

**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, October 22, 2013 in the Lord Dalhousie Room, Henry Hicks Building.

**Present:** S. Bearne, B. Boudreau, E. Denovan-Wright, S. Faridi, M. Gibson, S. Kimber, J. Kozey, R. Maitzen, J. Makani, R. Martin-Misener, N. Morgunov, S. Parcell, D. Patterson, D. Pelzer, S. Ponomarenko, M. Scott (Secretary), R. Singer (Chair), D. Tamlyn, B. Taylor, O. Theou, S. Theriault (FGS), L. Turculet, A. Vidovic, H. Whitehead, Y. Zhao

**Regrets:** W. Barker, K. Beazley, P. Boderik, A. Fenety, J. Grant, S. Scannell, G. Scherkoske, R. Stadnyk, E. Whelan

**FC13/14.11 Call to Order and Approval of Agenda**

The Chair called the meeting to order. The agenda was approved without additions.

**FC13/14.12 Approval of the Minutes of previous Faculty Council meeting**

It was **moved by S. Bearne, seconded by N. Morganov: to approve the minutes of September 24, 2013 as circulated. The motion carried.**

**Matters arising from the minutes** – There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**FC 13/14.13 Reports**

**i) Dean's Report (B. Boudreau)**

**Provincial Government Scholarships:** The Liberal party, in their election platform, indicated they would create 300 graduate scholarships. The government has been in contact with Dalhousie to start discussions. More information will be reported as it becomes available.

**ii) PDF Report (O. Theou)**

**National PDF Survey:** O. Theou reported on the findings from the National Survey of Postdoctoral Fellows. Highlights of the survey included:

- 30% of respondents expect to be PDFs for 5 years
- PDFs would like to be treated as employees and have access to benefits
- 50% of PDFs expect to be hired as faculty, however only 20% actually receive faculty positions

There was further discussion on how to distribute the findings, addressing the high expectations of obtaining faculty positions, and initiating a survey to postdocs 7-10 years out on their career paths.

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

a) **Election:** A. Vidovic reported that the DAGS VP Academic has resigned and an election will take place to find a replacement.

b) **Budget:** DAGS has had some budgetary changes and is working on preparing a revised budget.

iv) **Associate Dean (D. Pelzer)**

a) **Erasmus Mundus:** D. Pelzer reported that he has just returned from an Erasmus Mundus conference in Barcelona where Spanish University representatives met with representatives from North American Universities. North American universities have expressed concerns with the process and conditions in the current agreement and have requested that amendments be made. A teleconference is planned for the end of November to discuss the progress on the requested revisions.

b) **Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships:** The internal selection process is complete. Dalhousie will be forwarding one nomination to the national competition.

c) **Vanier:** Dalhousie's Vanier quotas over a three year period are 16 NSERC, 16 CIHR and 8 SSHRC. D. Pelzer expressed concern that in the current competition only one nomination was received in the CIHR competition. The nomination was not of a high enough quality to be forwarded to the national competition, so Dalhousie will have a quota of 16 to fill over the next 2 years. The NSERC applications were also down in quality and number submitted. Only one NSERC application will be forwarded to the national competition. The SSHRC competition received a higher volume of applications of a higher quality. Two nominations will be forwarded to the national competition. A discussion followed in which D. Pelzer reminded members that the Vanier Scholarship is a good recruitment tool, and is not meant to fund current students. The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences publicized the deadline a year ago, resulting in applications from students who are accepted into their programs for January 2014.

d) **NSERC Doctoral Competition:** Applications have been sent to the University Nomination committee who will meet mid-November to decide which applications will be forwarded to the national competition.

v) **Associate Dean (E. Denovan-Wright)**

a) **PDF National Survey:** In continuation of the discussion regarding the PDF national survey findings, E. Denovan-Wright commented that if 80% of PDFs won't get an academic appointment, this needs to be communicated to them early so that they can explore the other options that are available to them.

b) **PDF Research and Appreciation Day:** The event held on September 27th was very successful, with a high attendance, good poster presentations and a fascinating keynote speaker. The afternoon panel discussion was appreciated by PDFs in attendance.

**FC13/14.14 Continuation of PhD Defence Discussion**

R. Singer invited Dr. John Gosse, Department of Earth Sciences, back to Faculty Council to continue the discussion from the September meeting. Dr. Gosse explained that in his discipline there is active participation at PhD defences from industry experts. Under the current guidelines, there are two rounds of questions from members of the PhD Examining Committee, after which, if time permits, questions can be asked by audience members. His department would like to have the option to allow

questions from the audience after the completion of the first round of questions. They would like to see this done only when pre-approval has been received from the members of the examining committee, and with the assistance of the Chair who will monitor the proceedings to ensure the questioning doesn't get out of control.

A discussion took place in which members suggested that students should also have to give written consent that they agree to the change in process. This is necessary to mitigate the chance of a student filing an appeal after the defence.

Members commented that in some departments audience participation is not constructive and can derail the defence. It was also noted that the deviation in examination format would put an added burden on faculty who volunteer to act as defence Chairs.

It was noted that members of the Examining Committee have all read the thesis, and as a matter of courtesy they should be given priority over members of the audience who are not familiar with the content of the thesis. One suggestion was that the department could host a post-defence seminar where the student could again give the 20 minute presentation and then accept questions from the audience. It was questioned if this was fair to the student, to be put through the stress of a second defence-like event.

