

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

November 7, 2024 at 10:00 am in EV 2.309

PRESENT

Ex-officio members: E. Diamantoudi (Chair), M. Fitzgibbons.

Voting members: A. Aghdam, R. Berger, G. Dover, C. Hachem-Vermette, X. Huang, N. M. Ilyas, C. Lesage, W. Linds, M. Medraj, F. Scala, P. Stoyanov, M. Sussman, E. Tsabary, S. Ullah, F. Yuen, M. Zaare.

Non-Voting members: S. De Celles, D. Lafrance (Secretary), M. Jordan (Recording Secretary).

Guests: G. Beltran, N. Butt, M.-M. Duval-Martin, E. MacFadden, M. Mulrennen, C. Raso.

REGRETS

Voting members: E. Adams, J. Agbonhese, A. Fattoum-Guedri, F. Grond, M. Salazkina, C. Wilds.

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

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved and seconded (F. Yuen, M. Sussman). Carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Meeting of September 26, 2024

Moved and seconded (M. Medraj, A. Aghdam). Carried.

4. Chair's Remarks

The Chair highlighted the ongoing response to Bill 74 and its implications for immigration reform, specifically federal and provincial caps on international students. Governments are considering various approaches targeting different regions and institutions, student countries of origin, and native language to name a few.

President Graham Carr, alongside other university leaders, presented concerns at the National Assembly, emphasizing the potential challenges these caps pose for higher education institutions. Dean Diamantoudi encouraged departments to admit international students earlier in the cycle, and provide clear and robust funding packages.

The School will be organizing GPD townhalls on this subject and others over the course of the academic year.

5. Question Period

In response to a question about the availability of statistics on the admission process timeline, Dr Diamantoudi stated that the data is available in the Student Information System and that the School is working with the Institutional Planning Office to introduce a timestamping feature.

Presentations

6. Conflict of Interest form
Geoffrey Dover, Associate Dean, Graduate Student Academic Matters & Postdoctoral Studies

With a view to improving record keeping and reducing last-time defence cancellations, the School of Graduate Studies is implementing a mandatory Conflict of Interest form. Thesis defence committee members will now need to submit this form. In the event of a conflict, the School will contact the student's supervisor to seek a suitable solution. Situations of conflict of interest are outlined in the [thesis guidelines](#).

7. Decline Survey
Donald Lafrance, Director, School of Graduate Studies

Mr Lafrance provided a summary of the findings from the School's most recent survey targeting students who declined their offers of admission to Concordia in favour of other institutions. Conducted in early October and distributed to approximately 1,700 students, the survey revealed that the most prominent factor influencing their decision was funding. However, the analysis uncovered other interesting reasons shaping students' choices.

To facilitate further exploration and understanding of these findings, the School has developed a self-serve, filterable dashboard which was made available to Council members.

8. Time Limit Extension changes
Geoffrey Dover, Associate Dean, Graduate Student Academic Matters & Postdoctoral Studies

Dr Dover presented an update to the Time Limit Extension (TLE) regulations for graduate students. TLEs are approved at the departmental level, while second extensions are handled by the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). Since COVID-19, SGS has routinely approved second extensions, but concerns have arisen regarding extended times-to-completion. Completion times vary across disciplines, with Business and Fine Arts closer to the expected timeframe, while Humanities and Social Sciences take longer.

To address these concerns, changes to TLE approvals will take effect in May 2025. For extensions of three terms or less, approval will remain at the departmental level. Extensions beyond three terms will require SGS approval and supporting documentation. This policy aims to refocus on timely program completion while maintaining flexibility for extenuating circumstances.

9. Research Impact
Monica Mulrennan, Associate Vice-President, Research (Research Development & Impact)

Dr Mulrennan provided an overview of Concordia's strategy to enhance the real-world impact of its research. She highlighted a global shift in research focus, driven by societal challenges and increasing demands from funders and governments for practical, measurable outcomes.

The question addressed is how researchers and institutions can better showcase and expand their impact. Concordia's solution is a university-wide platform designed to integrate resources, foster collaboration, and guide researchers in maximizing the reach and influence of their work.

The approach aligns with broader trends in rethinking academic assessment, such as the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), which emphasizes quality and diverse contributions over traditional metrics like Journal Impact Factor. Concordia's strategy incorporates sustainability goals, equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, and innovative research practices.

The framework operates on multiple levels, supporting individual researchers, teams, and institutional strategies. Concordia aims to lead in redefining research impact by building on its existing strengths and fostering collaborative, actionable solutions.

Other

10. Adjournment

Moved and seconded (E. Tsabary, R. Berger). Carried.

Next Meeting: December 12, 2024 from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon in EV 2.309

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Jordan
Recording Secretary
Council of the School of Graduate Studies