



MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

26 October 2023 | 12:30 pm | Room 200, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

A meeting of Graduate Council was held on Thursday, 26 October 2023 at 12:30 pm. Dean S. Porter was the Chair.

ATTENDANCE

J. Aleksejuniene, D. Clemens, H. Cote, T. Dobson, V. Ferguson, J. Fletcher, A. Frankel, M. Gordon, S. Hagerman, M. Hunt, O. Kafae, J. Karim, J. Locher, P. Mehrkhodavandi, S. Moore, J. Phelps, S. Porter, N. Romualdi, R. Sharma, M. Spering, M. Taiebat, E. Triggs, K. Mazure

1. CALL TO ORDER

S. Porter called the meeting to order at 12:32 pm.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – S. Porter

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Approved by general consensus	}	<i>That the agenda of the 26 October 2023 meeting of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies be approved.</i>
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Carried.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Approved by general consensus	}	<i>That the minutes of the 28 September 2023 meeting of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies be approved.</i>
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Carried.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS – S. Porter

Launch 1 of Workday Student occurred, with overall success but quite a few issues in the graduate realm. These are being addressed.



Discussion on Joint Appointments Between UBCV and UBCO:

- The university has been working to create guidelines on faculty appointments across the two campuses, and the issue of graduate supervision was raised: in particular, what privileges faculty have with respect to students on each campus, and whether students registered at one campus can spend their entire degree program at the other.
 - The two relevant policies are those on [G+PS membership](#) and (Doctoral) [Residency Requirements and Duration of Program](#). As jointly appointed faculty are considered to have full appointments on both campuses, faculty situated at UBC-O will have full G+PS membership and thus UBC-V graduate student supervisory privileges.
 - The Residency policy states that doctoral students “will normally be expected to spend the equivalent of at least two consecutive years of full-time study at the University. With the approval of the Dean of G+PS, graduate programs may make different regulations concerning duration of study, sequence of study and location of full-time study.” The term “at the University” has been considered to be a geographic restriction to the UBC-V campus, and it is not clear whether the policy would allow for full-time study solely at the UBC-O campus. Dr. Porter’s particular concern was whether such a scenario would eliminate or reduce the very important intellectual/peer community aspect of graduate education.
- M. Spring stated that access to (free) services is also an issue, as experienced by UBC-V students in Medicine studying at UBC-O. S. Porter said the University is exploring potential solutions to this.
- A question was asked about students potentially doing most of their degree within industry – is that even possible and appropriately covered by insurance and safety oversight? J. Phelps stated that students were appropriately covered off-campus [see [Student Accident Insurance](#) and [Student Practicum and Placement Insurance](#)]
- Another issue raised was the observation that many students completed much of their program online. S. Porter then asked for Council’s opinion on the merits of the policy and whether or not it should continue.
- B. Goold noted that the university as a whole has an important part to play in a student’s education. Norms and values about academic and intellectual matters are espoused well beyond the student’s program, and being part of the broader UBC community is extremely important.
- S. Porter stated she appreciated that perspective. The same questions will be posed to the Graduate Academic Policy Committee.

S. Porter stated that the budget season is coming up. Unfortunately, we have been informed that there is no new money.

Graduate Supervisor Responsibilities (circulated):

- S. Porter stated that the guidelines outlining graduate supervisor responsibilities are being updated, and that there will be a more proactive effort to ensure faculty are aware of them. The responsibilities are intended to be ‘minimal’ only, with reference to the more rigorous document, [Principles of Excellent Graduate Supervision](#), for best pedagogical practices.
- A. Frankel stated that faculty should have required training in supervision when they arrive at UBC, and is concerned that nothing is in place (or often possible) to address problematic supervision.



