



**Academic Council
Graduate Studies Committee**

Tuesday, June 25, 2024
9:02 a.m. – 9:59 a.m.

Via Google Meet

All Meeting Materials (*copy and paste into browser):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QxM4EXCZEOlhOoBSE3QuYnXRvg33TvwD?usp=sharing>

MINUTES

Present: T. Christou, (Chair), J. Arcand, K. Ayotte (secretary), D. Bonetta, C. Davidson, F. Gaspari, P. Hung, S. Jackson, K. Krystyniak, A. LeSage, R. Liscano, P. Mirza Babaei, M. Watterworth, N. Wattie

Staff and Guests: H. MacPherson, K. McCartney, S. Windsor

Regrets: J. Abbass Dick, C. Cesaroni, G. Crawford, B. Easton, K. Elgazzar, L. Harkins, M. Heslip, L. Jacobs, A. Kassaris, R. Kay, A. Kiani, H. Kishawy, L. Livingston, S. Marsh, C. McGregor, C. Rodgers, A. Slane, P. Stoett, A. Tokuhiko, L. van Veen, J. Walsh, A. Wingate

1. Chair T. Christou called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

N. Wattie read aloud the Land Acknowledgement

2. Approval of the Agenda

Upon a motion duly made by J. Arcand and seconded by P. Mirza Babaei, the agenda was approved as presented.

3. Approval of the [minutes](#) of the Meeting of May 28, 2024

Upon a motion duly made by F. Gaspari and seconded by J. Arcand, the Minutes were approved as presented.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

5. [Comments from the Chair](#)

T. Christou began by expressing his gratitude for the committee members and their efforts over the past year. He highlighted the establishment of a leadership team within the SGPS and acknowledged the introduction of the Base Camp initiative to support students and supervisors noting that despite funding challenges, this initiative aims to provide comprehensive support through collective efforts. He highlighted administrative improvements, such as the introduction of DocuSign, have helped to streamline and expedite processes. He concluded by emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration and expressed excitement for the upcoming year.

6. Academic Policy Instruments

a) Program Nomenclature Directives

K. McCartney advised that the revisions primarily address terminology issues at the undergraduate level, including the double counting rule and noted that most changes affect undergraduate. The adjustments in the graduate section are mainly editorial to align with the current style guide and Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) definitions. She emphasized that additional comprehensive policy revisions, particularly for the undergraduate level, are anticipated within 18 months to clarify degree requirements and alleviate confusion for students and academic advisors.

Upon a motion duly made by R. Liscano and seconded by A. Lesage, GSC hereby approved the amended Program Nomenclature Directives.

7. Report on Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs at Ontario Tech University by the Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs (IDGP) Working Group

T. Christou noted the completion of a report initiated by previous leadership and carried forward to completion under his tenure as Dean of SGPS. He highlights the report's focus on current challenges in Graduate Studies, including differentiating between professional and research-based programs and noted that the report also explores interdisciplinary considerations and suggests new pathways within existing programs. While recognizing the report's thoroughness, he emphasized ongoing discussions on quality, excellence, financial constraints, and growth.

P. Mirza-Babaei noted that he facilitated feedback from committee members resulting in updates to the report. He emphasized key insights on graduate program models, best practices for interdisciplinary programs, and future opportunities identified by the committee and clarified that these insights are intended to spark discussion rather than impose mandates on faculties. He recommended that the GSC continue to prioritize discussions on interdisciplinary programs.

K. McCartney noted the importance of thorough review for new programs, emphasizing the need for careful consideration through the new program process and highlighting potential administrative challenges with joint programs. She cited the example of the Sustainability Studies program at the undergraduate level as a thoughtful model to consider, and also endorsed non-degree interdisciplinary offerings, like micro-credentials, noting their accessibility with minimal internal and no external approval required. Regarding the examples used in the report, P. Mirza-Babaei clarified that they were intended to stimulate discussion rather than represent active development projects. He emphasized that the report's recommendations could offer valuable guidance for existing interdisciplinary programs and recommended sharing and reviewing the report's best practices widely with faculty. He suggested that graduate program directors consider how these practices could benefit their programs and highlighted recommendations for the GSC to discuss in the upcoming year.

T. Christou addressed concerns regarding administrative transitions and faculty turnover for the up-coming academic year. He committed to distributing the report to all Deans by late summer and stressed the importance of presenting it to Faculty Councils in the fall. He also supported the idea of allowing students from different faculties to take elective courses outside of their discipline to foster interdisciplinary learning, acknowledging the challenges associated with managing cross-faculty course enrollments.

8. Roundtable

The Chair allotted time during the meeting for members to engage in informal discussions regarding their upcoming summer plans or to share any noteworthy achievements. Additionally, heartfelt congratulations were extended to A. LeSage and R. Liscano who are retiring, acknowledging their significant contributions and wishing them well in their future endeavors.

9. Termination

There being no other business, upon a motion duly made by F. Gaspari the meeting adjourned at 9:59 a.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary