GRADUATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
October 10, 2018
MINUTES

Attendance: Jorge Sousa – Chair, Sara Carpenter, Dia Da Costa, Joe da Costa, Darryl Hunter, Jerry, Kachur, Katherine Koch, Valentine Ojelde, Evelyn Steinhauser, Joan White

Regrets: Belen Samuel

1. Approval of Agenda:
S. Carpenter asked that under the Other Business item that the committee discuss the recent cancellation of Winter 2019 courses.

Motion: D. Da Costa moved that the agenda be approved, seconded by J. Kachur. CARRIED

2. Approval of Minutes: September 12, 2018

Motion: J. da Costa moved that the September 12, 2018 minutes be approved, seconded by S. Carpenter. CARRIED

3. Business Arising from the September 12, 2018 Minutes
J. Sousa informed the committee that:
- the Committee’s handbook had not yet been placed on the department website but work will proceed on it now that the initial process of the October MEd applications had been completed.
- the capping exercise document forms for EDPS 900 had been revised to eliminate the need for the program advisor to sign. The new forms were available on the department website and signatures on both can now be done electronically.
- Question: about the program advisor’s role for the capping exercise course/document.
- Question: could the department’s various forms be reviewed to determine need and accessibility
- the two academic staff members in the department who previously had not been connected to a department specialization, had now made a decision about which specialization they would be a part of. For more information he asked that the members talk to the relevant academic staff.

4. Library Report
K. Koch briefly talked about workshops that are available through the library. She also informed the committee that because the staffing of the libraries across the U of A had been decreased that various functions within the Library were becoming more centralized.

5. Report on MEd applications
J. White informed the committee of the number of MEd applications in the four specializations that were now being considered for admission. She also indicated that the number of Canadian applicants had decreased significantly.

ACHE = 3
EDAL = 10
IPE = 2 or 3
SJI = 5

In the discussion that followed:
- Embassies appeared to be increasingly asking for an additional letter (beyond the formal admission letter from FGSR) verifying that the individual was a (current/active) student at the U of A. J. White indicated that FGSR is the only office that is allowed to provide that type of letter. She will be contacting them about this to see if they are aware of this and if so what they are implementing to solve this issue.
- Question: was the decrease of Canadian applicants a trend that was across the Faculty of Education or just in the department? J. Sousa will be talking to the Faculty of Education’s GAAC about this.
- J. White is asked to provide stats at the next meeting to learn what the ratio is between convocating students and students admitted in a given year, for the last 5 years.

6. TOEFL vs IELTS English Language Score Minimums
J. da Costa presented information to the committee about the department’s current minimums for the various tests allowed by FGSR and what was missing and/or needed to be changed. The TOEFL exam is now offered paper-
based, computer-based and internet-based, but the department does not have a minimum concerning the
computer-based exam. When comparing the minimums between the department’s MELAB and TOEFL
requirements the department's MELAB minimum appears to be higher. The department’s IELTS minimum of 6.5,
when converted to the TOEFL figures, can fall below the department’s (and sometimes FGSR’s) minimums.

Motion: J. da Costa moved and seconded by D. Hunter that
- the committee approve the TOEFL computer-based minimum for the department at 237.
- the committee approve change of the MELAB minimum from 88 to 85
- the committee approve the change of the IELTS minimum and overall from 6.5 to 7.0

In favour = 2  Against = 0  Abstentions = 5  CARRIED

Stats of students who entered with the English Language Proficiency requirement and what their resulting GPA
was in their graduate program was asked to be obtained for the Department Council meeting when this motion is
discussed there.

7. Integrate Teaching into Mentorship of Doctoral Students
S. Carpenter started the conversation by asking if the department had a strategy to address this. It was confirmed
that there was no committee or department strategy.
- The development of teaching and research skills of the doctoral students in the department is and should be a
  concern by both the academic staff and students.
- The CTL unit in the Faculty of Education does help with some of this but it was felt that it does not provide
  all of the necessary education/skill opportunities needed.
- Question: How many TA’s could the department support in a given year?
- Question: How many of our students are planning to pursue academia?

After further discussion it was felt that this discussion should occur Department Council, as this is a department
issue and should involve more faculty members and students, so the item will be brought to discuss there.

8. EDPS 501: Parent/Caregiver Participation in Schooling
J. da Costa presented the course and informed the committee that this course had been brought forward before but
not approved. It had, though, been offered once already. J. Sousa asked that if the course was approved that it
would be for a one time offering so that, after this next offering the course, the specialization could then request
that it become a permanent offering, if they choose to.

Motion: J. da Costa moved to approve EDPS 501: Parent/Caregiver Participation in Schooling to be offered
a second time. Seconded by D. Hunter  CARRIED

9. EDPS 563 Calendar Change
J. Kachur presented the course and the changes recommended. The course had been offered over the years
without a course description in the U of A calendar. As well the change of title for the course was to reflect the
change recently made to the specialization’s name. The course has the same content and focus as had been
offered in the past.

Motion: J. Kachur moved to approve the EDPS 563 calendar change. Seconded by J. da Costa  CARRIED

10. Other Business
S. Carpenter talked about the recent cancellation of graduate courses for the Winter 2019 term.
- this came as a surprise to all involved as, in the past, the academic staff had been informed of a possible
cancellation before it happened
- Question: was not Winter courses normally cancelled around the end of October/early November? Answer,
  there is to be a review of how this decision was made and the possible change in process that would be needed
  for the future
- Question: Will the academic staff be given a rationale on why the courses were cancelled? Answer, low
  enrollment.
- Question: Would the academic staff have input into the decision on the process of cancelling courses?
  Answer, because of low numbers for admission, it was possibly having an effect on the course enrollments,
which could mean that the graduate program may need to have a more defined program plan (3 years) for students.

- J. Sousa suggested to explore the need to reconstitute the department Timetable Committee.

J. Kachur moved that the meeting adjourn at 3:45pm.

The next meeting will be on November 7, 2018.