

**MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF  
THE COUNCIL OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
OPEN SESSION**

**May 21, 2020 at 10:00 am via Zoom**

PRESENT

Ex-officio members: J. Beaudoin (Secretary), E. Diamantoudi (Chair).

Voting members: B. Abu Safieh, O. Ait Mohamed, R. Berger, J. Berzowska, K. Boies, S. Chauhan, F. Darvishi, A. Dolatabadi, G. Dover, L. Franzen, Y.-G. Guéhéneuc, E. Lagou, B. Nelson, P. Pawelek, A. Poteete, F. Scala, D. Secko, E. Shihab, A. Sinner, A. Soliman, L. Sotelo-Castro, L. Switzer, A. Youssef, C. Wild,.

Non-Voting members: S. De Celles.

REGRETS

Voting members: J. Zhou

Non-Voting members: W. Cheaib, S. Gabriele, J. Powlowski.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved and seconded (B. Nelson, E. Lagou). Carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Meeting of January 27, 2020

The approval of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

4. Chair's Remarks

Dr Diamatoudi welcomed Council members to the last meeting of the academic year which would be her first as Interim Dean of Graduate Studies. She also welcomed Dr

Dolatabadi who had agreed to take up the role of Associate Dean, Awards and Recruitment during this period.

In light of the current situation surrounding Covid-19, the Chair outlined a series of measures taken by the School of Graduate Studies and the university including the establishing of an exhaustive online FAQ section for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty members and staff. Certain in-person activities have been adjusted including oral defences which have been held remotely or in some cases waived at the master's level. Additionally, students near graduation whose internships were disrupted have been accommodated as best as possible.

Most of our regular events such as the Public Scholar's end of year symposium and those for new Graduate Program Directors have gone virtual. The School will also redirect its recruitment efforts towards local and national students given the travel restrictions currently in place.

## 5. Question Period

In response to a question about the risk of classes being cancelled that are not maintaining typical enrolment numbers, Dr Diamantoudi stated that while this is a faculty issue, she was aware that it had been raised at Academic Cabinet and discussions are underway.

There was a general concern about international students' ability to secure immigration documents for the fall and future terms. Dr Diamantoudi noted that the university's hope is that the Minister of Education will allow students to enrol in their program and begin studying from their home countries in the event that they are not able to enter Canada. The Chair also suggested that departments consider turning their focus towards admitting students from Canada bearing in mind the present situation.

A Council member raised concerns about international students who would like to defer their admission and inquired if there was a policy in effect. Dr Diamantoudi remarked that the School's position is that this is a departmental matter but that awards will not be retracted in the event a student opts to defer his or her admission. Funding commitments will be honoured.

Questions were raised about the challenges of delivering certain Fine Arts courses and the messaging students are receiving about access to campus. Dr Dolatabadi sits on a committee studying the possibilities of opening certain facilities such as laboratories and intends to raise these concerns at their next meeting. He also undertook to see that the Faculty of Fine Arts has adequate representation on the committee.

## **Consent Agenda**

### 6. Proposed Graduate Calendar Regulations changes

- |      |                                 |                |
|------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 6.1. | Transfer Credit GPA Requirement | CSGS 1920 4 D1 |
| 6.2  | Qualifying Program B- Rule      | CSGS 1920 4 D2 |

Moved and seconded (B. Nelson, P. Pawelek). Carried.

## Information

7. *Student's Guide to Thesis Preparation, Examination Procedures and Regulations – Video/Teleconferencing Exams* CSGS 1920 4 D3

Dr Pawelek provided Council members with an overview of this change which aims to allow a candidate to appear, in exceptional circumstances, at the oral defence via video/teleconferencing. The School recommends that candidates attend the defence in person; in light of the current situation, many oral examinations have taken place remotely and have functioned remarkably well.

## Discussion

8. Honorarium practice for external thesis examiners

Dr Pawelek opened the discussion on Concordia's practice of providing an honorarium of \$300 to external thesis examiners. The Student Affairs unit conducted a survey of 13 sister institutions across Canada and determined that we are an outlier in this instance. Eleven universities did not provide any honorarium while the University of Toronto and York University both allowed for a \$100 allowance. With more and more external examiners opting to attend defences via teleconferencing, the School would like to use these funds to upgrade its thesis defence room.

The discussion revealed that the expectation and norms around honoraria differed amongst disciplines with some Council members stating that an honorarium was rarely paid to them, if ever; while for others, it was quite usual. It was determined that a full consultation with departments and faculties was in order and that the subject would return to a future Council meeting.

9. Adjournment

Moved and seconded (P. Pawelek, B. Nelson). Carried.

Next Meeting: Fall 2020

10. Adjournment

Moved and seconded (B. Nelson, E. Cheasley Paterson). Carried.

Next Meeting: March 23, 2020, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon in EV 2.776