



**GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, May 26, 2021  
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm / ZOOM**

**Meeting commenced at 2:02pm**

**1. Chair's Remarks**

Paul reported that the minimum PhD funding requirement has been approved by Senate and awaits Board approval. This guarantees a minimum of \$23,000 for PhD students, and the money for the programs to do so.

Senate also moved a motion for pandemic funding for thesis-based graduate students. This will be distributed to all current thesis students as an \$800 one-time payment, and will not require an application. Deanna Roberts added that unfortunately this is not available to students that have already graduated, since the payments will be made via the SISC.

The second graduate credential in professionalization and career development has launched and is already receiving registrations.

A member inquired if the mandatory minimum funding requirement is going to decrease the number of PhD students admitted to programs and dissuade programs from admitting self-funded students. Paul responded that the university is aware of this concern, and is trying to find the middle ground between opening doors for self-funded students without disadvantaging incoming students who may not be aware of what they are committing to (by declaring that they don't require university funding). Kerry Rempel offered to provide information on the experience of self-funded students, if desired. Deanna also added that this available funding is in addition to existing resources, so will contribute to a larger pot of funds for students overall. Funding will be distributed to the Faculty Deans to distribute to the individual programs.

This funding is available to both international and domestic students, and applies to both incoming and current students. The \$23K total will not include the IDPT but will include TAships. Funding is guaranteed for four years, but programs may extend funds at their discretion. Existing students will receive funds based on eligible years of study remaining. For students house under multiple Faculties, funds will likely be handled by the primary Faculty and primary supervisor. The majority of these students are IGS in FaSS.

Minimum funding for Masters students is a future consideration.

In response to a discussion by Michelle Hewitt at the April meeting, Deanna reported that she has since met with Dean Peter Simpson, Dale Mullings (AVP Students), and a



Facilities coordinator to assess campus and begin discussing graduate student space. Dale Mullings will be speaking at the September meeting of GSAC.

Two new positions are open in CoGS and are in process of interviews; a Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator and a new Indigenous Advisor position.

## 2. Fall Resumption Communications feedback – Haley Allen

Haley surveyed GSAC for the resumption committee regarding plans for the fall. Members provided the following comments:

- Many students are split 50/50 with some preferring to stay online and others wanting to be back on campus. This seems to be tied to personal life and experiences during the pandemic.
- Understanding that the global reality of COVID control is not the same for all students, and many are still experiencing extensions of lockdown and banned flights. If students are not able to enter Canada, is deferral the only option?
  - o CoGS has distributed emails to all incoming international students to better understand where they are coming from and if they are experiencing study permit challenges. Messaging may be different from program to program and across Faculties; with some allowing online starts and others not. CoGS will push for clearer messaging regarding this. The current understanding is that some courses will be offered only in person or online and others will be hybrid. Paul added that SISC has now been modified to clarify at the point of registration, how a course will be delivered.
- Is there any protocol on meetings in person vs. virtually?
  - o The Provincial government will be coming out with updated guidelines for educational institutions in June. Paul added that larger campus meetings will likely stay virtual in order to keep them inclusive.
- Will this affect regulations on oral defences and comprehensive exams for thesis students?
  - o Paul responded that hybrid defences will need to be strongly considered moving forward. The current ability to have professors in different countries participating online is now trivial, where it used to be a technical nightmare. CoGS will not be going back to the same pre-COVID rules.
- Some students do not have the funds for paying hotels for Canadian quarantine requirements. Will UBC dorms be accommodating new students for this in September?
  - o This possibility is being explored; the university is also looking at information for international students about accessing vaccines once they arrive in



Canada. IPS is also hiring a series of student liaisons to help students find places to live and navigate the quarantine process. IPS has also funded a self-isolation bursary to augment the existing COVID fund provided by the UBCSUO. A portal is being created to be available to all incoming students to apply for this funding.

- Members also shared the need for clarification around vaccine schedules if incoming students are vaccinated for their first dose out of province or out of country – what does that mean for accessing second doses in Canada?
- Member consensus that email is the most useful method of communication for many grad students (versus web sites or social media channels)
  - o CoGS is also looking into distilling campus communications to make it clearer when information pertains to graduate students. GSAC members suggested that delineations for international student content would also be helpful.
- Deanna reported that the graduate student Collegium and Commons spaces will be going back to graduate student access only in September.

### 3. Future GSAC meetings – Paul Shipley

How would GSAC like to meet in the future? Members discussed meeting in person with the option to Zoom in when needed; or holding one in-person meeting per term with the remaining meetings online; or a combination.

A member inquired what the UBC policy will be for sending students abroad (such as via GoGlobal and Mitacs). Paul suggested contacting Candice Loring or Jennifer Tedman-Jones for information.

### 4. Masters of Design program: Tuition Consultation – Dale Mullings, Rehan Sadiq, Tashia Kootenayoo

Rehan Sadiq presented the new Masters of Design program and the tuition plan. Dale Mullings explained that the consultation period will continue until June 8<sup>th</sup>, wherein the feedback collected will be provided to the Board of Governors for their consideration in the approval process. If you would like to provide written questions or comments regarding the program or fees, please email [avps.ok@ubc.ca](mailto:avps.ok@ubc.ca).

GSAC members discussed the following:

- What is the length of time students are expected to be in the program?
  - o Rehan: 16 months consecutively, following regular academic semesters. Starting May 2022, finishing by September 2023.
- What is the anticipated salary for students coming out of this program? What are the kinds of jobs or salary changes associated with it?



- Rehan: Expecting that students will go to start-ups and larger organizations in specialized leadership roles. Expecting an average starting wage of around \$60K per year depending on the job; \$65 – 85K depending on experience. Mature students will have a different range.
- Will the \$28K tuition outweigh the opportunity, considering the costs of living in the Okanagan? Will students be able to stay and work locally? Will these students also be getting business skills?
  - The intention is for this program to direct local talent to all parts of Canada, and the quality of this program should meet that. Lots of local companies have been considered in this process and this program is not just about a specific sector, but about problem solving and design thinking. This program is meant to be as cheap as possible while being self-sustaining. Opportunities will depend on what the student wants, and entrepreneurship is only one goal. Would like to see interest from both domestic and international students to make a global program.
- There is a need for this kind of interdisciplinary program. Is this a Master's program only? Can it be offered as a certificate or micro credential?
  - This is a professional Master's program. Other options were considered, and may be created later in the future. This route was chosen as there is a lot of experience with existing programs in Vancouver. A micro credential is definitely a possibility.

## 5. Other Business

None.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:06pm.**