

**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, March 24, 2015 in the Lord Dalhousie Room, Henry Hicks Building.

Present: J. Armstrong, W. Barker, S. Bearne, P. Bodorik, E. Denovan-Wright, A. Fenety, S. Gadbois, M. Gibson, D. Groulx, R. Martin-Misener, R. Mullin, P. O'Brien, D. Patterson, D. Pelzer, N. Schepp, M. Scott (Acting Secretary), R. Singer (Chair), L. Spiteri, R. Stadnyk, S. Stone

Regrets: H. Ali-Hassan, A. Bucci, N. Daizy, P. Ellis, L. Fitting, S. Kimber, J. Kozey, M. Leonard, N. Morgunov, S. Ponomarenko, M. Rahman, S. Theriault (Secretary), P. Tyedmers

FC 14/15.48 Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

The Chair called the meeting to order.

It was moved by L. Spiteri, seconded by P. Boderik: to approve the Faculty Council agenda for March 24, 2015, as circulated. The motion carried.

FC 14/15.49 Approval of the Minutes of previous Faculty Council meeting

It was moved by E. Denovan-Wright, seconded by D. Patterson: to approve the minutes of February 24, 2015, as circulated. The motion carried.

Matters arising from the minutes – none.

FC 14/15.50 Reports

i) Associate Dean (Dieter Pelzer)

- a) **IP** – Dr. Pelzer indicated he had attended a presentation by Matthew Herder (Schulich School of Law) on intellectual property (IP) as it relates to emerging researchers (young faculty, postdocs and graduate students). He reported that Dal has not had an IP policy since 1993, and there is no Canada-wide policy; some Faculties have their own policies and practices. Prof. Herder has prepared a report (currently in the final draft phase) for CAGS. Once the report has been finalized it is likely Faculty Council will see it, and Prof. Herder will be invited to address Faculty Council at an upcoming meeting. Dr. Pelzer proposed that the Deans be invited to send representatives to this meeting as observers. There will be

extensive consultation about the generation of a new questionnaire addressing expectations concerning IP, designed for discussion and completion by both supervisors and PhD students prior to the PhD defense.

- b) **CGSM Competition** – The CGSM competition is now complete and the names of successful students have been entered into the Tri-council website. Starting April 1, the offers will be sent out to students. Dr. Pelzer reported that it is possible, but not yet confirmed, that the Doctoral competitions will be downloaded to the universities starting in the 2016 scholarship cycle. At present there is little clarity concerning the quota system for institutional awards, what metrics would be applied to determine such quotas, and what the long-term implications would be.
- c) **Workload Issues** – The additional workload associated with CGSM, Killam, NSRIGS and NSHRF competitions is not sustainable for already overstretched FGS scholarship staff. As a result, the timing of the second NSRIGS competition will be adjusted to have a closing date of early to mid April. Underlining the need for this change, FGS has received feedback that the current closing date of February 15 is too early, and should be set for later to capture more applications. Departments will be notified at the appropriate time.

ii) Associate Dean (Eileen Denovan-Wright)

- a) **Unionization** – Dr. Denovan-Wright indicated FGS is clearing up issues related to PDF unionization.
- b) FGS has been working with the PDF Society on a professional development session to be held later this week.

iii) PDF Report (Josh Armstrong)

- a) Dr. Armstrong reported that the professional development sessions being run in collaboration with IHRTTP are set for March 26 and will include presentations on applying for faculty positions, grant writing, and related issues.
- b) There was brief discussion about salary scales that will be negotiated in the contract. Dr. Denovan-Wright indicated that unionized postdocs elsewhere have negotiated minimum salaries. It was noted that IP issues also need to be considered.

iv) DAGS (Naznin Daizy)

A DAGS representative was not in attendance.

FC 14/15.51 PDF Unionization Update and Immigration Changes (Marlo Shinyei, Assistant Academic HR Administrator)

Ms. Shinyei was introduced and welcomed to the meeting. She reminded FC members that postdocs were now members of PSAC. The HR office has been working to streamline the processes for bringing postdocs to Dalhousie. She pointed out that, while there are two separate groups (PDF employees and PDF scholars), a postdoc paid 50% or more from a grant is a PDF employee, and that some PDFs will switch between the two categories during their time at Dalhousie. There are contract templates for both groups on the FGS website; these templates contain all the important elements and have been approved by Dalhousie Legal Counsel. The contract template for PDF employees (about 70% of postdocs) is

about the same as it was, whereas the template for PDF scholars is significantly different; faculty should be sure to use the appropriate up-to-date version from the FGS website. One of the biggest changes is that PDFs are no longer able to opt out of EI and CPP; PDF employees must pay EI and CPP. However, paying into these plans is not possible for PDF scholars. A PDF employee does not have a pension but does have benefits (whose costs have recently been decreased). Ms. Shinyei reminded everyone that postdocs can only be within 6 years of completing their PhD; after that they become research assistants (grant paid) employees of Dalhousie. She stressed the importance of having an accurate contract and strongly urged the use of the templates. Contracts that are written by faculty members without using the template will be sent back to be drafted using the correct template. Faculty desiring assistance with the contract process should contact the PDF Clerk in FGS.

