

**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, June 26, 2012 in the Lord Dalhousie Room, Henry Hicks Building.

Present: S. Bearne, K. Beazley, G. Brown, M. Cada, Y. Fedortchouk, A. Fenety, A. Fleet, K. Humes (FGS), K. Johnson, J. Kozey, R. Maitzen, N. Morgunov, S. Parcell, D. Patterson, D. Pelzer (Acting Chair), N. Schepp, M. Scott (Secretary), D. Tamlyn, P. Tyedmers, E. Whelan, H. Whitehead, Y. Zhao.

Regrets: B. Baldrige, B. Bisset, B. Boudreau (Chair), Q. Gao, J. Grant, G. Kipouros, K. Toughill, A. West

FC11/12.52 Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

It was moved by K. Beazley, seconded by R. Maitzen to approve the agenda for June 26, 2012, with no corrections. The motion carried.

FC11/12.53 Minutes of the Meeting

Corrections: R. Robski, R. Oomen, S. Heaslip and E. Whelan are listed as present, but did not attend; A. Fenety is not listed, but was present.

Approval of the minutes of May 15th. It was moved by S. Parcell, seconded by J. Kozey to approve the minutes of May 15, 2012 with corrections. The motion carried.

Matters arising from the minutes –

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

At this time, Dr. Pelzer took a moment to welcome new members **Karen Beazley, Resource and Environmental Studies, and Nikolas Morgunov, Physiology and Biophysics.**

FC 11/12.54 Reports

i) Dean's Report (B. Boudreau)

Dr. Boudreau was away and could not attend the meeting. Dr. Pelzer gave the Dean's report on his behalf:

- a) **Sunny Marche:** Dr. Sunny Marche, former Associate and Acting Dean of FGS, passed away on June 8th. There will be an open and informal remembrance event at the Grad House on Friday, June 29th from 3-5pm. An official memorial will be held by the Faculty of Management on July 16th.

- b) **May 2012 Convocation:** There were a total of 15 ceremonies (including King's and NSAC) and a total of 495 graduate degrees were awarded. Dr. Pelzer attended seven ceremonies and Dr. Boudreau attended eight.
- c) **Joint Doctoral Degrees:** The policy was officially approved by the Board of Governors.
- d) **CALDO Brazil Partnership:** The first official invitation to Brazilian graduate students and postdoctoral fellows has gone out. Dr. Pelzer noted that CALDO will collect the applications and inform the students of their acceptance.
- e) **FGS Budget:** Dr. Pelzer indicated that the budget for the coming year looks better than expected, with no base cuts.
- f) **Latex Thesis Template:** Dr. Pelzer mentioned that he and the Dean met with representatives from Oceanography, Mathematics and Engineering to discuss updating the Latex thesis template used by these departments. There is a history of issues regarding students using outdated templates that are not in line with FGS thesis formatting guidelines. It was also noted that the FGS thesis formatting process will be streamlined to ensure students receive consistent comments.

ii) **PDF Report (A. West)**

Dr. West was away and could not attend the meeting. Dr. Pelzer took a moment to note that October 12th has been chosen as the date for the next PDF Research and Appreciation Day. There will be an announcement soon with further details.

iii) **DAGS Report (A. Fleet)**

- a) **New DAGS President:** Alana Fleet has been elected the new President of DAGS.
- b) **Grad House Management:** Alana indicated that improvements to the management of the Grad House are continuing. The hope is to hire a new Manager, as well as a new Office Manager soon.
- c) **Orientation:** DAGS has been contacting departments about Fall Orientation, with the hope of having more collaborative events between them.
- d) **NSAC merger:** Representatives from DSU and NSAC are meeting next week to discuss how their students will fit into Dal operations when the two institutions merge.

iv) **Associate Dean – (D. Pelzer)**

- a) **AXA Partnership:** Dal has partnered with a European research fund called AXA. They fund research projects in three areas: Environmental Risks, Life Risks and Socioeconomic Risks. Dr. Pelzer explained that all proposals need to go through his office.
- b) **Awards Update:** The SSHRC PhD and Master's competition results were announced and Dal was awarded 21 Master's (out of 23 nominations) and 8 PhD's (out of 16 nominations). The Killam offering process will be changed: First round offers will go out at the end of February, a wait list will be established and shared with Grad Coordinators, then 2nd round offers will be made after the NSERC/SSHRC/CIHR results are announced.
- c) **Funding Issues:** There was a general discussion concerning the trend in reduced funding for graduate, especially Master's students and how this affects academic scholarship. Dr. Pelzer explained that budget cuts are a national trend that is unlikely to change under the current government. It was suggested that Floyd Dykeman, VP External Relations, be invited to a Fall Faculty Council meeting to discuss increasing the focus of fundraising on graduate students.

