

**DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY COUNCIL**

These minutes have been approved.

A regular meeting of Faculty Council was held at 11:30 am, Tuesday, April 26, 2011 in the Lord Dalhousie Room, Henry Hicks Building.

Present: D. Patterson, R. Singer, M. Bliemel, A. Fenety, S. Guppy, S. Parcell, H. Elliott, P. Gardiner-Barber A. West, S. Marche (Chair), M. Lee, D. Pelzer, M. Scott (Secretary), B. Baldrige, S. Tirone, P. Tyedmers.

Regrets: J. Bannister, L. Bennett, M. Cada, P. Ellis, S. Faridi, M. Heywood, G. Kipouros, R. Mopoho, T. Romanuk, N. Schepp, D. Scott, E. Snow, B. Swerhun.

In Attendance: S. Lucas, R. Robski

FC10/11.43 Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

The Dean called the meeting to order. The agenda was approved as circulated.

FC10/11.44 Minutes of the Meeting

Approval of the minutes of March 22, 2011. It was moved by S. Tirone, seconded by H. Elliott: that the March 22, 2011 minutes be accepted as circulated. The motion carried.

Matters arising from the minutes –

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

FC 10/11.45 Reports

i) Acting Dean's Report

- a) NSHRF** – Dr. Marche, Dr. Pelzer and Dr. Sean Barrett recently met with NSHRF. Dalhousie is currently doing very well when it comes to NSHRF funding, receiving the lions share of the funding available.
- b) ARTC Program** – The Faculty of Health Professions is no longer supporting this multi-university program. There does appear to be some interest from the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.
- c) Application Statistics** – Dr. Marche reported that the number of graduate applications is up about 11% over this time last year. The active offers are down approximately 10%. Also to note: the number of outstanding applications (still in departments waiting for a decision) is at 52% and the number of applications rejected is up by 30%. The issues of recruiting and

funding were briefly discussed. Dr. Marche indicated the report is sent out to the Deans and he believed it is available to departments.

ii) PDF Report (A. West) –

- a) **Postdoc Health Plan** – A health plan for the postdoctoral fellows was announced this week. The health plan is shared 50/50 between supervisors and postdocs while the dental plan is 100% funded by the postdoc.
- b) **Minimum Stipend** - Discussions are still underway on this issue.
- c) **Postdocs in the UK** – Dr. West reported that institutions in the UK are pushing for employment status for postdocs. This appears to be with less consultation than here. Dalhousie is sitting back on this
- d) **CAPS** – This group is currently working on a governance document. Dr. West indicated that the Dalhousie Postdoc Society is getting better results than at the national level.

iii) DAGS Report (H. Elliott) –

- a) **New DAGS Representatives** – Ms. Elliott introduced S. Lucas and R. Robski who will be two of the three new DAGS representatives on Faculty Council.
- b) **GG13 Conference** – This graduate student conference is taking place at Dalhousie and starts this Thursday.
- c) **Grad House** – The Grad House will be reducing hours over the summer months.
- d) **Executive Transition** – The new DAGS executive will officially take on their roles from Sunday, May 1st.
- e) **Executive thanks** – The DAGS executive thanked the FGS Faculty Council for encouraging their active participation in FGS activities, particularly Faculty Council. The Dean thanked the DAGS representatives on Faculty Council for their participation and interest in graduate issues.

iv) Acting Associate Dean - PDF, Professional Development and ID PhD

- a) **PDF Minimum Stipend** – Dr Lee indicated APCC had approved the minimum stipend when the policy was developed to regularize postdoctoral fellowship appointments. He didn't anticipate that this would polarize the university community the way it has. Letters from faculty in favour and against continue to come in, with the Faculty of Science faculty being most opposed. He noted that only 3% of the postdocs are paid less than the NSERC minimum and the lowest salary is within \$1,500 of the minimum. A special FGS Faculty Council meeting will be set up to give faculty members the opportunity to present their support or objections to the policy prior to it going to Faculty Council for a vote. This will likely be in early June with faculty and postdocs being notified in advance of the meeting.

v) Associate Dean – Curriculum & Reviews

- a) **NSERC Results** – The NSERC results are in and this is the worst showing Dalhousie has had with the doctoral success rate below 50%.
- b) **CIHR** – Dalhousie has had a 21.7% success rate here, down from 32% last year. Of the 23 applications we submitted, we received 5 CGS awards. Dr. Pelzer reported he met with respective Deans and it appears a task force on funding and recruiting will be set up and perhaps this concern may make it to the strategic priorities for the university. Dr. Pelzer outlined an initiative undertaken by the Dean of Engineering. The Excellence in Engineering Research Scholarship will be awarded to engineering students who were successful in

having their NSERC Postgraduate Scholarship (PGS-M or PGS-D) applications forwarded by FGS to NSERC. If awarded a NSERC scholarship they will receive a larger award from the Faculty of Engineering.

Dalhousie results in the scholarship competitions this year have been very poor. The problem has been compounded by a reduction in the funding dollars from the TriCouncils for scholarships.

There was discussion on a glitch that occurred in a CIHR submission. There was only the one problem that FGS is aware of and FGS continues to work with CIHR in remedying the situation.

