**MINUTES**

**Meeting of the Graduate Academic Policy Committee**

**Monday, 15 January 2024, 12.30-13.50**

Location: Zoom

**Present:** Michael Hunt (Chair), Murray Carlson, Christiane Hoppmann, Davide Elmo, Ayomide Akande, Miriam Spering, Teresa Dobson, Sumeet Gulati, Curtis Suttle, Max Read

**Guests:** Jens Locher, Özüm Kafaee, Jenn Fletcher, Jenny Phelps, Brendan Morey

**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 DECEMBER 11, 2023 MEETING**

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

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1. **BUSINESS**

Jenny introduces a series of calendar change documents to the Committee.

**Academic Progress definition for master’s degrees, graduate diplomas and graduate certificates. FOR APPROVAL (J. Phelps)**

Calendar change: i) A revised wording of Master’s degree minimum academic progress requirements for clarification purposes. There was an overlap between grading practices and academic progression in the previous version which led to confusion and redundancy. The proposed revision makes it more clear by focusing only on the academic progression components. ii) ii) Entries are made in this section for Graduate Diplomas and Certificates.

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| * *All* | } | *That it be approved.* |

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**Grading Practices for master’s degrees, graduate diplomas and graduate certificates. FOR APPROVAL (J. Phelps)**

Calendar changes: i) Unnecessary wording is removed in the Master’s degree entry on grading practices – specifically, language surrounding the maximum number of credits in the 60-67% range that can be counted towards degree requirements. ii) Entries are made in this section for Graduate Diplomas and Certificates.

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| * *All* | } | *That it be approved.* |

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**Residency requirements and program duration**

Calendar change: The amended version proposes an elimination of the previously-established policy for Masters students to spend an equivalent of one-year in full-time study because some programs finish sooner than that. The individual programs may establish their own residency requirements

* In presenting the new document to the group, Jenny says that the previous version had nothing on residency and that the new document now includes a direct statement. In addition, some changes have been made to the Master’s entry (noting that students are expected to be engaged in full-time study unless approved for part-time study by the graduate program) and the certificates and diplomas added as categories.
* A statement indicating that students are expected to spend an equivalent of one year in full-time study was removed as some programs finish in less than one year, the wording around that had to be changed.
* There has not been a requirement of residency period on campus for master’s students – this amended Calendar entry now includes a statement that individual programs may establish their own requirements for location of study.
* Sumeet supports the idea of the individual programs establishing requirements. Miriam also shows support for the revised wording.
* Curtis asks about the five-year limit (five-year as the maximum period of eligibility to complete a master’s degree). Jenny explains that it has always been the case. As per the new entry, individual programs may establish shorter durations for completion of a Master’s program. However, it would need to be rationalized in order to maintain a balance between the overall policy of 5 years and the program rationale for a shorter duration.
* Teresa asks if the individual program needs to ask for permission from G+PS to change the faculty residency requirement. Max says the programs normally send in a request for reducing the requirement with some justification. Teresa says the programs in questions have cited the cost-of-living crisis as a reason. Michael asks for some time to discuss this internally at G+PS.

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| * *All* | } | *That it be approved.* |

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**Withdrawal and reinstatement. FOR APPROVAL (J. Phelps)**

Calendar change: The policy of formal leaves of absence will not apply to students enrolled in the graduate diploma and certificate programs. The students who want to pause their studies will have to do so through their programs.

* This document introduces a parenthetical addition to indicate that

the formal leaves of absence would not apply to graduate certificate and diplomas students –those students who wish to pause their studies would have to apply through their programs.

* Michael explains the rationale behind the proposed change saying that the leaves of absence are not relevant to certificates and we don’t want to penalize them when there is no requirement to do so.

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| * *All* | } | *That it be approved.* |

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1. **DISCUSSION**

**Updates from Michael:**

1. **International Students Visa Approvals**

* Michael told the group that he’d be meeting the Head of Research Security at UBC in view of a recent incident at Waterloo where a student was denied visa for supposed espionage. He’ll discuss the implications of this incident for students at UBC.

1. **Course Building Location Transparency**

* Michael referred to a recent announcement by the Provost Office about the decision taken by UBC to no longer make public the information about the locations and times of courses for the safety of instructors and students.
* He talked about its potential implications for the doctoral exams at G+PS.

At G+PS, the doctoral exams are advertised, with the information about the student, dissertation title, and location made public in various instances. Michael asks the group to ponder if moving forward this should be changed as well

**Engagement between Associate Deans and G+PS**

* Jens presents an introductory overview of his team’s role at G+PS and engages the Committee to talk about the nature of information they would like to hear more about - What topics do you feel are most relevant to you?
* Christiane indicates her preference for receiving more information than too little. Davide and Curtis agree with her.
* Jens suggests adding the Committee members to all the groups and having another discussion in about a couple of months to see if any changes are needed.
* Committee members show an interest in getting the student-oriented communication as well.

**DATA**

* Jens makes a presentation about his team’s role in data collection and asks the Committee members about the data sets that need to be prioritized for better use by the programs/Associate Deans and what process should be adopted to discuss data needs.
* He talks about the possibility of converting the ad hoc requests into standard template and through automation it would be easier to run them across different programs and faculties - and share such analyses with them.
* Michael gives the example of Graduate Student Financial Survey – many of you have requested similar information – Susan and I had to create all of those graphs by hand – if that’s an important piece of information – Jens and Özüm may be able to put it into their repertoire moving forward.
* Christiane weighs in on striking a balance between data collection by G+PS and their usage by the individual programs (by creatively sourcing variables from different data sets) to avoid overburdening the G+PS team with time-consuming requests
* She also asks if anything needs to be done differently about the outlying individual programs. Should we await a regular evaluation to take count of their health. Jens informs the Committee that moving forward G+PS will compile these reports on an ongoing basis and will by default share these reports with all the programs every year. Michael talks about thinking broadly about the indicators signifying a program’s health.
* Teresa supports the sharing of more broader funding data which would be helpful given the funding allocations considerations
* Michael tells the group that he will put a collaborative OneDrive document for others to share their thoughts.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57pm.