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

Monday, October 18, 2010 at 2:00 pm room AD 308

PRESENT


Non-Voting members: J. Beaudoin (Secretary), G. Beaudry, G. Carr (Chair), O. Dyens, S. Fontaine.

Guests: V. Bruce, M. Debbabi, P. Grogono.

REGRETS


1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved and seconded (A. Falcon, A. Hamalian) and passed unopposed.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of September 13, 2010.

The approval of the Minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

4. Chair’s Remarks

At the September 13 meeting of Council, there was a request to have the TRAC agreement discussed at the next Council meeting. The Chair noted that the University has not yet ratified the agreement, but that Council would have a discussion on the agreement as soon as it is formally ratified.
5. Question Period

In response to a question from M. MacDonald regarding a hold on transcript release for students with outstanding fee balances, the Secretary responded that she would follow-up with the Student Accounts Office and Student Services to determine the reason for the hold.

With regards to a question on the expected pay date for Research Assistants and Teaching Assistants whose contracts were processed late due to administrative changes required as a result of the TRAC agreement, the response was that all payroll processing is expected to be up to date by the October 21 pay date.

Business

6. New Programs

The documents were discussed in reverse order from the agenda.

6.1 GCC report from the Chair of GCC
   CSGS 1011 2 D1

6.2 Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering
   CSGS 1011 2 D2
   New PhD in Information Systems Engineering

*It was moved and seconded (P. Wood-Adams, C. Mulligan), that the major graduate
curriculum changes in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, set out in
Document CSGS 1011 1 D2, be approved as recommended by the Graduate Curriculum
Committee in Document CSGS 1011 1 D1.*

The chair welcomed Dr. Mourad Debbabi, one of the principle authors of the new program proposal, from Concordia's Institute for Information Systems Engineering (CIISE). Dr. Wood-Adams explained to Council that the Institute already has four masters graduate programs, in Information Systems Security and Quality Systems Engineering. The Institute is now proposing a PhD program, structured in the same way as the other doctoral programs in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. Dr. Debbabi informed Council members that the PhD program would be unique in Canada, with only Waterloo offering a similar degree, in Systems Engineering. Dr. Debbabi explained that because the Institute does not have a PhD program, students wishing to pursue doctoral degrees are currently doing so within one of the Faculty’s departments. The proposed new program will allow students to receive degrees that more accurately reflect their area of research, notably Information Systems Engineering.

In response to a question regarding whether the two new program proposals discussed at this meeting will be subject to a CREPUQ review, the response was affirmative.

*Vote: carried unopposed.*

6.3 GCC Report from the Chair of the GCC
   CSGS 1011 2 D3

6.4 Department of Computer Science
   CSGS 1011 2 D4
   New PhD in Software Engineering
It was moved and seconded (P. Wood-Adams, C. Mulligan), that the major graduate curriculum changes in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, set out in Document CSGS 1011 1 D4, be approved as recommended by the Graduate Curriculum Committee in Document CSGS 1011 1 D3.

The Chair welcomed Dr. Peter Grogono, one of the principle authors of the new program proposal, from the Department of Computer Science. Dr. Wood-Adams explained that the Department already offers an undergraduate degree and two masters’ degrees in Software Engineering, and was now proposing the implementation of a doctoral program. There are currently many students receiving PhD’s in Computer Science whose research is in software engineering, thereby making the establishment of this new program a reflection of academic activity that already exists within the Department.

In response to a question on the supervision capabilities of 15 faculty members, Dr. Grogono replied that they should be able to supervise about 30 PhD students.

Vote: carried unopposed.

7. Calendar Revisions

Executive Summary

Dr. Skinner explained to Council members that there were several sections of the regulations section in the Graduate Calendar that require revisions. In order to facilitate the discussion, Dr. Skinner prepared a summary of the main changes to be found in each document.

To begin, the Thesis section was split into two documents for discussion purposes. The Copyright section was separated from the General section in order to highlight the fact that the Copyright section is new.

7.1 Thesis Regulations - General

It was moved and seconded (C. Skinner, G. Brown) to discuss and approve the proposed changes as defined in document CSGS 1011 2 D5.

The general thesis regulations have been updated to broaden the scope of definition of ‘thesis’. Many programs allow formats other than the traditional thesis, and the regulations have been edited to reflect this changing reality. Dr. Skinner informed Council there will be Thesis Guidelines drafted in the coming months, and they will outline in more detail the types of theses formats that are considered acceptable. When the new Guidelines are being drafted, a small working group with members from disciplines that commonly accept non-traditional theses submissions will be convened.

• There was a request to have the Guidelines include a revision to the instructions to external reviewers, which Dr. Skinner accepted.