- c) **PhD Nursing** – Dr. Pelzer reported this is now at Senate for discussion.
- d) **Policy Issues** – Dr. Pelzer repeated the request for members to be on a sub-committee looking at such issues as students working on industry research. Patrick Ellis, Dr. Fenety and Sheila Lucas (DAGS) have agreed to sit on this sub-committee.

FC10/11.46 Program Reviews

i) Political Science Graduate Programs

Dr. Frank Harvey, Graduate Coordinator, for the Political Science Department was welcomed to the meeting. Dr. Pelzer, referring to the memo submitted by Dr. Hebb, Internal Review Committee member, indicated that two issues were raised from the review. These related to the high number of cross-listed 5000 and 3000 level classes. The second issue related to the comprehensive exam process. Dr. Harvey was invited to update Faculty Council on the changes the department has made in response to the review.

Dr. Harvey thanked the review committee for their recommendations and indicated he has had a very busy first year as Graduate Coordinator. He reported that the department has reviewed their curriculum and those graduate classes that were cross-listed with 3000 level classes have been made inactive. Only those cross-listed with level 4000 undergraduate classes remain active.

On the recommendation regarding the comprehensive examinations, the department has made changes that allow student to better prepare for their comps. The department has created separate seminars for their Masters and PhD students. The seminars include topics like mentoring, grant applications, and comp preparation (written and oral). This has helped students know better what the expectation is and they are better prepared.

There was further discussion on teaching loads, the work load of the Chair, and faculty replacements. Dr. Harvey thanked Graduate Studies for their help during the transition.

Dr. Pelzer thanked Dr. Harvey for attending the meeting.

There was further brief discussion on the workload and governance.

It was moved by P. Tyedmers, seconded by R. Singer: that the Political Science Graduate Programs review be rated as satisfactory with recommendations to provide Faculty Council with an update on the crosslisting and workload issues by the fall of 2013. The motion carried.

ii) Psychology Department Graduate Programs –

Dr. Pelzer welcomed Dr. R. Klein, Chair, Dr. Tracy Taylor-Helmick Graduate Coordinator, Department of Psychology, and Dr. B. Baldrige and Dr. Mo El-Hawary, FGS representatives on the Internal Review Committee to the meeting.

Dr. Pelzer invited Dr. Baldrige to briefly review the Internal Review Committee report. Dr. Baldrige thanked the members of the review committee then went on to note that the Department of Psychology is doing an excellent job and has extremely healthy graduate programs, indicating they have an enviable record of graduates and recruits. This has provided them with the ability to be choosy as they have more good application than they can accept. With this quality of student most students are successful in gaining external funding.

The committee made recommendations that the department should increase student funding from faculty to graduate pool to increase the number of graduate students they can accept. He indicated faculty members are quite keen to increase the number of graduate students in the labs. The committee also noted that the department should participate actively in the Neuroscience program. He indicated both review reports indicate that Psychology need to be a part of the Neuroscience program. Dr. Baldrige went on to report on two comments that had been passed on to them. The first was a suggestion that the department need to discuss the level of support for statistics for students, and secondly, there was some concern expressed by graduate students in the clinical program that the workload was too high and the comprehensives were hard to fit into their schedule. The external reviewers highlight that the comprehensives caused students anxiety that could be reduced by communicating the intent and scope of the comprehensives.

Dr. Taylor-Helmick and Dr. Klein responded thanking the review committee for their report and agreeing that they do have a fantastic program. She agreed they receive great applications from exceptional students, more than the department can take. She indicated that the recommendations were in line with the faculty thinking. She reported that discussion with faculty cover how to increase capacity by getting faculty to contribute and although they have been able to increase numbers, the challenge is space.

There was discussion on a possible new stand-alone Neuroscience program, workload of the clinical students, clarification of comprehensive exams, and ways of providing students with statistical support.

Dr. Pelzer thanked the guests for attending the meeting. There was no further discussion.

It was moved by M. Bliemel, seconded by P. Tyedmers: that the Psychology Department Graduate Programs review be rated as satisfactory with no changes required. The motion carried.

FC10/11.46 Student Travel Grant Discussion

Dr. Marche briefly indicated that currently about 150 travel grants and 20 research grants are awarded each year. Currently the grants are worth \$400. The figures FGS received from departments about possible applications from non-thesis students that would attend conferences to

present research would increase the number of applications by between 70 and 100 students. At the level of funding currently available for student travel and research the award level would drop to about \$230 per award.

This discussion was deferred due to lack of time to the next Faculty Council meeting.

FC10/11.47 Other Business

- i) **Request to form search committee for Associate Dean position PDF, Professional Development & ID PhD** - Dr. Marche asked Faculty Council members to be thinking about this as there will be some urgency in getting this moving as quickly as possible once the Dean is announced.

FC10/11.48 Upcoming Meetings

- i) **Faculty Council Meeting** – A May meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 10 to replace APCC, Lord Dalhousie Room, Henry Hicks Building.
- ii) **FGS Full Faculty Meeting** – Thursday, May 12, Room 1011, Kenneth C. Rowe Building, 2:30 – 4:30.
- iii) **Additional Faculty Council Meeting** – (Open to all faculty members): Tuesday, May 17th TBC
To discuss Postdoctoral Fellow Guidelines – minimum stipend.

The meeting adjourned at 1:08 pm.

Sunny Marche, Chair

M. Scott, Recording Secretary