

**GENERAL FACULTIES COUNCIL**  
Approved Minutes  
Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

January 16, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

via Zoom

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***Voting Members***

Penny Werthner, Co-Chair  
Tara Beattie, Academic Co-Chair  
Kristin Baetz  
Marjan Eggermont  
Michael Hart  
Dawn Johnston  
Saaka Sulemana Saaka  
Dora Tam

***Regrets***

Hannah Ashton  
Mark Bauer  
Barbara Brown  
Nicole Schmidt  
Malinda Smith

***Guests***

Violet Baron, Director Strategic Education Initiatives, Werklund School of Education – present for Items 5 & 6  
Abraham Fapojuwo, Associate Head (Graduate Studies), Department of Electrical and Software Engineering – present for Item 8  
Daniel McGrath, Graduate Program Director, Department of Psychology – present for Item 7  
Mary O’Brien, Senior Associate Dean (Policy and Program Development), Faculty of Graduate Studies – present for Item 4  
Marlon Simmons, Associate Dean Graduate Programs, Werklund School of Education – present for Items 5 & 6  
Robin Yates, Dean and Vice-Provost Graduate Studies and Co-Chair of the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee present for Items 4 - 8

***Observers***

Jaclyn Carter, Institute of Teaching and Learning Consultant  
Kelly Hoglund, Partner, Program Innovation  
Jessica Revington, Program Proposal Assistant, Program Innovation  
Kelly Kay Spurlock, Analyst, Planning and Reviews

***Non-Voting Members***

David Stewart  
Melanie Zimmer

***Secretary***

Courtney McVie

***Scribe***

Cherie Tutt

***Resource Personnel***

Christine Johns, Senior Director (Program Innovation and Planning)

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The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

**1. Approval of the Agenda****Moved/Seconded**

That the Agenda for the January 16, 2023 Academic Planning and Priorities Committee meeting be approved.

**Carried****2. Remarks of the Co-Chair and Academic Co-Chair**

The Co-Chair welcomed the Committee back to a new term and encouraged members to complete the Strategic Plan Survey and Survey on Mental Health and Well-Being that were recently sent out, noting the critical importance of hearing from the University community.

The Academic Co-Chair reported that it is the time of year for the Committee's mid-year review and took the opportunity to review the Committee's role and responsibilities. She then noted some key areas the Committee should consider when reviewing program proposals, such as whether the proposal aligns with institutional strategic priorities, whether it is educationally and pedagogically sound, and if it meets a demand/fills a current gap.

It was suggested that other areas the Committee should consider are compliance with the collective agreements and financial sustainability of programs. It was noted that these are not specific areas of responsibility for the Committee, but are important, and as proposals are developed these points are considered.

**3. Approval of the December 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

*Secretary's Note: Approval of the Minutes was postponed to the next meeting to allow for further consideration of the content to be included in the Minutes for Item 7.*

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Minutes of the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee meeting held on December 12, 2022 be approved.

**Postponed****4. Approval of Changes to Graduate Admissions Section: A.3 Admission Categories, Qualifying Students**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Robin Yates and Mary O'Brien presented this item.

## Highlights:

- The presenters provided an overview of the proposed changes to Section A.3 *Admission Categories, Qualifying Students* in the Graduate Chapter of the University Calendar explaining that the changes clarify that time spent as a qualifying student does not count as time in program and that the category is intended for thesis-based students and only used for course-based students in special circumstance. It was reported that the category was always intended for thesis-based students and to be used on a limited basis, but that some course-based programs were using this category regularly, which was administratively burdensome and created challenges for international students.
- There were no questions

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the revisions to Section A.3 *Admission Categories, Qualifying Students* in the Graduate Chapter of the University Calendar, as set out in the document provided to the Committee, and as recommended by the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee, effective for the 2023-2024 Calendar.

**Carried****5. Approval of the Termination of the MSc in Educational Research**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Marlon Simmons, Violet Baron, and Robin Yates presented this item.

## Highlights:

- The presenters reported that as a result of structural changes in the Werklund School of Education (WSE) and based on discussions with faculty and students from 2011 – 2015 the content from the MSc in Educational Research was replaced with an equivalent MA program, and the WSE is now proposing that the MSc in Educational Research be terminated to clean up admissions pathways. It was noted there have been no students in the MSc in Educational Research since 2019.
- In response to a question, it was clarified that students who are interested in this specialization area can complete the equivalent MA program and so exit interviews on this were not conducted with the students who graduated in 2019
- The importance of terminating programs which are no longer being offered was discussed

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the termination of the Master of Science in Educational Research, effective immediately, as set out in the proposal provided to the Committee and as recommended by the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee.