- S. Porter stated this has been discussed for many years, and arguably is not straightforward, nor necessarily proven to be effective. There is currently a voluntary onboarding session which is well attended.
- B. Goold stated that he finds it baffling that these are considered guidelines rather than rules; and that many, in his opinion, don't go far enough. For example, supervisory committee meetings should meet more than once a year. S. Porter replied that this frequency is the norm in most programs.
- B. Goold referenced "integrating students into any existing research groups with clear communications around shared research, authorship and intellectual property issue." He believes this reflects a science perspective; in law, there may be some situations where students are not appropriately integrated into research groups, and co-authorship is not common in the social sciences and humanities. S. Porter stated that they will revisit that wording.
- A concern was raised about the wording "required....collaborators". Who determines this requirement? Students may disagree with a supervisor about such a 'requirement'.
- Another concern was: "refrain from requiring or expecting the student to perform tasks or activities that are unrelated to the student's research progress or to the normal collegial activities that support a research group." This student member said students in their department have expressed dismay at their supervisors requiring them to do administrative work or to assist on others' projects, which impedes their own progress. It is very vague what normal collegial activities are, which is a problem. S. Porter agreed and stated that they struggled with the language in this section, as such activities will be very different in different disciplines.
- B. Goold suggested including specific examples in the guidelines. Discussion ensued about the problematic grey area around a supervisor 'requiring', 'expecting', 'suggesting' or simply 'asking about interest' in doing specific tasks which may be beneficial to the student although not required for their degree (such as reviewing a paper).
- A question was raised as to what it would take to make onboarding training mandatory for supervisors. S. Porter replied that she felt it would be difficult to make it absolutely mandatory, but it might be possible to have it as a firm expectation.
- J. Phelps asked what the accountability is when a supervisor falls short of these guidelines. The burden on the student and the overall risk is significant.
- S. Porter stated the biggest problems are power differentials, and the perception of the University that supervision is a right and not a privilege. Although cutting off supervision privileges is possible, there are a number of other approaches that are more feasible.
- M. Taiebat encouraged considering the expectations as requirements – and not just for new faculty but all faculty.
- A. Frankel stated that HR/supervision-related training can be done by stealth, to a degree, in terms of wrapping it in rich information for new faculty members. Using senior faculty to do the training would also be helpful in making it become part of the Faculty culture. It does not have to be punitive training and it could be much more supportive.
- It was also noted that if resources were available, it would be easier for programs to deliver the training.
- B. Goold noted that the guidelines might look very different for students who are well into their programs. S. Porter replied that that is why it is difficult to put these guidelines in black and white.

7. POLICY – M. Hunt



M. Hunt stated that the Faculty will soon be taking on oversight of graduate certificates and graduate diplomas. The policies for these will need to be regularized, and will come before this Council. In attending to these, there has been discussion at the Academic Policy Committee around the grade requirements for master's and doctoral students academic progression. This will also come before the Council.

8. GRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT – S. Moore

S. Moore, the marketing and recruitment manager for graduate students, presented on initiatives for graduate student recruitment.

Internal – Support and Resources for Programs

- Recruitment framework sessions
 - Step by step guide to develop a recruitment strategy
 - Introduce marketing and recruitment theory
 - Ideas embedded with practical activities, advice, and examples
 - Around 30 attendees this year

Graduate student recruitment of practice

- First session focused on diversifying the applicant pool
- Second session will be on recruiting Indigenous students to grad programs

Graduate student recruitment advisory group

- Includes Faculty and staff
- Provides feedback on initiatives and insight into recruitment challenges
- Leading to developments (blogs and Faculty resource documents such as: housing, budgeting, funding, etc.)

External – Support and Resources for Applicants

- Application guide for grad school
- Fall info sessions
- Faculty and program info sessions
- LinkedIn (application advice, videos, etc.)
- Viewbook

Reminders

- Keeping the graduate degree programs up to date
- Keeping supervisor profiles up to date
- Student stories are important
- Advertising services can be used to promote grad programs

9. ASSESSMENT OF UBC'S ABILITY TO SUPPORT AND MANAGE PROSPECTIVE ENQUIRES – N. Romualdi & J. Locher



N. Romualdi presented on graduate student recruitment contexts. He noted that the Faculty does not currently have data that measures how well it is supporting prospective graduate students in their applications.

Proposed Assessment:

- Have ghost applicants to test the responsiveness of UBC to potential graduate students
- Choose subsets within Faculties with numerous personas and then monitor rate of response, response handling time, etc.
- Results can inform improvements in recruitment technologies
- Do we want to do this assessment?
- What is the best time of year to run this assessment?

Discussion on the Proposed Assessment:

- From a staffing perspective, doing this assessment during the Workday Launch would result in more stress and burnout for staff. J. Locher stated that it would be very few ghost emails for each department.
- P. Mehrkhodavandi mentioned that initial inquiries typically are about information that is available on the website. It is a problem that students do not reference the website, and it is an issue that information can be hard to find intuitively online. N. Romualdi and J. Locher agreed that the website should be reviewed. N. Romualdi stated that even if the information is on the website, that people may want reassurance anyway.
- B. Goold stated that this assessment seems worthwhile, but that it would involve actively deceiving staff members. What would relevant unions think of this idea in an ethical and legal sense?
- J. Aleksejuniene stated she thinks this assessment would be valuable, and that an information statement could be provided in a separate communication email afterwards.
- Several members stated that they would rather have proactive coaching of staff for proper responses instead of using this type of retroactive approach.
- J. Phelps stated that there are likely more engaging ways to do this type of assessment, even though the ghost idea is valuable.
- D. Clemens suggested running a survey instead. Everyone needs help with communication, as all departments are likely quite overwhelmed.

10. AUTOMATIONS TO DELIVER MORE DATA TO PROGRAMS: GSFS, ADMISSIONS DASHBOARD, PROGRAM REVIEW SUMMARIES, SUPERVISION HISTORY, ETC. – O. Kafee

This presentation was delayed until a later Council meeting.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:42 pm.