There was discussion regarding the principle of allowing students to submit a thesis in a language other than English or French. Among the issues discussed were: whether a
thesis by article could be written in a mix of English and French articles; whether submitting in a language other than English would only be considered if it was related to the content of the thesis; and whether the defence must occur in English if the thesis is written in another language. There was a suggestion that in order to remove pressure from the supervisor who is asked by a student if s/he can submit in a language other than English, the School of Graduate Studies should have a committee that makes these decisions at the outset of the student’s program. It was noted that theses in languages other than English or French might lead to difficulties with the Spectrum interface. Dr. Skinner mentioned that the Thesis Guidelines could contain examples of situations where the thesis could be submitted in another language (for example, students who are at Concordia as a result of a formal agreement, such as ALGANT or co-tutelle, or joint programs for instance).

- It was agreed that the text would be revised to make it clear that theses could be submitted in a language other than English or French when warranted by the discipline or research topic.

- It was agreed that the request to write a thesis in a language other than English or French would have to be made at the program level before the student began the work, and that the program would in turn have to make a reasoned recommendation to the School of Graduate Studies for formal approval of the request.

- It was further suggested that the text be revised to state that normally the deferment of publishing the thesis should not exceed two years, with the supervisor’s approval; also subject to a supervisor’s approval, the embargo may be renewed.

It was noted that there is no mention of the “mixed thesis” as an acceptable format, such as when half of the thesis is manuscript and half is traditional. It was agreed that this could be highlighted in the Guidelines.

The additional editorial changes described herein were presented as a friendly amendment to the motion, and the question was called.

Vote: carried unopposed.

7.2 Thesis Regulations - Copyright CSGS 1011 2 D6

It was moved and seconded (C. Skinner, D. de Guerre) to discuss and approve the proposed changes as defined in document CSGS 1011 2 D6.

The reference to confidentiality in the Copyright section addresses the need in some cases to have participants in a thesis defence sign a confidentiality agreement. There are instances when the thesis research has been funded by industry contracts and where the sponsors request a delay in the release of the findings. The confidentiality agreement allows students to defend in a timely manner while at the same time assuring the sponsor that their contracts will be honored. There are also cases when the student wishes to defer public release of the thesis in order to publish the findings. Dr. Skinner highlighted that
the signing of the confidentiality agreement allows the defence to remain open, which is a key principle of academic integrity.

- There was a request to remove the reference to “all Canadian universities”. Dr. Skinner replied that he would be pleased to make the change.

The additional editorial changes requested were presented as a friendly amendment to the motion, and the question was called.

Vote: carried unopposed.

7.3 Thesis Supervision CSGS 1011 2 D7

*It was moved and seconded (C. Skinner, P. Wood-Adams) to discuss and approve the proposed changes as defined in document CSGS 1011 2 D7.*

The text in this case refers to the principal supervisor. In response to a question regarding the possibility of students taking a Leave of Absence if they find themselves without a supervisor Dr. Skinner responded that it was possible to do so, although the need to secure a supervisor without delay is paramount.

- There was a request to change the time reference from “one-term” to “four months”, referring to the time that a student has to secure a supervisor should the relationship with the original supervisor dissolve. Dr. Skinner agreed to the change.

The additional editorial changes requested were presented as a friendly amendment to the motion, and the question was called.

Vote: carried unopposed.

7.4 Qualifying Program CSGS 1011 2 D8

*It was moved and seconded (C. Skinner, N. Dayanadan) to discuss and approve the proposed changes as defined in document CSGS 1011 2 D8.*

In reply to a question whether the revisions to this text would cause additional financial hardship on international students, the response was that it would not; qualifying courses have always been assessed as extra credits and therefore billed separately. The important consideration is that programs should assess the need for a Qualifying Program at the time of admission, and record the program on the student’s record accordingly.

Vote: carried unopposed.

7.5 Prerequisite courses CSGS 1011 2 D9

*It was moved and seconded (C. Skinner, P. Wood-Adams) to discuss and approve the proposed changes as defined in document CSGS 1011 2 D9.*

Vote: carried, unopposed.
7.6 Grading System – IP grade

*It was moved and seconded (C. Skinner, G. Brown) to discuss and approve the proposed changes as defined in document CSGS 1011 2 D10.*

Other than a request to correct an omission and add the “pass” grade to the list of grade choices, there was no other discussion.

*Vote: carried unopposed.*

Other

Next Meeting: Monday November 15, 2010 at 2:00 pm. room H-763

8. Adjournment of Open Session

It was moved and seconded (P. Wood-Adams, G. Brown) to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Beaudoin
Secretary, Council of the School of Graduate Studies