**MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND**

**Academic Council of the School of Graduate Studies**

**Minutes, October 17, 2016**

PRESENT: Dr. D. Farquharson (Acting Chair), Dr. P. Coady, Dr. D. Foster, Dr. R. Joy, Dr. L. Lye, Ms. C. Walsh, Dr. J. Doré, Dr. J.C. Loredo-Osti, Dr. C. Walsh, Dr. D Mullings (teleconference), Dr. M. Cheema (teleconference), Mr. B. Abdelaleem, Mr. M. Ismail, Mr. R. Biswa, Ms. V. Campbell, Dr. M. Greene, Dr. S. Cadigan, Dr. E. Pittman, Dr. C. Reynolds

APOLOGIES: Dr. A. Surprenant, Dr. C. Dyck, Dr. J. Weber, Mr. Tanjin, Dr. R. Klein, Dr. T. Brown, Dr. D. Moralejo, Ms. S. Cleyle, Dr. K. Tahlan

It was moved by Dr. Cadigan and seconded by Dr. Coady that the agenda be approved. The motion

 CARRIED

1. MINUTES:

It was moved by Dr. Foster and seconded by Dr. Lye that the minutes of the meeting held September 19, 2016 be approved. The motion

 CARRIED

1. BUSINESS ARISING
2. CORRESPONDENCE
3. DEAN’S REPORT/REPORT OF SENATE
4. At the regular meeting of Senate, October 11th, calendar revisions governing comprehensive examinations were approved.
5. An external review to assess the proposed new graduate programs at the Marine Institute (Master of Science/PhD in Fisheries Science) will be held October 27/28, 2016. A university wide invitation did go out for any individual/group interested in meeting with the Review Committee. Anyone interested in booking a time with the Review Committee, or sending written comments, can do by contacting A. Williams (awilliam@mun.ca ).
6. A welcome was extended to the new graduate student representatives on Council.
7. A call for nominations to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee for the search for Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies, was extended to the University community. The closing date for receipt of nominations was October 14th.
8. The annual Graduate Officer Information session is scheduled for Wednesday, October 26th, Room IIC 2014, Bruneau Centre. Graduate Officers in all units are encouraged to attend.
9. The 3MTcompetition was held early today on October 17th. There was a big turnout of 30 contestants. The winner was Meghan McCardle, Faculty of Science (Experimental Psychology).
10. REPORT OF THE GRADUATE STUDENTS’ UNION

The GSU did not have any business to report for this meeting.

1. STANDING COMMITTEES
2. Academic Council Executive
3. Revision to Graduate Application – ‘Special Circumstances’

 The School of Graduate Studies is requesting endorsement of a ‘Special Circumstances’ clause, to be included in the graduate application as a new checklist item. This revision does not mean academic admission requirements are any different, but rather it gives the applicants the opportunity to provide circumstances that may have had significant impacts on their academic performance. One example could be if an applicant had breaks in registration on the academic record, an applicant can provide additional information to explain that, or any other special circumstances could be provided to help in the admission process.

 One member stated that SSHRC announced that similar language will be used in their applications, as will be the case for the Tri-Council agencies.

 There was great support for this revision to the graduate application, but because it was felt that all circumstances do not necessarily have to be negative, it was agreed as a friendly amendment, to remove the word ‘negative’ in the 2nd last sentence of the ‘Special Circumstances’ clause. It was also noted that the application does have sections to outline achievements, in addition to the CV providing such information.

 One member stated that the current regulations allow for students to be accepted without the minimum admission requirements, however ‘minimum requirements’ was included in the wording so that it is not perceived as overlooking the academic record completely.

On the call for question, the motion to endorse the inclusion of the ‘Special Circumstances’ section, with the friendly amendment, unanimously

 CARRIED

 The ‘Special Circumstances’ checklist item will now read:

 To be considered for admission, all applicants must meet the minimum requirements as outlined in the University Calendar. The most competitive applicants will have consistently high academic achievement in their previous degree programs. Other aspects of a graduate application, including strong reference letters, research experience, standardized test scores, and statement of purpose can contribute to the competitiveness of a graduate application. The School of Graduate Studies recognizes that, for some applicants, financial hardship, community responsibilities, or some other disadvantaged socioeconomic, or other exceptional circumstances, might have had a significant impact on their academic performance. If relevant, please describe these circumstances below.

1. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
2. NOTICE OF MOTION
3. A notice of motion to revise the Constitution of the Academic Council, School of Graduate Studies, was circulated Sept 21, 2016. The revisions reflect the deletion of item 2.d., which is no longer required in lieu of the insertion of a representative for each of the three Schools at Grenfell Campus. There was also a request for change in the title for Dean of Student Affairs and Services, which should read ‘Deputy Provost (Students) and Associate Vice-President (Academic) Undergraduate Studies or delegate’.

It was moved by Dr. Coady and seconded by Dr. Doré that the revisions to the Constitution be approved.

Discussion

It was noted that the Faculty of Arts requires a change to reflect it’s new title.

On the call for question, the motion to approve the revisions to the Constitution, with the friendly amendment,

 CARRIED

1. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned 4:27 pm.

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Danine Farquharson, Acting Chair Peggy Coady, Secretary