Other suggestions included allowing the External Examiner to ask their 2<sup>nd</sup> set of questions before opening to the audience. A further suggestion included that the regulations not be changed, but that departments wishing to deviate from standard practice send a request, which would include consent from the external examiner, examining committee and the student, to the Faculty of Graduate Studies on a case-by-case basis to allow the Associate Dean to decide if the exception be granted.

Due to time constraints R. Singer brought the discussion to a close and advised members that he will draft a motion, run it by Legal Counsel, and distribute it for an e-vote before the next meeting.

#### **FC13/14.15 Concept Paper – Master of Anatomy**

R. Singer welcomed Dr. Bill Baldrige and Dr. Bill Currie to the meeting and invited them to provide the rationale for the new Master of Anatomy program.

Dr. Baldrige advised that in January 2013 the department's name changed from Anatomy and Neurobiology to Medical Neuroscience. The department's MSc and PhD programs are also changing their focus to Neuroscience. A concept paper for the new MSc/PhD in Medical Neuroscience is being prepared. The new Medical Neuroscience graduate program will not accommodate major medical school courses like gross anatomy, histology or embryology. The department wants to use the Master of Anatomy program to attract and train the next generation of anatomists.

Dr. Currie advised that the program will be 2 years in length (5 terms), and will be course-based. The program will also require students to prepare a research project, and spend time working in laboratories. Courses in simulation will allow students to gain competencies much faster than they would be able to gain by working with cadavers.

A discussion followed. Members questioned how many employment positions will be available for graduates from year to year. Dr. Currie advised that there are many anatomists at the retirement stage that will need to be replaced. There are also opportunities in the private sector, and in simulation instruction. Dr. Currie pointed out that a lot of other programs require students to take introductory Anatomy classes. There are two similar programs in Canada, offered at Queens and Western Ontario. Western Ontario has a very large pool of highly qualified applicants, from which they select about 10 students per year. It is also estimated that about half the students who apply to the program will have the intention of going on to medical school.

Members questioned if this program would compete with the MSc or PhD programs in Medical Neuroscience. Dr. Baldrige explained that Anatomy was a turn off for those wanting to focus on neuroscience, so the creation of this new program will create two streams in the department. There would not be a mechanism in place for students to move from one stream to the other. In addition, it was noted that almost all of the courses required for the Master of Anatomy program are currently being offered.

R. Singer thanked Dr. Baldrige and Dr. Currie for attending and asked members to put forward a motion.

**It was moved by H. Whitehead, seconded by S. Bearne: that Faculty Council recommend that the concept paper for the new Master of Anatomy proceed to SAPRC for consideration. The motion carried.**

#### **FC13/14.16 Proposed Wording: Advanced Placement**

R. Singer invited Ms. Åsa Kachan, VP Enrolment Management and Registrar, and Ms. Wendy Fletcher, FGS Student Services and Program Officer, to the meeting and asked Ms. Kachan to provide the members with the rationale for the proposed regulation change.

Ms. Kachan informed members that the idea for advanced placement was first brought up by the School of Health and Human Performance as a way to engage strong undergraduate students in work that would encourage them to continue on into a master's program. The proposal isn't unique to just Health and Human Performance, as there are other programs with honors students that may like to have this option.

An undergraduate student taking a graduate level course in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of their undergraduate degree could use that course towards their undergraduate degree with no issues as the student "over achieved" the undergraduate requirements. The student would be given the opportunity to test graduate work, and faculty members could begin preliminary research with the student. For graduate classes that have been counted towards the undergraduate degree, advanced placement of up to six credit hours of study may be used to reduce the overall class requirements in the graduate program, and may replace one or more required classes, if the student enters a graduate program following graduation from an undergraduate program.

A discussion followed in which members felt that the permission to allow advanced placement must remain at the department level. Members pointed out that undergraduate students don't fall under the purview of graduate coordinators and suggested that the departmental approval come from both the

honors advisor and the graduate coordinator. In response to questions from members, Ms. Kachan explained that the regulation would allow students the option to roll back to the undergraduate level (by a specified date) should the student feel overwhelmed. In order to register for the graduate class, the student would have to receive pre-approval from the department prior to the start of the class. Students would not have the option to switch to the graduate level course mid-way through the term.

Members also questioned if certain departments who won't allow advanced placement could have their department opt out completely, to avoid the administrative workload of having to receive and deny the requests from undergraduate students. It was suggested that departments could place that information in their undergraduate handbooks.

Members suggested that the proposed wording of the regulation be modified to include language to allow for transfer credits, and recommended that the other regulations be checked to ensure the wording around "not using previous credits" would not be contradicted anywhere.

It was decided that Ms. Kachan, Ms. Fletcher and Dr. Pelzer meet to discuss revisions to the wording based on the suggestions from Faculty Council members.

**It was moved by D. Tamlyn, seconded by D. Patterson; that the recommended wording with suggested revisions be brought forward to the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching for approval and inclusion in the Graduate Calendar. Two opposed, one abstention. The motion carried.**

#### **FC13/14.17 Nominating Committee**

Due to time constraints this agenda item was deferred to the next Faculty Council meeting.

#### **FC13/14.18 Other Business**

Due to time constraints this agenda item was deferred to the next Faculty Council meeting.

#### **FC13/14.19 Next meeting - Tuesday, November 26, 2013, Lord Dalhousie Room.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

---

R. Singer, Chair

---

S. Theriault, Recording Secretary