

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

These minutes have been approved.

A meeting of Faculty Council was held at 11:30 am, Tuesday, December 1, 2015, in the Lord Dalhousie Room, Henry Hicks Building.

Present: H. Ali-Hassan, W. Barker, J. Armstrong, S. Bearne, S. Boe, M. Durier-Copp, D. Iron, G. Loomer, B. Sabo, K. Toughill, T. Ulicki, S. Wells, P. Bodorik, E. Denovan-Wright, L. Fitting, S. Gadbois, M. Gibson, J. Kozey, M. Leonard, R. Martin-Misener, R. Mullin, D. Pelzer, J. Michael Lee (Chair), S. Stone, P. Tyedmers, C. Casey (FGS)

Regrets: D. Bhatia, N. Daizy, D. Groulx, P. Ellis, M. Hesam, D. Patterson, R. Stadnyk

FC15/16.29 Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

The Chair called the meeting to order.

It was moved by E. Fitting seconded by M. Leonard: to approve the Faculty Council agenda for December 1, 2015 as circulated. The motion carried.

FC15.16.30 Review of the Department of Oceanography (Bruce Smith, Graham Gagnon and Paul Hill)

G. Gagnon started discussion. He mentioned that with respect to the graduate program, it was a very robust program. There were a couple of points that were important to mention: one being an issue of completion times and some confusion around student exam time tables etc. G. Gagnon pointed out that there was a large fieldwork component in some students' programs so this could be a reason for the delay in completion. As well, there were some administrative hurdles and some issues around funding. There needed to be greater clarity as to what was available to students, possibly compiling this information and having it at the ready for students.

M. Lee asked guests to comment on course load specifications.

B. Smith noted that for physical oceanographers the course load is greater with a higher number of required courses, but less fieldwork.

P. Bodorik asked about format of final examination.

B. Smith noted that the format of the final examination was a subject of intense debate. Qualifying exams generally consisted of the student being provided a suite of papers and then being asked to synthesise the information.

P. Hill also noted that papers were generally related to the student's dissertation topic. P. Hill also mentioned that historically PhD students were required to take 3 out of the 4 core courses. He noted that there was a need to make a uniform set of requirements.

E. Denovan-Wright asked what the administrative hurdles to completion times were.

G. Gagnon discussed how students were unable to organise qualifying exams etc., and that this was the type of administrative hurdle he was referencing earlier.

M. Durier-Copp asked about affiliations, and if there were any, for example with Marine Affairs?

P. Hill said yes, they current did have good relationships/affiliations with Marine Affairs and that there were ongoing steps to form affiliations and support of these already in existence.

The guests were thanked for attending.

M. Lee summarized that there were three areas of concern:

1. Rationalization of course work load
2. Shortening of completion times
3. Clarification of student requirements/funding

End of discussion.

It was moved by D. Pelzer seconded by M. Durier-Copp: that Faculty Council accept the Department of Oceanography as:

- Satisfactory but with recommendations and request for follow-up within 18 months.

FC15.16.31 Review of the Department of Engineering (Josh Leon, Mark Gibson, William Barker and P. Bodorik)

W. Barker started discussion saying that the graduate program was a big part of the Engineering Faculty's programs. He noted that the committee were looking at the student experience in particular, and that it was somewhat complicated. He pointed out that the main theme in the internal report was space. The faculty did have plans to expand available space for graduate students, as highlighted in their strategic plan, but that this issue will continue until it resolved by accomplishment of that goal. There was also a governance issue in terms of the Graduate Studies office in Engineering: its staffing and oversight. In his opinion it would be a good idea to have a faculty point person between FGS and Engineering, especially given plans for expansion.

P. Bodorik also noted that there was an issue with internal communications within the Faculty generally, as well as a gender imbalance issue in terms of student numbers. He echoed the issue of a lack of Associate Dean of Research, which he felt was needed to streamline administration.

