



SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OPEN SESSION

May 17, 2018 at 10:30 am room LB 362

PRESENT

Ex-officio members: J. Beaudoin (Secretary), S. Poulin, P. Wood-Adams (Chair).

Voting members: A. Aghdam, O. Ait Mohamed, J. Berzowska, K. Boies, S. Chang-Kredl, S. Chauhan, D. Howes, T. Mohamed, B. Nelson, P. Pawelek, A. Poteete, L. Qashu, A. Soliman, M. Taufiqzaman, S. Ullah, V. Venkatesh, M. Watson.

Non-Voting members:, I. Kraulis.

Guests: A. Derkson, D. Lafrance, A. Whitelaw.

REGRETS

Voting members: C. Assi, S. Bhagwati, M. Debbabi, D. Erropole, B. Jaumard, E. Peltier-Wagner, K. Sawchuk, G. Vaillancourt, C. Wild.

Non-voting members: W. Cheaib, S. Gabriele, J. Powlowski.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order immediately following the Closed Session.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved and seconded (K. Boies, B. Nelson). Carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Meeting of February 26, 2018

Moved and seconded (B. Nelson, S. Ullah). Carried.

4. Chair's Remarks

Due to the Closed Session and the heavy agenda of the Open Session, Dr. Wood-Adams waived her remarks other than to thank the Council members for their contributions over the past year, and she expressed her appreciation to the members for their commitment to graduate studies at Concordia.

5. Question Period

There were no questions.

Business

6. Proposed Graduate Calendar Changes

6.1 Deferment of Admission

CSGS 1718 5 D1

The change to the regulation is the removal of the \$25 deferral fee currently in place. Students will be permitted to defer once in a given year, if the need for the deferral is due to circumstances beyond the applicant's control.

A friendly amendment to the text was proposed and accepted. The phrase "*such as non-processed visa (supporting documents may be required)*" was deleted.

Moved and seconded (A. Aghdam, B. Nelson). Carried, no abstentions.

6.2 Withdrawal for Academic Reasons

CSGS 1718 5 D2

The proposed reduction to the number of terms a withdrawn student must wait to be considered for a new admission will make Concordia's regulation more consistent with other universities. The hiatus period is to be reduced from the current five-term waiting period to three.

Moved and seconded (A. Aghdam, J. Berzowska). Carried, no abstentions.

6.3 Fast Track to PhD Programs

CSGS 1718 5 D3

There was some discussion related to the proposed change to the "fast track" regulation. The new regulation will allow programs to fast track students directly from the Bachelors' degree, and eliminate the current requirement that Master's courses be completed before the fast track to the PhD. The academic performance of the individual must be outstanding, as evidenced by the GPA, research publications, a proposed research topic suited to a doctoral dissertation, or other related achievements. Programs may set the standard higher, but the revised regulation will be the baseline that programs can adapt as appropriate, and ideally move toward a practice more aligned to current practices in Britain and the U.S. It was suggested that this regulation should be widely communicated, and Dr. Wood-Adams ensured members that it would be.

Moved and seconded (A. Aghdam, S. Chang-Kredl). Carried, no abstentions.

6.4 GPA Graduation Requirement

CSGS 1718 5 D4

Dr. Wood-Adams reported that the impetus for this change came from discussion with the Graduate Students Association (GSA). The School of Graduate Studies did an extensive analysis of practices at other universities, as related to their "repeat" regulations. The analysis revealed that most universities that permit students to repeat courses and count both attempts in the GPA have a graduation requirement of 2.7, and that is the case in 2/3 of the 15 universities surveyed. Universities that only count the 2nd attempt in the GPA maintain a graduation requirement of 3.0. The School's preference, and the consensus following consultation with Faculty Deans and Associate Deans, was not to review or change the current C and F rules, and this proposal is the most consistent with practices elsewhere. A further analysis revealed that this change would potentially result in an additional 20 to 30 students becoming eligible to graduate in any given year.

The regulation will apply only to 2nd cycle programs, which addressed a member's question. The rule will be in the Winter 2019 Calendar, and will apply to students beginning in academic year 18-19. Any retroactive application of the new regulations will be assessed on a case by case basis based on the GPD's recommendation. Further discussion clarified that the F rule will still apply, and programs with the "two C rule" will continue to apply the program withdrawal regulation, allowing for individual exceptions if the overall GPA is somehow over 2.7. It was emphasized that academic performance must be followed closely, and all necessary interventions should occur at the earliest possible stages of the student's career.

Moved and seconded (A. Aghdam, B. Nelson). Carried, no abstentions.

6.5 Academic Standing

CSGS 1718 5 D5

The rationale for this change is to align with the revised graduation GPA requirement.

