

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm / ZOOM

Attendees

Al Ousi, Sahar	X	Lawrason, Sarah	R	Singh, Shambhavi	X
Ahmad, Hammad	X	Low, Jonathan	R	Steele, Andrew	X
Amoh-Siaw, Felix	X	Manrique Hernandez, Johanna Elizabeth	X	Tao, Sophia Hong Yang	R
Ayres Rebello, Thais	X	Nunes, Helena	R	Ueda, Yukie	X
Crampton, Kara	X	Petillion, Riley	R	Wale, Janna	R
Del Buono, Katie	X	Piva, Larissa	X	Wallace, Mandy	X
Ganesh, Kirthana	X	Rempel, Kerry	R	Walsh, Monique	X
Hewitt, Michelle	R	Rousseau, Camille	X	Wiebe, Karin	X
Huggins, Madison	R	Shatzko, Amanda	X	Woolgar, Lucia	R
Shipley, Paul (chair)	X	Roberts, Deanna (CoGS)	R	Meehan, Alicia (secretary)	X

1. Chair's Remarks

December GSAC was cancelled as it was scheduled right before the holiday break.

Changes to Policy O-9, the policy regarding supervision and committee membership at UBCO, were approved by Senate. The changes clarify the approval pathways for qualified individuals to serve on supervisory committees. There is also now an easier route for educational leadership faculty to gain approval to serve as supervisors and on committees.

Changes to thesis defences and doctoral dissertations were approved by Graduate Council. The changes move remote defence/exam policies and procedures from being emergency temporary measures to permanent measures. In fields where students have traditionally needed to be in person to question answers (ex. writing formulas on a board), the supervisors will need to file a plan that addresses how these types of questions will be handled during remote defences. The defence/exam changes also now allow for an optional advisory committee member at the defence/exam who can question the student during the event, but cannot participate in the voting or in camera discussion.

In follow up to the last GSAC meeting, CoGS has been working with Engineering to improve the comprehensive examination process, so that the policies are provided to students in advance of the comprehensive exams and so that the exceptional pathway is regularized to be more clear and open and demonstrates similar rigor between the exam options.

GSAC discussed past issues related to the bookable space in the Commons building. CoGS was asked to send a reminder to students regarding booking policies (ex. the space can only be booked for 6 hours per week). CoGS was also asked to clarify policies around using the room when it is empty and what the no-show policy is.



CoGS is still investigating how students can provide feedback on programs. One possibility is a graduate student exit survey.

The CoGS' budget ask for an international master's tuition award was not approved in this year's budget. UBCV has billed UBCO \$30 million for Workday and \$30 million for the new campus building downtown. CoGS will continue to advocate for the international master's tuition award in future budget asks.

2. Students' Union Report

The UBCSUO has now formed a standing graduate committee. The committee will consist of at least nine graduate students who will advocate specifically for graduate students. The committee is currently working with UBCSUO to establish regulations for the functioning of the committee.

The student tuition engagement survey is out. The UBCSUO will be speaking with UBCO to see if there is any way to manage tuition increases, especially amidst the pandemic. Please complete the [survey](#) to share your opinions. The survey is open until February 18th.

GSAC discussed graduate student housing issues including the limited housing market, scams, and access to kitchens. It was noted that the UBCO housing bursary is lower than UBCV's, yet housing prices are comparable. UBCO is working to create partnerships with existing organizations to offer temporary housing for 2-3 months, so that students just arriving in Canada have somewhere to live while they search for housing. There is also an ad hoc committee that is compiling information and communications to go out through government channels, so that landlords can better understand graduate student housing needs. The hope is to streamline the existing rental market to connect landlords and renters. Information is also being compiled regarding fair rental prices, renter's insurance, and tips for spotting scams. [UBCO's Off-campus Housing Ambassador](#) was mentioned. GSAC also discussed the graduate student housing that used to exist at UBCO several years ago. There is a critical need for graduate student housing on and off campus, and the housing needs of graduate students are unique.

3. Report from Senate

Changes related to admission requirements have passed through Senate. The types of English language tests accepted by UBCO have expanded. Some tests will be accepted provisionally for three years. For a list of tests that will be accepted or for more information, please contact Alicia Meehan (alicia.meehan@ubc.ca). The number of required references has changed from three to two. Changes are not in effect during this current admissions season, but will be in effect starting in September.

January 27th is next Senate meeting. Senate will be reviewing the add/drop deadline for 2021 Winter – Term 1. At UBCV's Senate meeting earlier this month, they approved an extension to the add/drop deadline to February 6th. The UBCO Senate will also be reviewing a request to extend the deadline to February 6th.

4. Online classes until February 7th – applicable to graduate students?

It is unclear as to whether or not UBC's online course decision is applicable to graduate students. While UBC made the decision to move all courses online until February 7th, each faculty made their own decisions regarding which courses/labs would be online or in person. It is anticipated that there will be a shift back to mostly in



person courses on February 7th; however, it is anticipated that each faculty will likely make their own decisions with respect to their courses. It was noted that some students, faculty, and staff are uncomfortable with returning to in person as this time.

5. Other Business

CoGS is moving forward with a proposal to issue formal honoraria for graduate students who serve on CoGS' committees. There will be a different level of honoraria provided to individuals representing traditionally marginalized or underrepresented populations. The proposal is currently out for consultation, but will be sent out to GSAC as soon as the review process is complete. Taking steps towards formal honoraria for grad students on CoGS committees.