

MINUTES

Meeting of the Graduate Academic Policy Committee

Monday, 16 January 2023, 12.30-13.50

Location: Zoom

Present: Michael Hunt (Chair), Susan Porter, Bruce MacDougall, Christiane Hoppmann, Curtis Suttle, Murray Carlson, Davide Elmo, Miriam Spering, Teresa Dobson, Sumeet Gulati, Max Read, Jennifer Fletcher, Arafat Safdar, Özüm Kafaee (guest)

Regrets: Thomas Chang, Jolanta Aleksejuniene

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

<i>All</i>	}	<i>That the agenda be approved.</i>
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Carried

2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Doctoral Exams

- Michael makes a presentation about the doctoral exam process across Canadian universities with the aim to provide an overview of what other institutions require for their examination committee composition
 - All universities have minimum requirement of 4 examiners, none have more than 6
 - Most required at least 2 non-committee members on the examination committee
 - More than 50% of the universities he looked at required the external examiner to be present at the oral defence
- McGill has two different committee types (based on number of supervisory committee members attending exam), both with the aim to balance the constitution of supervisory committee and non-supervisory examiners – their university examiner provides a formal written report which is not required by UBC – their chair is someone from inside the program
- Curtis talks about the differences in the Canadian and American academic practices and says that the former are somewhat archaic – peer institutions in the US do not follow any of these formats – Susan talks about two recent changes being discussed
 - 1) we don't have to be as strict as we are about the arm's-length requirements
 - 2) we may not need two university examiners

Murray supports the change around two university examiners to one – Christiane and Davide think the arm's-length policy needs to be reviewed
- Sumeet asks about the logic of having an external examiner with relation to its impact on the quality of a doctoral dissertation and about the cost of having such a mechanism in place. Susan says it is a way of keeping things not too insular and for faculty and students to have very thorough readings of their dissertations – Many students improve their dissertations after the external examiner reports – academic community - it's a way of bridging the doctoral educational enterprise across the country – Davide recounts his experience of having an

external examiner and how it benefited him during his PhD - Michael adds that it's a great opportunity for the program and the students to see where their work fits in the wider scope – Miriam also agrees with this

Program Review

- Michael asks the Committee for suggestions around the data points that G+PS should provide to the units to help them improve the quality of graduate programs
- Miriam points out that her program does not have any data around the well-being of the students in the program and asks if such data could be generated? – Susan says it's not something G+PS can capture but that the programs would be best-placed to produce any such data.
- Teresa asks if the details around time to completion could be mentioned specifically from when the students reach candidacy as the road to candidacy may be quite onerous in some of the units which leads to a delay in the candidacy – She also asks is there is any data available about courses, such as around what types of courses are students taking if they are attending classes in-person, online or hybrid? – Susan says this would be more appropriate coming from the program
- Michael tells the committee about a recent suggestion at G+PS to put together this data set and send it to each program for them (instead of the current practice where the programs have to submit a data request to get the process started) – Christiane supports this idea.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35pm.