**MINUTES**

**Meeting of the Graduate Academic Policy Committee**

**Monday, 20 November 2023, 12.30-13.50**

Location: Zoom

**Present:** Michael Hunt (Chair), Susan Porter, Ayomide Akande, Murray Carlson, Thomas Chang, Teresa Dobson, Davide Elmo, Benjamin Goold, Sumeet Gulati, Christiane Hoppmann, Jorma Neuvonen (delegate for Forestry) Jenny Phelps (guest), Max Read, Curtis Suttle,

**Regrets:** Shannon Hagerman, Miriam Spering, Jolanta Aleksejuniene,

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

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| *All* | } | *That the agenda be approved.* |

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| Carried |

1. **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 16, 2023 MEETING**

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| *All* | } | *That the previous minutes be approved.* |

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1. **BUSINESS**

Jenny introduces some proposed policy change documents to the Committee members.

**Program of Study registration expectations for master’s students**

Calendar change: Clarify different registration expectations between master’s programs that charge tuition fees on an installment basis and those that charge tuition on a per-credit basis

* Master’s students are normally expected to remain continuously registered until the completion of degree. The proposed change makes an exception for the students who are charged tuition on a credit-by-credit basis and whose program of study is conducted online. However, the programs eligible for this exception will have to set the acceptable registration expectations and timelines for such students.
* Michael asks if there are currently any programs charging tuition credit-by-credit and are not online – Jenny says there are two such programs in the Faculty of Law.
* Ayomide asks if there is a baseline allowance about how long such programs can go on for. Jenny says she will soon be putting forth some policies that would establish the maximum duration of such programs.
* Jenny mentions the policy of exemptions for the graduate diploma and certificate programs – contrary to the normal practice whereby if a Master’s student is exempted from taking a required course, they still have to take another course in lieu of that exempted required course, some certificate and diploma programs wanted the ability to exempt a student from a required course without requiring them to take a course in lieu of that course as long as the student still completes the minimum number of credits required for that credential. (For example, if there is a graduate diploma that requires 24 credits generally but the program wants to exempt a student from three of those credits, they can do so without having to ask the student take a different 3-credits course in lieu of the exempted course because they would still have to take 21 credits which is above the minimum required for a diploma).

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| *All* | } | *That the motion be approved.* |

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**Leave of absence policy for Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas**

Calendar change: Create an exemption to Senate Policy V-302: Graduate Student Leaves of Absence for Graduate Diploma and Certificate students.

* Jenny presents a policy document that seeks to update the existing policy on leave of absence vis-à-vis the Graduate Certificates and Diplomas – the *leave of absence policy* will not be available to students in the Graduate Certificate and Diploma programs.
* Responding to Susan’s question if students enrolled in these programs would be able to take a leave of absence at all, Jenny says these students would have to seek permission from their graduate programs and that no formal leave of absence will be granted by G+PS. This is different from being on a ‘formal leave of absence’ and could instead be understood as a ‘pause’ in the studies.
* Jenny also mentioned that availing this pause will not extend the length of program for the student. Michael asks if changes would have to be made to the *maximum length of program* policy as well if these students have to strictly adhere to the stipulated timeframe – Jenny recalls her conversations with the committees of various programs, saying they were comfortable with the 5-year length of a program, including the leave of absence.

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| *All* | } | *That the agenda be approved.* |

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**Graduate Student Leaves of Absence as a Senate Policy**

* Jenny presents the aforementioned policy with the changes as they would appear in the Senate Policy.
* Ayomide suggests adding a note along the lines of ‘contact your graduate studies director if you require a pause in studies’ for students – Max says that it may be rejected as it is more of a procedural issue than a policy one. She suggests adding this to the G+PS website.

1. **BUSINESS**

**Academic progression**

* Building on to Jenny’s proposed policy changes from the last meeting, Michael informs the committee that these changes would require a rethink of some of the policies as a whole – one such policy is that of the *academic progression* (minimum passing grade for Masters students and the allowance of only 6 credits with grades in the C to C+ range (60-67%) eligible towards the degree requirement). Michael says that few programs actively use this policy (some of the clinical masters programs in Medicine use this as an assessment criteria for the foundational knowledge on a term-by-term basis) – moreover, this practice is not common in other Canadian universities.
* Jorma, Tom and Sumeet say they have spoken with their colleagues who, in turn, are fine with the current policy. Tom says there is a viewpoint in his Faculty that the passing grade should be raised to 68% – Michael points out that some programs in UBC have raised their passing grade above the UBC minimum passing grade, and this remains an option for any graduate program offering as long as it exceeds the UBC-wide minimum.

**Recording of Thesis Examinations**

* Michael states the current policy around Zoom recordings of doctoral examinations and asks the larger group about their views on how best to proceed with these.
* Susan asks if the opinion of the University Counsel has been sought on this – Michael says he has yet to confer with the Counsel.
* **Action item: Michael will reach out to University Counsel for guidance**
* Ben asks about the purpose of such a recording if it is not be made available to people on demand. He advocates for there to be only one recording that would be owned and controlled by the University and would be made available to the students on demand. He also calls for establishing a certain criterion to allow or decline requests submitted by students to access these recordings.
* A number of concerns were raised regarding recording these examinations and making them publicly available: detracting from the openness and freedom in the Q&A portion (note: the current policy only permits the presentation to be recorded); potential negative consequences for the students if discussion topics are less tolerated in their home jurisdiction.
* Curtis advises caution and argues against granting access to students to such recordings. Jorma and Tom also disagree with this idea of making a recording public.

Towards the end, Michael previews some recommendations on policies around the *Use of AI in doctoral theses* and the *Residency Requirement* that he hopes to bring up for discussion at one of the future meetings.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58pm.