

**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 25, 2017, in University Hall. This meeting was dedicated to two agenda items only, and the usual reports from the Dean, Associate Deans, post-docs and students were absent from the agenda in this one instance.

Present: J. Bluestein, S. Boe, T. Currie, E. Denovan-Wright, S. Gadbois, P. Gardiner Barber, D. Groulx, D. Iron, B. Johnston, B. Karten, A. Kirk (Secretary), J. M. Lee (Chair), M. Leonard, R. Martin-Misener (Vice Chair), H. Niu, D. Pelzer, E. Reeve, L. Robinson, P. Tyedmers, S. Wells, J. Wilson

Regrets: H. Ali-Hassan, C. DeGagne, M. Durier-Copp, M. Ghasemi Ghodrat, E. Joubert, G. Jung, A. Kane, J. Kozey, H. MacFadyen, R. Mullin, B. Sabo, S. Stone

FC16.17.57 Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

This meeting was dedicated to two agenda items only, and the usual reports from the Dean, Associate Deans, post-docs and students were absent from the agenda in this one instance. Members of the community were invited to hear and contribute to the discussion on the two agenda items, but could not vote should such be required of Council members.

It was moved by J. Blustein seconded by D. Pelzer: to approve the Faculty Council agenda for April 25, 2017 as circulated. The motion carried.

FC16.17.58 Approval of the Minutes of previous Faculty Council meeting

It was moved by B. Johnston seconded by R. Martin-Misener: to approve the minutes from March 28, 2017 as circulated. The motion carried.

FC 16.17.59 Matters Arising

Guests from Senate (Chair Kevin Hewitt, and Vice-Chairs Jeff Hoyle and Katharine Harman) joined Faculty Council to observe proceedings as part of an ongoing information-gathering exercise. K. Hewitt explained that the goal is to find out how to better integrate Senate with stakeholders across the University and to better understand governance models. There was acknowledgement that SLTC and SAPRC sub-committees of Senate are more organically integrated with Faculty Council. There was a brief discussion around two-way communication between SAPRC and Faculty Council, the Associate Dean taking Council's business to SAPRC, and reporting back to Council on relevant business at SAPRC. It was considered that the Chair of FGS Faculty Council should sit on Senate.

FC 16.17.60 The Future of the PhD Dissertation (R. Klein)

R. Klein briefly provided background on the work being done by the Canadian Association of Graduate Students (CAGS) subcommittee considering this matter. He noted that there were two task forces: one considering the dissertation and the other considering comprehensive/qualifying examinations. His presentation focused on the former matter: the shape of the doctoral dissertation. He noted that his job here was to collect input and feedback to take back to CAGS—along with his own views—as contribution to their report. The report will be advisory only since individual universities have the power to determine regulations around what constitutes an appropriate dissertation.

The first area of discussion was around defining what a thesis is, and in what acceptable forms scholarship may be presented in a thesis. L. Robinson noted the new and growing field of implementation science, and how it plays into the IDPhD which is a relatively permissive crossover program. It was also noted that Dalhousie has many applied programs, so *application* of knowledge (in addition to creation of new knowledge) cannot be outside of our definition.

E. Denovan-Wright noted the current definition of a thesis at Dalhousie (10.2.2 Graduate Calendar, “The thesis must represent a coherent body of original work by the student. It must display a scholarly approach and thorough knowledge of the subject.”) and expressed concern that the adjective “coherent” could get lost, for instance in theses which are collections of stand-alone/published articles. Typically, the structure of a thesis includes an introduction that places the work in historical context, and a discussion that summarizes the entire middle part. That middle part could, then, be subject to more variety. R. Klein added that students should be expected to discourse on the research, which wouldn’t preclude more modern notions of the content being included. There was consensus that the thesis document itself must display a high level of scholarship which can be created supplementary to other forms of work (such as sculpture, poetry, film, structures, etc.) D. Groulx added that where each PhD committee is unique, the PhD is essentially re-defined with each new PhD student and there is room for variation if it’s determined to be suitable by the committee.

A guest in the audience commented that there can sometimes seem to be two separate pieces: the academic qualification and the professional qualification. It could be the structure of poems or films that makes the student a professional in some field, but it is the *framing* of it in the written thesis that makes the student academically qualified. R. Klein offered that there are other “doctoral” degrees, Doctorate of Psychology for example in his own field. Offering different types of doctorates could afford opportunity to adjust the scale between professional and academic for students with varying interest in these two pursuits.

J. Wilson suggested that the idea that a long written document may not be necessary in every scenario as a means to show knowledge, and that there may be other means to display knowledge. E. Reeve continued, questioning whether the ability to communicate scholarship in the written form must be the necessary requirement for getting a PhD. R. Klein noted that we do have an oral component, and students can be excellent writers but unable to discourse orally—something which is also essential to scholarship at a high level.

ACTION: Contact R. Klein if any further input, Ray.Klein@Dal.Ca

FC 16.17.61 Faculty Council Structure

M. Lee presented a short report which outlined a proposed revision of the structure of Faculty Council. This report followed from the last Senate review of FGS report, and was informed by the recommendations from a small committee established by Council and led by Vice-Chair R. Martin-Misener. The proposal suggests that Faculty Council could be principally made up of one standing member from each Faculty of the university, that person being a representative from each Faculty's level graduate council. This would provide a consistent conduit for information sharing and communication between FGS FC and the Faculties. There would also be ex officio membership from the Dean's office, DAGS, and PDFs, as well as from cross-Faculty programs (e.g. IDPhD). The proposal included a mechanism for creation of new standing committees, the only current one being the Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee (APCC). The new structure would include three additional committees: policy, scholarships and governance/nominations. These committees could be comprised of faculty inside/outside of Faculty Council, increasing interaction with departments. It was noted that the proposed structure did not address a mechanism for proportional representation of faculties—although this could be considered with consideration of appropriate data.

Before the new structure would be put in place, each Faculty must be afforded the time to establish a graduate council and its membership, if such a council does not already exist, or to identify an ex officio individual who could provide a similar, appropriate conduit for information to/from Council. It was suggested that the revised structured should be implemented for September 2018.

P. Tyedmers and S. Boe commented that given the range of program types in their faculty (thesis, non-thesis/professional), having one person might not be a true representation of the Faculty's activities and interests. It was noted that a graduate council at the Faculty level may help unite Faculties on some level. D. Pelzer pointed out that Faculty diversity plays a more important role at APCC, when curriculum and program matters are considered, than at Faculty Council per se.

Some members of Council spoke in favour of integrating some mechanism for proportional representation, both in fairness to large (perhaps under-represented graduate activities) and to add to what would be, as proposed, a smaller Council. R. Martin Misener commented that the inclusion of "members-at-large" could perhaps address the issue of proportional representation.

ACTION: M. Lee to obtain graduate enrolment numbers across Faculties for June/17 meeting, to further discuss what proportional representation may look like.

FC 16.17.62 Other Business

D. Pelzer commented that the PhD in Agricultural Sciences is coming up for discussion at APCC in May, however there is no FC meeting in May. This would cause the discussion to be deferred to June, which would be too late for Senate to act in time for fall. He requested that Council give APCC permission to consider this program and, if it were approved, to forwarded the proposal to SAPRC.

It was moved by D. Pelzer seconded by J. Blustein: to empower APCC to consider for approval the PhD in Agricultural Sciences. The motion carried.

FC 16.17.63 Final meeting –Tuesday June 27th, 2017 in the B400, Killam Library (basement)

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

J. Michael Lee, Chair

A. Kirk, Recording Secretary