**MINUTES**

**Meeting of the Graduate Academic Policy Committee**

**Monday, 11 December 2023, 12.30-13.50**

Location: Room 200, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (with Zoom link)

**Present:** Michael Hunt (Chair), Susan Porter, Murray Carlson, Thomas Chang, Christiane Hoppmann, Davide Elmo, Ayomide Akande, Jolanta Aleksejuniene, Miriam Spering, Teresa Dobson, Sumeet Gulati, Curtis Suttle (on Zoom)

**Guests:** Jenn Fletcher, Max Read, Jenny Phelps (on Zoom)

**Regrets:** Shannon Hagerman

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 NOVEMBER 20, 2023 MEETING**

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

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| Carried |

1. **BUSINESS**

**Audiology and Speech Sciences - Post-acceptance Requirement**

This is a request to formalize already existing post-acceptance procedures in the program by listing them in the UBC Calendar. Since students must complete clinical practicums, they are required to adhere to immunization requirements at any clinical site that they visit. Also, since they may be interacting with vulnerable populations, they are required to undergo a Criminal Record Check. These requirements have recently been approved for Calendar entries in other clinical programs in the Faculty of Medicine.

The main Calendar changes proposed here are the following:

1. Students have to go immunization review with university health services at their program location to ensure they are up-to-date on all immunizations required by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the Provincial Health Authorities; and
2. Students must undergo a Criminal Record Check prior to commencing the program.

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| *All* | } | *That the policy change be endorsed.* |

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| Carried |

**Guaranteed Doctoral Funding Policy**

* Michael provides a brief background to this discussion item – this proposal pertains to a proposed increase in the guaranteed funding for doctoral students from the current $22k (last approved in 2022) to $24k – gradual increase was envisioned back in 2022.
* Susan makes a PowerPoint presentation about the most recent available data (with the 2021-22 dataset):
  + $38k is the average gross funding ($32k if the tuition fee is extracted)
  + 36% are below the poverty line in Canada (based on their net funding)
  + Funding is considerably reduced for the fifth year - $20,676 is the average net in the 5th year
  + 57 students (3%) are currently funded under the current guarantee of $22k, but will be below the proposed new guarantee($24k)
  + Comparison with other universities – TAship payment is higher in Ontario – UBC funding is slightly higher than UoT and Waterloo if TAships are not included
* Christiane asks if anybody who is offered a TAship as part of their funding package but does not want to do that, does that release the program from the funding obligation – Susan pointed out that there is specific wording on this in the minimum funding policy [handbook](https://www.grad.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/doc/page/2023-12-15_faculty_handbook_for_minimum_funding_policy_0.pdf) – (note: “Where the student declines part or all of the package - either at admission or at any subsequent point throughout their PhD program - the program must submit Form A (in Appendix 2) to G+PS, signed by the student, acknowledging the University has met its obligations and detailing what funding the student has declined and for what period of time.”)
* Curtis asks about the status of the GSI tuition funding and how it is reflected in the numbers – Susan says it is considered an internal award.
* Curtis – we were advised not to offer salary increases until the outcome of the unionization – Susan said we had discussed that with the union and they are supportive of this proposed increase since it was proposed at the time of the last increase.
* Murray highlights the concern that in absence of an increased budget, the number of students getting admission into PhD programs would be affected - Susan acknowledges this concern especially in the absence of extra funding at a time when the university is struggling.
* Teresa asks if the increase in PhD funding would rule out funding for Masters students and asks if the two should be discussed together, considering both these fundings are coming from the same source – Susan says that the consensus around the funding for Masters is that it will be challenging or it would be too low compared to what we offer for the doctoral programs, further adding that the funding for Masters would be difficult without locating additional money sources.
* Jenny emphasizes the clear communication of this policy, for fears of being easily misunderstood, especially given that no new funding is accompanying this policy change. Christiane agrees with that.
* Ayomide – even if equity within the same department – there will still be some students at the bottom of – conversation is about years 1-4, my question is for year 5? I am wondering where is that funding coming from? Susan says some students are doing TAship, RAship so basically the same sources
* Christiane – there is a difference in a student taking a scholarship in Vancouver compared to one taking one in Regina.

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| * *All* | } | *That the raising of the guaranteed PhD funding to $24,000 per annum be approved* |

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| Carried |

1. **DISCUSSION**

**Residency Requirements**

* Michael introduces the discussion item to the Committee: Students in a master’s program are expected to spend the equivalent of at least one year in full-time study whereas the students enrolled in a doctoral program are expected to spend the equivalent of at least two consecutive years at the University – this last part being the “residency requirement” relating to the physical presence of the student on/near UBC
* Michael offers a comparison of policies from various universities in Canada –
  + UoT – ‘geographically available’
  + McGill – residency has nothing to do with geography but with the time that the students are in the program – Max observes that the UBC policy could likely have been based on this policy.
  + Queen’s – expected to maintain geographic availability – full-time participation in the academic life of the community
  + Alberta - doctoral program – time spent on campus and interactions with the faculty and the graduate students at the university
* Michael opens the discussion with the following questions to consider: Are these requirements still relevant? How often are these enforced? What is defined as ‘at the university’? How *remote* should be permissible?
* Murray thinks the language in the UBC policy is too vague
* Miriam – it’s important for us to clarify that the student should be in the province – Susan asks if she would be okay with students based at UBC-O, while enrolled at UBC-V. Miriam acknowledges it could lead to some issues but that thinks that some flexibility to allow for students to spend some years there (and vice versa) should not be problematic.
* Sumeet – why would G+PS like to regulate it instead of letting the Programs do this? Susan says this would be to set a principle and also to facilitate the interaction within the community.
* Susan summarizes the discussion by observing that apart from differences over the exact wording around this requirement, the committee members agree with the principle of having some requirement as a default.
* It was agreed to continue this discussion, but there was no apparent need to change the policy at this time.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:56pm.