

# Minutes of the Meeting of Graduate Education Council (GEC) Monday, April 3, 2023

The meeting was held at 12:00pm in the Western Interdisciplinary Research Building, Room 3000, and via Zoom.

## COUNCILLORS:

**Akis Psygkas** – Law  
**Andrew Hawkes** – SGPS/Social Science  
**Arzie Chant** – Engineering  
**Ayman El Ansary** – Engineering  
**Busra Copuroglu** – SGPS/Arts  
**Carrie Marshall** – Health Sciences  
**Cindi Ryde** – Health Sciences  
**Danica Facca** – SOGS  
**Dianne Bryant** – Health Sciences  
**Doug Woolford** – Science  
**Emi Iwaizumi** – SGPS/Education  
**Genevieve De Viveiros** – French Studies  
**Hubert Pun** – Ivey  
**Immaculate Namukasa** – Education  
**Joanna Blom** – Engineering  
**Kaleigh Campbell** – SGPS/Law  
**Kamran Siddiqui** – Engineering  
**Karine Dufresne** – PAW

**Leah Blackwood** – SGPS/FIMS  
**Lina Dagnino** – Schulich  
**Linda Miller** – SGPS (Chair)  
**Lisa Hodgetts** – Social Science  
**Lisa Latif** – Registrar's Office  
**Liz Webb** – Science  
**Lorraine Davies** – SGPS  
**Lyn Purdy** – Ivey  
**Matheus Sanita Lima** – SGPS/Science  
**Melanie-Anne Atkins** (for A. Haque) – CTL  
**Melissa Adler** – Information & Media Studies  
**Nandi Bhatia** – Arts & Humanities  
**Pam McKenzie** – Information & Media Studies  
**Peter Donahue** – Kings  
**Robert Glushko** – University Librarian  
**Seyram Afealete** – SGPS/Music  
**Shabir Razavi** – SGPS/Eng  
**Shawn Whitehead** – Schulich

**Stephen McClatchie** – Huron  
**Tobias Nagl** – Arts  
**Tom Drysdale** – Schulich  
**Tony Adebero** – SGPS/Health Sciences  
**Vasudeva Bhat** – PAW  
**Victor Chu** – SGPS/Schulich  
**Yolanda Babenko-Mould** – Health Sciences

## OBSERVERS:

**Adrian Aguirre Jurado** – SGPS  
**Candace Loosely** – SGPS  
**Chris Circelli** – SGPS  
**Julie Jonkhans** – SGPS  
**Matt Dumouchel** – SGPS  
**Mihaela Harnos** – SGPS  
**Ron Wagler** – SGPS

	Items/Discussion (Host)	Motion(s)/Action Item(s)
1.	<b>Land Acknowledgement</b> Immaculate Namukasa offered a Land Acknowledgement.	
2.	<b>Welcome</b> Linda Miller welcomed members.	
3.	<b>Minutes of Prior Meeting</b> It was moved by Kamran Siddiqui, seconded by Tom Drysdale, That the minutes of meeting of December 1, 2022, be approved as circulated.	CARRIED
4.	<b>New Business</b>	
4.1	<b>GEC Academic Policy and Regulations Committee</b> Lorraine Davies presented the following recommendations from GEC Policy Committee.	
	<b>4.1.1 Research and Professional Degree Program Definitions (Programs – Regulation 3.0)</b> It was moved by Kamran Siddiqui, seconded by Arzie Chant, That Graduate Education Council approve and recommend the revision of the Research and Professional Degree Program Definitions (Programs - Regulation 3.0) to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy. Chris Circelli, Program Coordinator (Graduate Program Design), SGPS, reported that the program definitions are needed to guide graduate program innovation and to provide	CARRIED