**Carried**

## **6. Approval of a Change in Course Requirements for the PhD in Educational Research in Adult Learning**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Marlon Simmons, Violet Baron, and Robin Yates presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters provided an overview of the proposed change to course requirements for the Adult Learning (AL) Specialization in the PhD in Educational Research explaining that the WSE is proposing that an additional three-unit course be added to the AL Specialization to bring the total number of units required for all PhD in Educational Research specializations into alignment
- The presenters then outlined the content for the new course
- In response to questions, the presenters explained:
  - The typical course sequencing for a student in the AL Specialization, noting that the new course will be in sync with other content specialized course offerings scheduled in the summer of each year and that summer is a time students should expect to be enrolled in courses
  - It is not anticipated that students will find the additional course work burdensome, as there have been no concerns from students in the other specializations who have been completing this number of units and it is believed this course will better prepare students by deepening knowledge and addressing content and research focus issues. It was also noted that supervisors were providing current AL Specialization students with additional research outside of the courses and this change better reflects this.

### **Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the change in course requirements for the Adult Learning Specialization in the PhD in Educational Research, Werklund School of Education, as set out in the proposal provided to the Committee and as recommended by the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee.

**Carried**

## **7. Approval of a Change in Course Requirements for the MSc and PhD in Psychology**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Daniel McGrath and Robin Yates presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters provided the rationale for the proposed change to reduce the course requirements for the MSc in Psychology from six to zero units and from twelve to six for the PhD in Psychology explaining the challenges students have been having finding elective courses. It was also explained that the change brings the programs into better alignment with other similar programs in the U15 and is supported by faculty and students.

- In response to questions, the presenters reported that:
  - Students do not transfer from the MSc into the PhD and are required to complete the MSc before moving into the PhD
  - Some of the reasons the department struggles to offer enough elective courses include staffing and budget challenges related to several faculty members having course releases to focus on their research and having a large number of high demand undergraduate courses
  - The change is beneficial to students in that they will have more time in the lab to focus on research
  - The experimental and clinical programs in psychology are separate entities and the proposed changes will not have any effects on the licensure of students in the clinical program
  - The program did consider completely removing the elective requirements for the PhD, but thought the reduction was a good first step and will continue to assess this
  - There is currently no Indigenous content within the core courses, but there is a faculty member, Adam Murry, who is increasing the focus on Indigenous research/content within his lab and students could seek out this content
- The Committee suggested that the program continue to think about:
  - Whether more elective courses for PhD students versus MSc students makes sense pedagogically
  - How to better integrate Indigenous content into the program to ensure all graduates have baseline knowledge and awareness, noting the impact of this area of study on Indigenous peoples. Some examples of ways to do this included embedding content into core courses and integrating Indigenous methodologies.

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the change in course requirements for the MSc in Psychology and PhD in Psychology, as set out in the proposal provided to the Committee, and as recommended by the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee.

**Carried****8. Approval of a Change in Course Requirements for the Software Engineering Specialization in the Course-based Master of Engineering in Electrical and Computer Engineering**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Abraham Fapojuwo and Robin Yates presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters provided the background and rationale for the proposed increase to course requirements for the Software Engineering (SE) Specialization reporting that many applicants do not have the required background to complete the Software Engineering Specialization, so the Schulich School of Engineering has been admitting applicants as *Qualifying Students* while offering

them bridging courses before admitting them as *Regular Students* to the SE Specialization. Adding the bridging courses as foundation courses to the SE Specialization will remove the administrative burden associated with changing students from *Qualifying to Regular* and will improve student experience.

- In response to questions, the presenters explained:
  - This program is very attractive to engineers from other disciplines who want to reskill
  - Students with a software engineering background will not be required to complete the foundation courses.
  - The foundation courses will be included on the transcript
  - This is considered to be a terminal program
  - The course sequencing
  - There was a charge for students to take the bridging courses and there will be an approximate 7% increase associated per course as the courses have been changed to the 600 level

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee approve the change in course requirements for the Software Engineering Specialization in the course-based Master of Engineering in Electrical and Computer Engineering, as set out in the proposal provided to the Committee and as recommended by the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee.

**Carried****9. Mid-Year Survey**

The Academic Co-Chair reported that the Mid-Year Member Survey will be sent out to the Committee tomorrow and that the Survey assists the Committee in determining how it is functioning and is an opportunity to hear the perspectives of its members. The survey will be sent through Qualtrics, feedback will be anonymous, and a Likert scale has been added to each question in addition to the open-ended question boxes. Members are encouraged to use the open-ended question boxes to elaborate on their feedback. The Survey will be open for the next few weeks and results will be presented at the February 27 meeting.

The Committee requested that the aggregated data be presented to the Committee versus a summary. It was agreed that at a minimum the Likert data would be provided and that if the comments do not compromise anonymity they will also be presented.

**10. Subcommittee Reports: Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee, December 14, 2022 and Calendar and Curriculum Subcommittee, December 15, 2022**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda for information only.

**11. Status of Program Approvals Report**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda for information only. Questions can be directed to the Program Innovation and Planning office.

**12. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**13. Motion to Adjourn**

**Moved/Seconded**

That the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee adjourn the January 16, 2023 meeting by consensus.

**Carried**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

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Courtney McVie  
University Secretary