



General Faculties Council
GRADUATE ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE
APPROVED MINUTES

May 15, 2024, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

A167 (Governors Boardroom)/Zoom

Voting Members

Tara Beattie (Co-Chair)
Qiao Sun (Academic Co-Chair)
Amy Burns*
Amy Dambrowitz
Justin MacCallum – left during Item 8
Kimberly Lenters
Elizabeth Oddone Paolucci
Oleksiy Osiyevskyy
Alexandria Poppendorf

Regrets

Andy Knight
Francine Smith
Louise Wells

Guests

David Anderson*, Associate Dean, Transdisciplinary Scholarship, Faculty of Graduate Studies – present for Items 6 and 7
Marjan Eggermont*, Executive Co-Director, UNU Hub – present for Item 7
Martyn Clark, Executive Co-Director, UNU Hub – present for Item 7
Kenna Kelly-Turner, Senior Program Development Specialist, Faculty of Graduate Studies – present for Item 7
Melissa Morrison, Associate General Counsel, Litigation, Student Appeals, and Policy – present for Item 8

Observers and Resource Personnel

Catherine McLeod*, Senior Director, Strategic Operations, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Jaclyn Carter*, Educational Development Consultant, Taylor Institute – present for Item 7
Kelly Hogle, Senior Specialist, Academic Initiatives, Program Innovation Hub – present for Item 7
Elizabeth Pando, Program Innovation Partner, Program Innovation Hub – present for Item 7

**Attended virtually*

Non-Voting Members

Christine Johns

University Secretary

Courtney McVie

Meeting Secretary

Michelle Speta

Scribe

Tasha Hodzic

Staff

Elizabeth Sjogren*

The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. Traditional Land Acknowledgement and Approval of the Agenda

The Co-Chair provided the Traditional Land Acknowledgement.

Moved/Seconded

That the Agenda for the May 15, 2024 Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee meeting be approved.

Carried**2. Remarks of the Co-Chairs**

The Co-Chairs welcomed Alex Poppendorf, Vice-President (Academic) of the Graduate Students' Association on this occasion of her first meeting.

The Co-Chairs also shared that the Ministry of Advanced Education has approved the thesis-based Master of Transdisciplinary Research and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees in Transdisciplinary Research and Sustainable Systems Engineering.

The Committee meeting scheduled for May 29, 2024 will be cancelled due to no pending business. As this is the last meeting of the year, the Co-Chairs thanked Amy Burns, Andy Knight, and Francine Smith for their contributions to the Committee, as their terms are ending.

3. Approval of the April 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes from the April 17, 2024 Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee meeting be approved.

Carried**4. Approval of the Update to Section G.D.1.2 *Term-based Registration for Course-based Graduate Students***

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Oleksiy Osiyevskyy, Associate Dean (Policy and Program Development), Faculty of Graduate Studies, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter explained that the proposed addition to Academic Calendar Section G.D.1.2 *Term-based Registration for Course-based Graduate Students* is intended to provide clarity for international graduate students of possible study permit implications if there is a gap in enrolment outside of a scheduled break that is longer than 150 days
- The Committee discussed the importance of also making this information readily available through other means, such as on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website, and sharing it with Graduate Program Directors and staff to advise students

Moved/Seconded

That the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee approve the addition to Section G.D.1.2 *Term-based Registration for Course-based Graduate Students*, effective for the 2024-2025 Academic Calendar, as set out in the document provided to the Committee.