Ms. Shinyei indicated that, to date, HR had not received the notice to bargain from PSAC. Some of the item that she anticipates will be negotiated at bargaining include job postings, benefits, salary, grievance procedures, and hours of work.

Discussions continued on the services to PDFs and their access to professional development sessions. Currently a postdoc is considered to be in training. It is hoped that the same opportunities for training will apply to all postdocs, but this matter is subject to change.

There was discussion about external funding and the option for faculty to offer top-ups. Also discussed were limited-term appointments, and situations in which renewal would be dependent on funding, performance or both. Ms. Shinyei suggested that a contract should specify an end date, rather than be linked to the availability of funding. She also indicated that most postdocs have a probationary period when performance issues should be addressed.

Ms. Shinyei then informed Faculty Council about changes that have recently been imposed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). In February, CIC established an employer compliance fee for individuals needing a work permit that does not require a Labour Assessment. Such individuals include visiting professors, researchers and research students. Students studying and taking classes still only require a study permit. The compliance fee is \$230, and must be paid prior to a work permit being issued. In addition to the compliance fee, an immigration form (IMM 5802) must also be completed and submitted along with the work permit application. It was noted that a self-funded researcher planning to be at Dal for less than 6 months can be turned away at the border if they do not have a work permit.

To help faculty with the compliance fee and the immigration form, HR is looking after international faculty and postdocs, the International Student Office is looking after visiting undergraduate students, and FGS is looking after visiting graduate students. To ensure no one is turned away at the border, Dalhousie asks that all intended visitors complete the form and arrange to pay the compliance fee. If it turns out that someone does not require the compliance fee, CIC will allow us to request a refund. The fee cannot be paid by the student, but must be paid by either Dalhousie or the home institution. It was noted that there is an exemption for academic examiners.

FC 14/15.52 Students Working out of the Country (Wendy Fletcher, FGS Program Officer)

Ms. Fletcher was introduced and welcomed to the meeting. She indicated that currently there is no reliable system for keeping track of students travelling outside Canada, including students at conferences, doing research or taking classes. At present the only records are FGS travel and research grant applications, and students on an approved letter of permission.

A student who has applied for a travel grant and is going abroad for the conference is now required to take the on-line Pre-departure Course before the travel grant will be approved. Even a student who does not apply for a travel grant is encouraged to take the Pre-departure Course. Because this course is on-line, students at other campuses can access the program without difficulty.

Ms. Fletcher also recommended that students and staff planning to travel abroad should first register with DFAIT so they could be notified of any issues concerning the destination country while travelling. This registration will also provide a record of you being in the country.

FC 14/15.53 SRI Teaching Evaluations for Graduate Courses (S. Gadbois)

Dr. Simon Gadbois addressed Faculty Council on the issue of the SRI teaching evaluations for graduate courses, a process driven by Senate Learning & Teaching Regulation 4.1. The issue is that, even though students in small graduate classes (5 or fewer students) may complete the Teaching Evaluation form, for reasons of confidentiality the evaluation feedback is not provided to or used by anyone. Many professors in some departments are only involved with such small graduate classes, so feedback on their teaching is not currently available, even though such feedback is necessary for tenure and promotion decisions and may also be required for program accreditation.

Dr. Gadbois asked Faculty Council to lobby the Senate Learning & Teaching Committee to reconsider this regulation, remove the threshold, and allow such feedback to be used for both tenure and promotion decisions and for accreditation purposes. It was suggested that Dalhousie could use a system similar to that used at the IWK, in which feedback from small courses is aggregated over a period of several years to help maintain confidentiality of the participants.

There was discussion about issues of some larger classes not being evaluated, of inappropriate classes, i.e. thesis registration, being evaluated, and of the ethics of the withholding of feedback. It was pointed out that under FOIPOP the process could be grieved. Faculty Council members mandated that a sub-committee (S. Gadbois, R. Stadnyk and R. Mullins) be stuck to consider these issues and produce a letter, to be forwarded by the FC Chair to Faculty Council members, outlining the concerns and perhaps suggesting methods for a purpose-built model for graduate classes. One option would then be an electronic vote concerning the letter, with an approved letter sent to the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee.

FC14/15.54 Other Business

There was no other business.

FC14/15.55 Next meeting - Tuesday, April 28, 2015, Coburg Board Room, Room 3107, Mona Campbell Building.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

R. Singer, Chair

M. Scott, Recording Secretary