Items/Discussion (Host)		Motion(s)/Action Item(s)
	clarity around what differentiates professional and research-based programs. No discussion.	
	<p><b>4.1.2 Proficiency in English (Admissions – Regulation 2.01)</b></p> <p>It was moved by Joanna Blom, seconded by Liz Webb,</p> <p>That Graduate Education Council approve and recommend the revision of the Proficiency in English Regulation (Admissions 2.01) to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy.</p> <p>Lorraine Davies shared that current regulations do not accurately reflect the most recent updates to the English Language Proficiency requirements (post-covid) for admission to a graduate program. A brief discussion ensued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If programs are finding inconsistencies, they can set a higher minimum acceptable score for the IELTS Academic</li> <li>• Programs still have the option to a waive requirement if a student's score is near the minimum; this is covered under exemptions</li> <li>• We need to remain alert to the English language proficiency requirements and how this aligns with EDIAD</li> </ul>	CARRIED
4.2	<p><b>SGPS/Graduate Education Council Constitution</b></p> <p>It was moved by Arzie Chant, seconded by Kamran Siddiqui,</p> <p>That Graduate Education Council approve and recommend the amended School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Council Constitution to Senate Operations/Agenda Committee.</p> <p>Linda Miller reviewed the proposed revisions noting several changes have been made to reflect the maturation of SGPS and to more clearly articulate aspects that have been found to be less than clear in practice. Following a brief discussion, members proposed a further addition (see ++ under 4c)</p> <p>"To the extent possible, representatives from Faculties should be elected/appointed by peer constituents."</p>	CARRIED
	<p><b>GEC Committee Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>It was moved by Arzie Chant, seconded by Kamran Siddiqui,</p> <p>That Graduate Education Council approve the amended Terms of Reference for its Academic Policy Committee, Mentorship Advisory Committee, Postdoctoral Affairs Advisory Committee, and Professional Development Advisory Committee effective May 1, 2023</p> <p>Like the SGPS Constitution, Linda Miller shared that the proposed changes have been made to reflect the maturation of SGPS and to more clearly articulate aspects that have been found to be less than clear in practice. Linda shared that originally and intentionally the Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) was the Chair the Mentorship Advisory Committee. When the Director, CTL returns from their leave, we will be able to confirm the Chair role.</p> <p>Following a brief discussion, members proposed adding a staff member representative to Professional Development Advisory Committee, and Mentorship Advisory Committee.</p>	CARRIED
5.	<b>Other Business</b>	
5.1	The university and SGPS were applauded for taking a hard look at the graduate student funding issue and for initiating many good steps to address the issue. It was proposed that a working	

Items/Discussion (Host)		Motion(s)/Action Item(s)
	group be formed to keep this issue on the front burner and to lobby on campus and at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council of Ontario Universities and the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies have been lobbying, but those voices are not enough</li> <li>• The Ontario Graduate Scholarship has not increased in 20 years</li> <li>• It would help to focus on internal scholarships through donor-based funding</li> <li>• Western has always taken the approach of having campus-wide minimum PhD funding; however, Western's equitable minimums across all parts of the university may work to our disadvantage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Following our lead, other universities have offered a guarantee that is not campus-wide; this allows flexibility to have higher minimums in some areas and even more variability at the Master's level</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The planning is underway for increased on-campus housing for graduate students; however, individuals are encouraged to also lean on their municipal ward councillors to help improve off-campus housing issues</li> <li>• With thanks to SOGs, the TA unions and faculty support, negotiations to date have helped to bring down costs and opened financial avenues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student leaders at other universities are using data-driven evidence to figure out ways to better assess how to bring about structural changes at their institutions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Over half of the University of Toronto's increase came out of faculty agreeing to pay more out of their grants which may mean they take on fewer graduate students</li> <li>• All this talk about increasing grad students, the university cannot take on this funding we are going to have fewer graduate students. At Schulich we've maintained our levels but that's on the back of developing professional programs</li> <li>• In the background, current graduate students are being asked tough questions by potential incoming graduate students</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: Linda Miller to bring the idea of a Working Group to the Provost</b></p>	
6.	<b>Adjourn</b>	
	The meeting adjourned at 1:11pm	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <p><b>May 4, 2023</b></p> <p>rescheduled to May 2, 2023</p>

Recorded by Ann Hoffer