MINUTES

Meeting of the Graduate Academic Policy Committee
Monday, November 4, 2024, 2.00-3.30 PM
Location: Zoom

Present: Adam Frank (Chair), Michael Hunt, Richard Price, Curtis Suttle, Davide Elmo, Dónal O'Donoghue, Jolanta Aleksejuniene, Shannon Hagerman, John Ries, Jenny Phelps (guest), Max Read, Jennifer Fletcher (guest), Orkhon Gantogtokh
Regrets: Thomas Chang, Sumeet Gulati

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

   Adam proposed moving item no. 5 (embargoes) to the bottom of the agenda

All	}	*That the agenda be approved.*

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   Carried
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2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

All	}	*That the minutes be approved.*

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   Carried
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3. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

   a. **GenAI and Graduate Education (Jenny Phelps)**

   - As a member of a subcommittee on GenAI and Grad Education which forms part of a larger UBC Steering Committee on GenAI, Jenny made a presentation about the work done by the committee. Here are some key points from her presentation:
     - This sub-committee's deliverables are to generate guidelines and advice on the use of GenAI tools for all constituents of Grad Education at UBC and these guidelines will be manifest in the forms of
       1) Guidance website
       2) GenAI 'self-study guide' for grad programs
     - One of the key tenets of the GenAI-Grad Education interface is that the use of GenAI by a grad student is an academic/scholarly decision and, thus, subject to the discretion of an instructor, supervisor or grad advisor, ideally by mutual agreement with the student. No university-level unique policies are needed as UBC's Academic and Scholarly Integrity policies are broad enough to govern the use of GenAI. The UBC resource website will be modeled on a similar UoT website.
     - G+PS to propose that all submitted theses/dissertation have a statement on the use of GenAI tools in the preface. Jenny also shared some concern around the lack of sophistication of the AI detection tools.

- Re: AI detection - Jolanta mentioned that a mechanism similar to the one in place at the research journals could be considered where the researchers have to disclose the extent to which they have used AI. She also mentioned the mistakes and errors AI technology ends up making – Jenny said both these concerns have come under discussion at the subcommittee's academic integrity policies.
- Curtis raised a concern that any material one uploads on ChatGPT could be used for training purposes and was an intellectual property issue – Jenny said this has also been discussed to some extent at the subcommittee and that it might need be addressed more specifically through FAQs on the guidance website.
- Dónal mentioned tuning in to a guest lecture at his department and the lecturer had invited the listeners to think of GenAI tools as co-intelligence. He also mentioned that a program director recently told him of a couple of applications that were being considered by the admissions committees and which carried almost identical letters of recommendation (generated through AI) – Jenny acknowledged this as a point that could be referred to in FAQs.
- Davide also mentioned seeing some review papers generated through AI as they did not have anything specific. Danger is that an external reviewer may cut time to generate review but the entire thesis is in the system and it becomes public information. Jenny acknowledged the concern around research material getting into the system inadvertently.
- Richard asked about the timeline of the website publication – Jenny said it would be published by January.

b. **Policy on the Academic Progress**

- Adam highlighted a problem with a calendar entry stipulating that 'a minimum of 68% (B-) must be achieved in all coursework taken for credit' as it did not specify any distinction between coursework required by the program or any other coursework students might take. A change was needed to specify that in case of failing a course, a student needed to either repeat the course or take another course with similar learning goals. This distinction was not made clear in the existing calendar entry.
- Adam walked the group through a document with the proposed changes on satisfactory progress and candidacy for both Masters and Doctoral studies.
- Shannon asked what would happen in a situation a program may require a course of a student in the sense that is at the discretion of the supervisor and the student and is not explicitly specific by the Program. Adam said that such a course would be deemed to be required even if it was not numbered.
- John – student who obtains a grade of less than 68% in more than one course, will be required to withdraw – if they take it again, the less than 68% course will still show up on their transcript, - transcript has to reflect the actual academic experience of a student – Max says that the failed course will stay on the record – Max explains the rationale – if the student has failed 2 courses, it should at least merit a discussion.
- Dónal – could the different levels of courses be considered good enough to make up for a failed course, for example, if a student failed a 600-level course, could he ask for permission to take a 500-level course with the same learning objectives? In such cases, Max said, G+PS would be guided by the academic recommendation from the student's program.
- Patricia asked if any mechanism existed for differentiating between the failed and the remedy courses for a student who had made up for a course they had initially scored 68% on - Max said there was no such mention made on the transcript and that the student would have to

supplement this information in some other supporting document – Patricia asked if there is any provision for such a mechanism to be considered – Max responded that she was not aware of any such practice at other universities. Adam said he would look into it further.

- Patricia asked who had the power to make a decision about a student's withdrawal – was it meant to be a collective decision or just a singular one by the supervisor? She also asked if other people could be part of that decision-making process because some students might have a difficult relationship with their supervisor – Michael said that the final decision on withdrawal from a program rested with him but that he would (and had) never withdraw(n) a student based on the opinion of a single individual.
- Curtis asked if there was any reason for not delegating the determination of satisfactory program requirements to the individual programs - Michael said that was the policy already but a structure was needed.
- Orkhon asked if the satisfactory progress clause was applicable after the candidacy or before that? Adam said that if was to kick in after the candidacy had commenced but Michael acknowledged the need for such a mechanism even in the pre-candidacy phase in case some students might not be able to reach the candidacy for any number of reasons.

c. **Audit**

- Adam introduced the current rules and regulations around auditing and asked the Committee if the standing policy should be revised or if a new standing policy needed to be devised just to focus on the graduate side of auditing courses.
- He also asked people to share observations on how auditing worked at graduate levels.
- Shannon – it's a very instructor-dependent thing. I don't allow audits for various pedagogical reasons but other do permit that.
- Donal – similar in Education – based on a discussion between the student and the supervisor.

d. **Embargo**

- Adam provided a brief overview of the current UBC thesis embargo policy - UBC offered students an option of one-year embargo which could be renewed if the justification provided to request so was strong enough. Recently, some discussion arose in the Faculty of Arts about whether a longer-term embargo might be put in place if the student wanted to publish a book Richard Price commented that this did not appear to be of widespread concern. Adam agreed with his opinion.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**
   The meeting was adjourned at 3:25pm.