M. Gibson mentioned that the Dean was looking for an Associate Dean as well as a Graduate Studies Coordinator to work on what P. Bodoric had specifically mentioned, both in relation to communication and a clear strategy for the Faculty.

J. Leon thanked review committee. He noted that they are striving for improvement. He gave a brief summary of how TUNS became part of Dalhousie. It had become obvious shortly after this that there was a need for an Associate Dean of Research. A new strategic plan had been completed which included looking for a new Associate Dean of Research.

J. Leon also pointed out that, in addition, the Internetworking program had gone from under 10 students to over 200 in just over eight years. There has been an abundance of positive feedback in reference to the program, from recognised employers.

J. Leon noted that space (vs. growth) is an issue—as is the workload of faculty members. Funding for postdocs has been a problem as well but has been corrected with new collective agreement. Graduate student funding by the province (NSGS) has made a big difference, but there is still a need for additional external funding.

D. Pelzer urged the Faculty of Engineering to consider more personnel resources in their graduate studies office, and noted that there is a requirement to make all faculty members more aware of scholarships which are available.

J. Leon said that one challenge is the need for additional funding to back (partial) scholarships, and said that this quickly became a management problem re: back-stopping funding applications: not just with NSGS but also with NSERC.

W. Barker mentioned that there was a 67% increase in graduate student numbers in the last 5 years, and this constituted a forever-moving target, making it hard to give fixed advice. The committee's principal concern was with the students, and the consensus was that they are doing well.

The guests were thanked for attending.

D. Pelzer reiterated the need for more support for the graduate studies at Sexton. W. Barker echoed this, stating that Engineering definitely needs a (faculty member) administrative coordinator for that office.

M. Lee thought that linking M. Gibson's position as Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee in Engineering with the graduate studies office made sense, as did provision of more support.

It was moved by P. Bodorik, seconded by E. Denovan-Wright: that Faculty Council accept the Department of Engineering as:

- Satisfactory but with recommendations and request for follow-up within one year.

FC15.16.33 Law Review (Julia Wright, Camille Cameron and Jocelyn Downie)

J. Wright started discussion, noting that there was at present an opportunity to boost enrolment. V. Howard noted that it was extremely helpful having both the internal and external reviews happening simultaneously. J. Downie mentioned how the reviews were overall positive and that they were encouraged by students and alumni comments. She also noted that funding was the most immediate problem and that they were treating it as a threshold condition, hoping that the situation was more promising with the new Dean (C. Cameron) coming on board.

W. Barker asked why tuition was a barrier. J. Downie stated that Dalhousie's tuition was almost double that for competing peer programs. M. Lee asked if there was any evidence to support that tuition was a barrier affecting enrolment numbers. J. Downie said that there was nothing concrete, and that there was no reference in self-study.

M. Lee asked if the majority of students were self-funded, paying high tuitions? J. Downie, yes. D. Pelzer wanted to know if there were a substantial pool of endowment funds which might be available. J. Downie said they had such an endowment, but that the funds were directed to undergrad and graduate students as prescribed.

E. Denovan-Wright pointed out that, given such a strong statement that Law's graduate programs were in jeopardy due to underfunding, immediate discussions surrounding tuition costs were necessary. J. Downie noted that, financially, they can run the program but the quality of the educational experience was questionable.

M. Lee asked if Master's students really had to complete a 150 page thesis. J. Downie confirmed this, but said the size was reduced from previous years.

The guests were thanked for attending.

W. Barker asked whether Council should make any decision now (re: if the review was satisfactory or not) or whether it should await feedback on funding from Law program. He suggested that the fee structures in other programs should be reviewed for evidence that there are indeed tuition-related barriers for students at Dalhousie. There was also some discussion around follow up in six months' time.

It was concluded that Law should be given 6 months to sort out the funding issue, reporting back to Faculty Council at that time.

FC15/16.34 Next meeting – Tuesday December 15, 2015, in the Lord Dalhousie Room, Henry Hicks Building.

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

J. Michael Lee, Chair

C. Casey, Secretary