

(Approved November 9, 2011)

BROCK UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of October 5, 2011
2:00 - 3:30, Sankey Chamber

Present: J. Allard, K. Arnell, J. Atkinson, M. Berman, U. Brand, D. Butz, R. Dimand, L. Duhaime, C. Federici, M. Feldman, M. Hennigar, H. Junke, I. Makus, J. Mercier, C. Merriam, B. Minor, G. Pepper, M. Plyley (Chair), S. Rothstein, D. Samson, C. Santos, S. Sekel, A. Smith, C. Tardif-Williams, S. Tilley, C. Ugolini (Admin Support), S. Vint, M. Webber, M. Winter, J. Yuen

Regrets: N. Klentrou, R. Kuchapski, H. McGarrell, M. Richards, K. Samokhin

Programs not Represented: Applied Linguistics, Biological Sciences, Physics

Dean Plyley welcomed members and introductions took place.

1. **Approval of Agenda** - **MOVED** (C. Merriam/R. Dimand) that the Agenda of October 5, 2011 be approved. **CARRIED** (1 abstention)
2. **Approval of Minutes of May 18, 2011** - **MOVED** (C. Tardif-Williams/M. Webber) that the Minutes of the meeting of May 18, 2011 be approved. **CARRIED** (7 abstentions)

3. **Business Arising from Minutes**

Dean Plyley referred to the following discussion items addressed by former dean, Marilyn Rose, from the Minutes of the last meeting of May 18.

- a) ***Course Outlines*** - What should we require from the academic integrity perspective? One member suggested that students be directed to the policy governing academic integrity in the calendar, noting that on the undergraduate side, one common issue is defining collaboration – when does it go too far? Dean Plyley asked that members email him with suggestions on this topic so that we come up with ideas to debate.
- b) ***Degree Level Expectations*** - Dean Plyley noted that that these will become more important in the new and cyclical program reviews as they go forward to the Academic Review Committee.
- c) ***Annual Reviews of Student Progress*** - Further to discussion at the last meeting regarding formal annual reports of graduate students' progress, the Dean noted that that he was impressed with elements in the model currently used by Chemistry, and asked that GPDs share with Graduate Studies the model they are using. G. Pepper mentioned that there are some samples of monitoring student progress on the FGS website which may need to be updated.
- d) ***Whither Graduate Council?*** - Dean Plyley has determined that effective with the 2004/05 academic year, the number of Senate committees was reduced from 22 to 7 committees and the Student Appeals Board, and that Graduate Council existed prior to Senate Graduate Studies Committee, as an advisory group to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean also indicated that Graduate Council has no legislative capability, but recommends policy to SGSC. Is Graduate Council too big to do anything? Should the structure of SGSC be different? Should Graduate Council be dissolved and programs meet individually? The Dean is open to suggestions to determine if we should reconstitute into something else.

4. **Dean's Report**

- a) ***Appraisals***- On June 30 our proposed Joint MA Program in Canadian-American Studies program received OCGS approval, one of the last programs to be approved by OCGS.

The MA in Classics is the first graduate program to be reviewed by the new internal process, ARC, and is on its agenda for a meeting in November.

- b) *Enrolment*** - At this point, we will be over our target on the PhD side (number of MTCU funded PhD students - 50.8). We will be attempting to get more spaces (note: we are over 34 spaces for 2011-12). Our MTCU Masters target is 634.6 funded spaces (note: we are under by 45 spaces for 2011-12). These numbers include both new intake for 2011-12 + returning students (termed flow through). Our numbers will be confirmed on November 1 when the MTCU “official” count is done. The intention of MTCU is to convert unfilled spaces from one level to the other at the rate of 2.5 Masters to 1.0 PhD, with a possible permanent loss/gain of spaces. The MTCU is rolling out a plan to provide 6,000 new funded spaces, but the split and allocation are unknown at this point. Each university will “bid” on how many spaces are needed and why (note: last time we bid for additional PhD spaces, but received none).

Enrolment planning and recruitment initiatives will start immediately for next year.

c) *Events*

- i) *Mapping the New Knowledges:*

Research Café I: November 15, 4:30 p.m., Pond Inlet

Title: “Targeting health and disease: new frontiers in Biological research”

Research Café II: February 8, 4:30 p.m., Pond Inlet

Title: “Living healthier, living better, living longer”

Dean Plyley asked members to forward ideas for future research café topics.

Graduate Student Conference: April 11, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Plaza Building. The program consists of both oral and poster presentations by graduate students. Graduate students will be invited to submit nominations for the Graduate Mentorship Award which will be presented at this event. New this year will be the Youth University Research Prize for research on youth; funds have been provided for two awards, one for a poster presentation and one for an oral presentation.

- ii) *Professional Development Series of Workshops* – This new series of free professional development workshops will focus on carry-forward skills for graduate students. All sessions will be held from 4:30 to 6:45 p.m. in MC D350 L and registration details will be posted on the FGS website.

