Dean responded that SGS is looking at this, but also that SGS spends $80,000 a year on conference
grants. If SGS increases the number of times a student can apply, either the number of awards will decrease, or the amount will decrease. It will be different across divisions, and SGS is thinking if the graduate units should be helping out with these funds. SGS is thinking about this, but does not have any answer yet. The Dean mentioned that he is happy to take this information, and hopes to have a response by March GEC.

A student GEC member asked about graduate funding. The Dean advised that a few years ago, Vice-Dean Luc De Nil chaired a group about student funding. The group looked at transactions, compositions, and transparencies. The Dean noted that they had met with GSU about this, and that the GSU was going through each of the recommendations, and it is ongoing. By March SGS hopes to bring this to GEC and will invite the GSU representative who is working on the issue, as it will be a joint communication.

9. Other Business

None.

10. For Information

10.1 Name and/or Status Change to Graduate Units or Programs
The report is for information only, and provides the council with a summary of approved name and status changes for graduate units and graduate programs, since our last meeting.

10.2 Graduate Education Council Membership: 2015-2016
This document distributed with the agenda is the up to date GEC membership chart for 2015-2016, which includes all returning GEC members and those who were elected in the spring and of this year.

10.3 Graduate Academic Appeals Board membership 2015-2016
This document distributed with the agenda is the up to date GAAB membership chart for 2015-2016. The GAAB Chair is on sabbatical this year. Professor Angela Fernandez is our Acting Chair.

10.4 Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters – Annual Report
The SGS annual report on the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters student cases has been distributed with your agenda. It details the number of cases received at SGS, as well as the nature of the misconduct and the timeliness of the resolution.

10.5 Graduate Academic Appeals Board – Annual Report
The SGS Annual report from the Graduate Academic Appeals Board has been distributed with your agenda. It provides basic details on the appeals heard at SGS, including the graduate department of the appellant, the basis for the appeal, and the outcome.
10.6 External Awards Report
The External Awards Report provides a detailed overview of the federal Tri-Agency, and provincial award competitions, and the outreach, process, and results of each of these awards over the last five years.

10.7 Post-Doctoral Fellow Report 2013-2014
The annual report was distributed with the agenda. The report is based on a snapshot of PDF engagement in 2013-2014. Records reflect 2648 PDFs associated with U of T during this time. The report focuses on campus affiliation, hospital affiliation, and other statistics, such as divisional representation, unit, faculty association, citizenship, gender, and stipends.

10.8 Collaborative Program Guidelines – September 2015
Recently revised in consultation with the Faculty Deans and SGS. Now produced by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs.

11. Closing Remarks
The Dean noted that the next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2016. You will receive a communication from our office. We anticipate there will be some regulations tabled for consultation and approval. We also will report back on many of the ongoing initiatives at SGS. We welcome your questions and feedback at anytime. Thank you for your attendance and participation today.

12. Adjournment
The Dean confirmed this meeting as the first 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 4:50.

Emma Thacker, Secretary, GEC

Date: November 17, 2015
Appendix to the Minutes
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL
Record of Attendance – November 17, 2015

Present (Voting & Non-voting Members)
Rowe, Locke (Chair)
Thacker, Emma (Secretary to Council)
Arsenault, Jessica
Brooks, Dina
Buck, Les
Bussmann, Markus
Everett, Nicholas
Koga, Midori
Hogendoorn, Christopher
Hu, Jim
Julian, Stephen
Kaplan, Allan
Mahrt-Smith, Jan
McDougall, Doug
Qudrat, Anam
Quinonez, Carlos
Segal, Hugh
Skira, Jerry
Reisz, Robert
Rice, Keren
Shanouda, Fady
Simpson, Andre
Smarandache, Bogdan
Smyth, Elizabeth
Strong, Kim

Absent
Alford, Larry
Barker, Joshua
De Nil, Luc
Dubber, Markus
Gertler, Meric
Goel, Vivek
Golden, Brian
Gough, William
Hill, Jenny
Hsieh, Amanada
Little, Jeffrey
Locke, Marius
Mabury, Scott
Magnusson, Lynne
Matkar, Pratiek
Mitas, Christina
Nelson, Sioban
Regehr, Cheryl
Somigli, Luca
Siewrattan, Kavita
Szymanski, Karolina
Williams, Charmaine
Yip, Christopher

In Attendance (Guests & SGS Staff)
Cayley, Rachel
Dales, Corey
Freeman, Jane
Grav, Peter
Hurlihey, Victoria
McKeown, Rory
Marquez, Ian
McGhee-Peggs, Heather
Moore, Scott
Reithmeier, Reinhart
Rutchinski, Steve
Sargsyan, Hasmik