Carried**5. Recommendation of the Revisions to Graduate Admission Regulations**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Oleksiy Osiyevskyy, Associate Dean (Policy and Program Development), Faculty of Graduate Studies, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter explained that the proposed revisions are to Section G.A.1 *Graduate Qualifications* regarding English Language Proficiency (ELP) requirements and Section G.A.5 *Graduate Offer of Admission* regarding admission deposits
- The proposed revisions to Section G.A.1 make Duolingo one of the options students may use to demonstrate they meet the ELP requirements for admission a permanent change. This was allowed on a temporary basis (through Summer 2024) during the Covid-19 pandemic, and data collected during this time supports making it permanent.
- In response to questions, it was explained that:
 - The Duolingo test is considered rigorous with strong practices in place to prevent cheating.
 - Duolingo is also accepted by the University for admission at the undergraduate level. Peer institutions (University of Saskatchewan, University of Lethbridge, and Western University) allow Duolingo and have not flagged any issues.
 - An analysis of cumulative grade point average (GPA) for graduate students admitted with Duolingo versus that of students admitted with other ELP exams showed no statistically significant difference
- The proposed revision to Section G.A.5 is to remove the dollar value of the admission deposit from the Calendar
- In response to questions, it was explained that:
 - Not giving a dollar amount for the admission deposit in the Academic Calendar is common practice across peer institutions (including the University of Alberta) and allows the University to be more timely in changing the deposit amount in the future if needed
 - A higher amount for the admission deposit is currently under consideration due to the changes to the federal study permit process and limited number of Provincial Attestation Letters (PALs) available. The amount will be discussed at the Tuition and Fees Consultation Committee (TFCC). It was noted that the dollar amount of the deposit is outside the purview of this committee.
 - Students will continue to be notified of the amount of the admission deposit, and that it is non-refundable, in advance of accepting their offer of admission. This information is provided in admission offer letters and posted on the University website. It was emphasized that the deposit is not an additional fee, as the amount is applied toward the student's regular tuition and general fees. For international students, it counts towards proof of finances for entering Canada.
 - Once an admission deposit amount is set for a given admission cycle, it will not be changed

Moved/Seconded

That the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee recommend that the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the revisions to Graduate Regulations Section G.A.1 *Graduate Qualifications* and Section G.A.5 *Graduate Offer of Admission* of the Academic Calendar, effective for Fall 2025 admissions, as set out in the documents provided to the Committee.

Carried**6. Approval of the Revision to Course Prerequisites for Transdisciplinary Studies (TDST) 601**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. David Anderson, Associate Dean, Transdisciplinary Scholarship from the Faculty of Graduate Studies presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter explained that the proposed revision is to open the course to students from all graduate programs, rather than limiting it only to students in the new Transdisciplinary programs, as it is relevant to a broad range of disciplines
- Since the course is required for students in the Transdisciplinary programs, an amendment was requested to revise the entry to read: *“Prerequisites: Admission to a program in Transdisciplinary Studies or Transdisciplinary Research or consent of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.”*

Moved/Seconded

That the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee approve the revision to the Calendar entry for Transdisciplinary Studies (TDST) 601, effective for the 2024-2025 Calendar, as set out in the document provided to the Committee with the requested amendment.

Carried**7. Recommendation for the Creation of the Specialization in Water Resilience within the Master of Transdisciplinary Research and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Transdisciplinary Research**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Marjan Eggermont and Martyn Clark, Executive Co-Directors, UNU Hub, and David Anderson, Associate Dean, Transdisciplinary Scholarship, Faculty of Graduate Studies, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters provided an overview of the proposal to create the Specialization in Water Resilience within the Master of Transdisciplinary Research and the PhD in Transdisciplinary Research, explaining that the specialization will leverage the University’s expertise in water research and education, and that students in the specialization will have the opportunity to apply to a joint degree program offered in collaboration with the United Nations University (UNU)
- Initially called the Specialization in Water and Sustainable Development Studies, it was renamed to Water Resilience in response to feedback from Indigenous scholars

