

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

**September 26, 2024 at 10:00 am in EV 2.309**

PRESENT

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

Voting members: E. Adams, J. Agbonhese, A. Aghdam, R. Berger, G. Dover, A. Fattoum-Guedri, X. Huang, N. M. Ilyas, C. Lesage, 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, K. Clarke, E. MacFadden, S. A. Tadepalli.

REGRETS

Voting members: F. Grond, W. Linds, 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. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair conducted a tour de table.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved and seconded (G. Dover, F. Yuen). Carried.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Meeting of May 16, 2024

Moved and seconded (G. Dover, C. Lesage). Carried.

5. Chair's Remarks

The Chair provided an overview of the 2023-2024 School of Graduate Studies Annual Report which touched on the various activities of SGS including outreach and engagement, graduate student success, academic development, organisational strategy, as well as future projects.

Following a short presentation on graduate enrolment figures, Dr Diamantoudi noted that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) visa caps for this year now include graduate students and have decreased by 10%. The federal quota exceeds last year's visa applications; however, it remains contingent upon the provincial government's decisions. A GPD townhall meeting is scheduled for November, during which a clearer understanding of the procedures will be provided. The Dean recommended that rolling admissions be implemented. Additionally, the IRCC mandates a financial support requirement of \$20,000, which should be explicitly stated in offers of admission.

6. Question Period

In response to a question about how deferrals are tallied in admission statistics, the Chair stated that they are only counted once, in the year of the student's admission.

**Consent Agenda**

7. Steering Committee Members ratification CSGS 2425 1 D1

Moved and seconded (G. Dover, S. Ullah). Carried.

**Presentations**

8. Integrated Pathways  
Faye Diamantoudi, Dean of Graduate Studies  
Donald Lafrance, Director, School of Graduate Studies

Dr Diamantoudi provided an overview of the Integrated Pathways program, allowing undergraduate students to begin graduate coursework that counts towards both their bachelor's and potential master's degrees. This program benefits students by shortening their graduate study timeline, lowering educational costs, and providing a preview of graduate-level work. Concordia, in turn, retains talented students, boosts graduate enrolment, and attracts high achievers.

Eligible students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.3 scale and at least 60 credits completed. Up to 16 graduate credits can be integrated into their undergraduate studies, provided each course is passed with at least a B. These grades impact the undergraduate GPA but not the graduate GPA.

The implementation process requires departments to assess pathway suitability, work with the School of Graduate Studies to choose courses, and adjust curricula if needed. Departments are encouraged to begin these discussions by October 2024 to prepare for a Fall 2025 launch. For more information, departments can contact Associate Dean Rachel Berger or Graduate Programs Manager Gina Beltrán.

9. Program Fact Sheets  
Gina Beltrán, Manager, Graduate Academic Programs

Dr Beltrán gave a summary of SGS' Program Fact Sheets and how our team produces data- and evidence-based fact documents for all graduate programs to inform curriculum discussions with departments, support program review, and enhance offerings by providing insights into enrolment trends and similar programs to guide decision-making.

10. Doctoral Internship Program  
Kristy Clarke, Manager, Graduate Professional Development

Ms Clarke presented an outline of the Doctoral Student Internship Program, an initiative providing PhD students with career-related work experience by involving them in strategic projects within the university. It helps graduates develop skills for careers in and beyond academia while offering financial support. Internships focus on project-oriented tasks, including research, data analysis, and training design, rather than administrative roles.

## Faculty Updates

11. Amir Aghdam, *Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science*

Dr Aghdam reviewed the Gina Cody School's current enrollment strategies. The School has developed a semi-automatic email system to reach out to PhD students who have not yet completed a milestone, aiming to reduce time to completion. Additionally, the School continues to hold biannual sessions for admitted students who fail to enroll, with the goal of increasing registration rates.

Cédric Lesage, *Associate Dean, Research and Research Programs, John Molson School of Business*

Dr Lesage provided Council members with a brief overview of JMSB's recent initiatives. Overall, enrolment has stabilized over the past four months, including in the EMBA program. However, there has been a 25% decrease in applications to course-based programs. In response, JMSB is closing three graduate diploma programs and establishing a task force to address these challenges.

On a positive note, enrolment in research programs has nearly doubled. The School implemented several effective measures to achieve this, including streamlining the admissions process.

*Francesca Scala, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts and Science*

Dr Scala provided insights into the Faculty of Arts and Science's current admissions strategies. Enrolment figures in the Faculty are holding steady, partly due to collaborative efforts on graduate funding. The Faculty plans to adopt an aggressive approach to direct entry and fast-tracking, as well as enhance support for Graduate Program Directors during the admissions process. Additionally, there will be a second iteration of a grant writing workshop.

*Eldad Tsabary, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Fine Arts*

Dr Tsabary summarized the Faculty of Fine Arts' current initiatives. He has been holding regular meetings with Graduate Program Directors to discuss integrated pathways and direct entry possibilities, which, while atypical for FoFA, are becoming increasingly accepted. On the curriculum front, there are plans to introduce a thesis option for the MFA, and an MFA in Performance Creation (Theatre, Dance, and Music) is also in development. Additionally, the Faculty has been collaborating with Concordia International to target new recruitment regions.

## **Information**

### 12. Council of the School of Graduate Studies

12.1	Council Members 2024-2025	CSGS 2425 1 D2
12.2	Membership and Powers of Council	CSGS 2425 1 D3

The above documents were distributed to Council members for their information.

## **Other**

### 13. Adjournment

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

Next Meeting: November 7, 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