FC11/12.55 Earth Sciences Departmental Review – Dr. Rebecca Jamieson, Chair, Department of Earth Sciences, and Dr. Frank Harvey, FGS Representative on the Internal Review Committee, invited for 11:50am.

Dr. Pelzer welcomed Dr. Jamieson and Dr. Harvey to the meeting. Dr. Harvey started off by saying that, without exception, there was overwhelmingly support for the department Chair and everyone agreed that she is the right person to address the issues raised in this and the previous review. He explained that there was a previous report done in 2004 that the Committee reviewed to determine what progress has been made. Unfortunately, they found that many of the problems outlined back then still exist today, in particular the absence of a strong Graduate Coordinator (GC). He said there is a clear need to rotate GCs more often and to provide them with clear terms of reference, particularly with respect to student engagement and communication.

Dr. Jamieson indicated that a new GC has been chosen, however he is on sabbatical and therefore will not start until the Fall of 2013. The current GC will continue to fill the post until then. P. Tyedmers wondered whether or not the GC has enough course release and if this could be part of the reason GCs have been less thorough in the past. Dr. Jamieson said the GC teaches 3 courses, and the department recently devised a workload points system to support this area.

In terms of student engagement, Dr. Jamieson mentioned that they are working on updating the website and the student handbook to make them more user-friendly. Also, they are working on improving the introductory course, EARTH 6300, to make it more informative and to further emphasize the importance of deadlines. Students will now have to present a proposal at the end of the course, to be approved by faculty. Dr. Jamieson indicated that part of the student communication and engagement issue is that many of their students have external co-supervisors from St. FX, especially in the area of environmental science. Since these students are often physically at St. FX, they often end up “out of the loop” compared to the local Dal students. The hope is that a stronger, more present GC in the department will help facilitate better communication between supervisors, supervisory committees and students.

P. Tyedmers asked Dr. Jamieson to provide some numbers that outline the current scope of the program. Dr. Jamieson said they currently have 31 graduate students (22 PhD's, 9 Masters) and they anticipate accepting quite a few more this year. They have 17 faculty members (12 professors and 5 instructors) and that 9 of them hold NSERC grants (out of an eligible 12). Dr. Jamieson said that the time to completion for their students is generally at or below the National average – 4 years on average for PhD's, and 2 years + 1 term for Masters.

Dr. Jamieson indicated that a better space plan was devised in Fall/early Winter last year with support from the Dean, but it will be at least 5-10 years before this plan can be fully implemented depending on the progress of the LSC renovations. For now, Dr. Jamieson said this item is 3rd on the Department's priority list.

After Dr. Jamieson and Dr. Harvey departed, members discussed concerns regarding the lack of progress the department has made since 2004 to address the issues with communication and the strength of the GC. It was agreed that the department has made some progress but Faculty Council still needs to closely monitor the Department's progress and receive regular updates.

It was moved by A. Fenety, seconded by K. Johnson: that the Earth Sciences graduate program review be rated as satisfactory but with request for follow-up after 12 months, then 24 months. After 12 months, evidence must be presented that the department has addressed the reviewers' recommendations, particularly those related to communication. At this time, a meeting including students will be arranged in order to get their feedback regarding changes to the Department's graduate program.

FC11/12.56 Graduate Calendar Changes (continued from section 6.1, with addition to Membership section and replacement section for Master's Defence committees)

There was not enough time for the group to discuss these changes. Dr. Pelzer requested that members send him their comments electronically. He mentioned that any members that need another copy of the documents can email Kim.

FC11/12.57 Other Business

i) Outgoing member's thanks

Dr. Pelzer took a moment to thank outgoing members for their service on Faculty Council. He presented an FGS mug to each as a token of appreciation:

B. Baldrige **Dr. Baldrige was not in attendance; Dieter will deliver*

P. Tyedmers

He also thanked the members that have agreed to serve another three year term:

A. Fenety

R. Maitzen

N. Schepp

FC11/12.58 Next Meeting

- i) Faculty Council Meeting – Tuesday, July 24, 2012, at 11:30 am, in the Lord Dalhousie Room, Henry Hicks Building.

The meeting adjourned at 1:13 p.m.

Bernard Boudreau, Chair

M. Scott, Recording Secretary