- The presenters explained that the Calendar entry for the two thesis-based programs was reviewed and approved by this Committee in March, but have been brought forward again with a revision to update the name of the proposed specialization
- In response to questions, it was explained that:
 - All of the Transdisciplinary Research programs, not just the Water Resilience specialization, have a requirement for students to work with community or industry partners. This will be facilitated in the TDST 601 course that is required for all Transdisciplinary program students.
 - The thesis committee for both Master's and PhD students will include one non-academic member
 - The Faculty of Graduate Studies is planning to offer training for supervisors of transdisciplinary students, and create a structure of regular check-ins to ensure that students are supported from start to finish
- The Committee discussed the anticipated need for student support and guidance in identifying appropriate community or industry partners for their research, and the importance of being prepared to support students who may encounter conflict or challenges with these members of their committees as can happen with an academic supervisor
- The Committee requested the following amendments the Calendar entry:
 - Any references to the joint program with the UNU be revised to align with the University's nomenclature for sub-degrees and joint degrees, and it be indicated that the parchment will read "*Joint Degree offered ~~collaboratively~~ in collaboration with the United Nations University*"
 - That information regarding the letters of support that are required for admission be added to the Admission Requirements section of the program's Calendar entry

Moved/Seconded

That the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee recommend that the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the creation of the Specialization in Water Resilience within the Master of Transdisciplinary Research and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Transdisciplinary Research, effective for Fall 2025, as set out in the documents provided to the Committee.

Carried**Moved/Seconded**

That the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee approve the revisions to the Calendar entries for the Master of Transdisciplinary Research and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Transdisciplinary Research, effective for the 2025-2026 Calendar and contingent upon the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee's approval of the Specialization in Water Resilience, as set out in the documents provided to the Committee with the requested amendments.

Carried

8. Recommendation of the Revisions to Calendar Regulations for Student Appeals

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Michelle Speta, Associate Secretary and Melissa Morrison, Associate General Counsel, Litigation, Student Appeals, and Policy, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters provided an overview of the proposed changes to Calendar regulations pertaining to student appeals, which include:
 - Updates for alignment with changes to the Student Appeals Policy suite that are currently going through governance;
 - Revisions to provide clarity on continued registration while under appeal;
 - Removal of redundant sections that are a holdover from the formerly separate Graduate Calendar; and
 - Revisions to clarify the difference between a grade reappraisal and an appeal of a reappraisal decision
- The presenters shared that feedback was received from the Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee (CCS) Working Group shortly before this meeting and will be incorporated before presentation to the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC) for final approval
- In response to questions, it was explained that:
 - All uses of the term “normally” in these Calendar regulations are intentional due to the legal context
 - Revisions to Section I are intended to clarify that grade appeals are actually appeals of grade reappraisal decisions, but the reappraisal process itself is separate from appeals and falls outside of the scope of the Student Appeals Policy suite
 - Section J.1 revisions are only intended to capture current practice within the Calendar regulations, not to change current practice
 - Faculties can place some restrictions on a student’s academic activities while they are under appeal
- For future consideration, the Committee discussed addressing whether a student should be able to have a candidacy exam or defend a thesis while under appeal
- The Committee requested an amendment for all acronyms be spelled out in full throughout the Calendar entry. It was also noted that care should be taken to ensure language regarding academic assessments aligns with the forthcoming updates to University Regulation Section G. *Academic Assessments and Examinations*

Moved/Seconded

That the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee recommend that the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the revisions to student appeals Calendar regulations, effective July 1, 2024, contingent upon the General Faculties Council and Board of Governors approval of the changes to the Student Appeals Policy suite, as set out in the document provided to the Committee and with the requested amendment.

Carried

9. Program Approvals Status Report

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda for information only. It was noted that questions can be directed to the Program Innovation Hub.

10. Annual Committee Performance Review

Courtney McVie, University Secretary presented this item for discussion.

Highlights:

- The presenter explained that the intention of the annual committee performance review is to provide an opportunity for the committee members to share feedback with the Secretariat and the Co-Chairs on the overall operation of the GAPS, as well as to reflect on the past year of the Committee's work together as a group
- Appreciation was expressed for the hybrid meeting modality as well as for the addition of page numbers to the all-in-one document package
- Audio issues for those attending virtually were also raised; the Secretariat noted that IT is working to resolve

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Adjournment**Moved/Seconded**

That the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee adjourn the May 15, 2024 meeting.

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Courtney McVie
Secretary