**MINUTES**

**Meeting of the Graduate Academic Policy Committee**

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

Location: Zoom

**Present:** Michael Hunt (Chair), Susan Porter, Murray Carlson, Thomas Chang, Teresa Dobson, Davide Elmo, Benjamin Goold, Sumeet Gulati, Christiane Hoppmann, Miriam Spering, Curtis Suttle, Max Read, Jennifer Fletcher, Jenny Phelps (guest), Julian Dierkes (guest)

**Regrets:** Jolanta Aleksejuniene, Shannon Hagerman

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

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

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| Carried |

1. **INTRODUCTIONS**

* A new committee member (Dr. Benjamin Goold – Allard Law) was introduced
* All committee members provided an re-introduction to the group
* The purpose(s) of this committee were explained; namely, 1) the approval body for policy changes prior to being discussed at Graduate Council, and 2) an opportunity for G+PS leadership and disciplinary Faculty Associate Deans (Grad) to discuss topics of relevance to graduate education at UBC

1. **UPDATES**

**Update on the changes to eligibility requirements for University Examiners for doctoral exams**

* Michael makes a presentation about the updates to the eligibility requirements that were approved at the March 2023 Academic Policy and Grad Council meetings
  + new wording on the eligibility requirements was shared
  + breakdown of exams since the policy change that had only one University Examiner at Arm’s length (n=24) vs. both University Examiners at Arm’s length (n=166)
  + number of requests for exception to eligibility requirements is also down (8 in past 3 months vs. average 15 over a 3-month timeframe)
  + Michael’s perception is that the change is working to make identification of appropriate examiners easier, but without negative impact on the objectivity of the examination process; the doc exams team will continue to monitor this, and report back if any major changes are observed

1. **POLICY-RELATED ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**Letters of reference for graduate applications**

* Michael presents a proposal to reduce the minimum number of letters of reference for applicants from three to two.
* Programs will still have the option to require three or more letters if they desire.
* It was clarified that this was only for graduate degrees, and different requirements might be in place for graduate certificates or diplomas.
* Teresa asked what the current Calendar language is regarding graduate certificates and diplomas.
  + **Update:** There is currently no Calendar entries regarding any aspect of graduate certificates or diplomas. Instead, the requirements are currently handled individually by the programs.

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

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| Carried |

**English language requirements for graduate applications**

* This is not a policy change; rather consolidation of language across various Calendar entries.
* Michael noted that most of these changes were approved by the Policy Committee in the last academic year, but the proposals were not put forward to Senate Policy while we awaited similar changes on the undergraduate side.
* The changes presented now remove redundant Calendar entries, and provide direct links to UBC-wide minimum language requirements, with the caveat that some programs may require higher English language proficiency scores.
* Minor grammatical changes were suggested.

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

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| Carried |

1. **DISCUSSION**

**Thesis formatting requirements**

* Susan presented on changes related to changes in the possible formats for theses and dissertations, and provided examples of non-traditional formats.
* Feedback on these changes has been good so far, and the goal is to enhance communication regarding what are acceptable formats.

**Graduate certificates and diplomas**

* Jenny presented an update on the discussions and transition process related to G+PS taking oversight and responsibility of graduate certificates and diplomas.
* She noted that there will be a number of policy changes and proposals coming to this group in the coming months, including policies related to admissions, academic progress, and registration.
* Phase 1 (Preparation) is ongoing until November 2024; Phase 2 (Active Onboarding) will commence in December 2024; with the steady state expected in May 2025 onwards.

**Postdoctoral fellow involvement in the supervision of doctoral students**

* Miriam presented a guidelines document that will be used in Faculty of Medicine programs related to the approval and procedural expectations when a postdoctoral fellow is recommended for doctoral student supervisory committees.
* She noted that many people aren’t aware that postdoctoral fellows are eligible to serve on supervisory committees, but also that there may be unique factors to consider with their involvement – mainly related to conflicts of interest with the supervisor.
* Two separate pathways and requirements are proposed depending on whether the postdoctoral fellow and graduate student share the same supervisor or not.
  + Michael noted that he mistakenly circulated an earlier draft of the guidelines document, and will reach out to Miriam to ensure that this group has the most up-to-date version for their records and consideration.
* The guidelines were viewed favourably by the group, and there was a request for Miriam to report back with any relevant updates on this process.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.