Nov. 2 - *Communications 101: Tailoring and Targeting in Writing and Speech*

Dec. 7 - *Managing Conflict: What to Do When Things Come Unglued*

Jan. 11 - *Effective Team Leadership: From Chaos to Creating the Conditions for Success*

Feb. 1 - *Navigating a Diversified World: Strategies for Inclusivity and Productivity*

March 7 - *The Entrepreneurial Mindset: Imagining and Creating Your Own Opportunities*

April 4 - *Managing Time / Managing Projects: Sane Approaches to a Fast-Forward World*

- iii) *Fall Convocation* takes place on Saturday, October 22. 287 grad students will be graduating, and the Dean urged GPDs to attend in support of their students.

- d) *External Scholarships:*** Deadlines have been sent out regarding the various external award competitions. The time period has been changed by eliminating FGS vetting. Applications will be adjudicated, ranked and vetted at the unit level before coming to Graduate Studies, thus giving students a few more days to prepare.

One member, who serves as an OGS panel member, expressed concern that ranking is crucial and that there is no longer an opportunity to provide comments. Another member noted that there are issues concerning the recording of averages on the forms. Gail Pepper will ask Joanne Kremble to look into the issue.

In terms of adjudication, we will need 3-5 members to serve on the NSERC adjudication committee, 6-8 on the SSHRC adjudication committee, and 2-3 on the CIHR adjudication committee, as well as 15 very specific folks for OGS adjudication at the Provincial level. Please advise Dean Plyley if you know of anyone who is willing to serve.

e) Surveys

- i) *Space* - Dean Plyley asked that GPDs provide him with details of rooms their programs use that are dedicated as graduate student space. Besides space, what else is provided for the students in terms of computers, software, etc? Do you have dedicated classroom space for graduate courses, and if not, are your graduate courses scheduled through the Registrar's Office? Where do your defences occur, and how is this space booked?
- ii) *Social Media* – do you use Facebook and Twitter or other social networking media to contact students or advertise students' events? If so, Heather Junke can work with your program to post information concerning graduate studies.

f) Strategic Planning - The Deans have been asked to build a plan based on the 7 strategic pillars. Dean Plyley will consult with Associate Deans to help build the plan for FGS.

g) OGS Panelists - The Dean reported that Associate Deans would have been approaching faculty to serve as OGS adjudication panellists for the 2012-13 competition. Brock was to nominate 15 new panellists as follows: Humanities - 3; Social Sciences - 5; Physical Science - 2; Biological Sciences - 5. In order to make the process less time consuming, the OGS Selection Board is aiming to reduce the number of files to a maximum of 50-60 files per panel.

5. Director's Report

- a) **Web Application:** G. Pepper reported that electronic referee reports will be used beginning next year. Concern was expressed with regard to the issue of phishing or fraud with this process. Another area of concern was that referees from some countries may not have easy access to the internet. G. Pepper responded that we were one of the only institutions not participating in electronic references, so we needed to make the change. For this year, part of the applications and admissions process will be electronic and part will be hard copy. IT is working on all of the pieces, and we will send information to GPDs as it becomes available.
- b) **Website:** G. Pepper reported that changes have been made to the Future Students site. We have tried to make the program pages more dynamic. A few changes have been made to the Faculty & Staff site; GPDs are asked to inform G. Pepper if there are any changes they would like made.
- c) **Doctoral Scholarship Top-up:** An email was sent to GPDs announcing an increase to the DGS Excellence Scholarship (top-up) provided to OGS, SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR external scholarship recipients. The top-up for PhD students who garner a Tri-Council award will increase to \$7,500 (the Master's top-up for Tri-Council awards will remain at \$5,500). The PhD recipients of an OGS and QEII-SST award will be \$5,000, while that for an MSc award will be \$3,000.
- d) **DGS Entrance Scholarships:** As a result of changing the method of calculating entrance averages for 2011/12 from the complete UG average to an average over the last 2-years, it was necessary to increase the minimum average for this award to 84% (47 DGS Entrance Scholarships were awarded as part of the offer to eligible students). We have now determined that we have enough 11/12 budget in the DGS Entrance Scholarship account to decrease this average to 83%. As a result all eligible Spring or Fall students with an entering average of 83% have been notified that they will receive a DGS Entrance Scholarship. We will use 83% as our working average for 2012/13 for full-time domestic master's students.

6. GSA Report – no GSA report was presented.

7. General Discussion Items - this item not addressed in order to allow time for Agenda Item 8.

8. Other Business - Road Trip

- a) Part 1 of the road trip consisted of a tour of Room Plaza 312, which is a space reserved for Graduate Studies use, and booked through Cathy Ugolini (cugolini@brocku.ca). The Dean noted that the room is not currently IT friendly, but that he will submit a Schedule 8 in his budget submission to make the room more useable.

The Dean also reported that Jack Miller has given Grad Studies the use of room C206. A Schedule 8 will be submitted to set up the room for PowerPoint, etc. so that it can be used for thesis defences and presentations.

- b) Part 2 of the road trip consisted of a visit to the newly renovated space dedicated to graduate students on the 6th floor of the Library. The new space features study carrels, computer workstations and a bookable meeting/presentation space for Committee Meetings and Thesis Defences, which can be booked online - only by graduate students.

9. Adjournment - The meeting/road trip adjourned at 3:45 pm.