Moved and seconded (A. Aghdam, K. Boies). Carried, no abstentions.

6.6 Assessment Grade Point Average

CSGS 1718 5 D6

The rationale for this change is to align with the revised graduation GPA requirement.

Moved and seconded (A. Aghdam, B. Nelson). Carried, no abstentions.

6.7 Graduate Curriculum Committee member appointments

CSGS 1718 5 D7

Dr. Nelson reported that a year had passed since the Graduate Curriculum Committee's mandate was expanded. At year-end, it became clear that the one-year appointments for faculty members to the committee was not an efficient model, as the constant renewal would slow down the committee's work. Dr. Nelson's proposal is to align the appointment term for this committee with other administrative appointments, namely three years.

Moved and seconded (B. Nelson, V. Venkatesh). Carried, no abstentions.

Discussion

7. Feasibility of moving the existing DISC deadline to end of term

CSGS 1718 5 D8

Dr. Wood-Adams asked Council for a brief and open discussion on the idea of moving the current DISC deadline to the last day of term. Currently, SGS approves roughly 95% of requests for late DISCs (those past the deadline). While the DNE deadline has financial repercussions to it, the DISC deadline does not; there is no obvious administrative consequence to the DISC deadline, leading to questions as to the purpose of an actual deadline. A number of issues were raised by Council members, related to motivation, possible abuse of the DISC notation, and work load, among others. There were concerns expressed about whether a cavalier attitude to a DISC would set in if students could just self-serve the process up until the last day of class; on the subject of team project work, there was discussion as to what would happen to groups if students dropped out at the end of term and the group was left in the lurch at the last possible moment; there were issues around teaching load, and how many times a student could DISC a course at the last moment, then take it again and again, or how smaller classes could end up grading only one or two students if a few used the DISC in the last day. The Registrar also suggested there might be issues related to Financial Aid that would have to be investigated.

The Chair thanked the members for their thoughtful insights, and expressed that SGS would investigate other means of reducing administrative processes and making them more efficient.

Presentations

7. Anne Whitelaw, Vice-Provost, Planning and Positioning
Ainav Derkson, Government Reporting Analyst, Enrolment Services
New CAFF Structure

Dr. Whitelaw introduced Ainav Derkson, the Government Reporting analyst who has been working closely on the “CAFF” project. Ms. Derkson reported that the current clarder system, which the provincial government uses to assign a financial value to different disciplines, has been in effect since 2005. Two separate groups were established to separately examine what codes should be used and how they should be assigned, and a separate group was established to assign a financial value to those codes. Ms. Derkson provided a methodical explanation about the FTE system and weighting. In reply to questions, Ms. Derkson stated that the government would use course descriptions to determine how to assign codes in the next system making it all the more important to have clear descriptions on record for each and every course. Additionally, she explained that for inter-disciplinary courses, the “primary” discipline is used as the baseline. Dr. Whitelaw stressed the importance of having clear course descriptions going forward, to ensure that the right codes are assigned. When the assignment of financial gradients is done to each clarder, it will be based on the government’s estimate of much it costs to teach courses in that “clarder”. Ms Derkson added that with streamlined coding the institution will be able to better assess what types of courses are attracting the most students, information which could always prove useful. Dr. Whitelaw reported that a standardized course outline would help streamline course descriptions, and using sets of key words would reduce the chances of inaccurate coding. Dr. Whitelaw emphasized that our course descriptions should be written so that the related weighting reflects what is in fact being taught.

Dr. Wood-Adams thanked Dr. Whitelaw and Ms. Derskson for their presentation and asked that a copy be sent to the Secretary for distribution to Council. In addition, Ms. Derkson invited any anyone with questions to contact her directly.

8. Donald Lafrance, Graduate Enrolment Analyst
SGS Data Sharing

The Chair invited Donald Lafrance, the Graduate Enrolment Analyst at SGS to present a sampling of the data dashboards he has prepared and shared with the community over the past months. Mr. Lafrance highlighted the types of questions that typically get asked of and by SGS, and what data sets can be used to answer the larger, or sometimes more specific, questions. Using Tableau software and in collaboration with the Institutional Planning Office, Mr. Lafrance has produced data dashboards that are not only highly user-friendly, but also can be easily manipulated to filter for specific criteria. Currently, there are dashboards on recruitment/admissions, GradProSkills usage, and Service Requests (formerly known as Student Requests). Mr. Lafrance is currently working on a Time-to-Completion dashboard, a tool that

will become essential to programs seeking to strategically manage their enrolments. The data can be viewed on [C-Space](#).

9. Adjournment of the Open Session moved and seconded (V. Venkatesh, B. Nelson).

Next Meeting: September 2018 (to be announced)

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Beaudoin
Secretary
Council of the School of Graduate Studies