

**University of Waterloo**  
**SENATE GRADUATE & RESEARCH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the March 17, 2025 Meeting**

**Present:** Hassan Baaj, Steven Bednarski, Sue Ann Campbell, Ashley Day (secretary), Peter Deadman, Charmaine Dean (co-chair), Robert de Loe, Bernard Duncker, Anna Esselment, Ana Ferrer, Alison Hitchens, Abhishesh Homagain, Brian Ingalls, Julie Joza, Brian Laird, Joseph Meleshko, Ian Milligan, Carlee Ann Montgomery, Marina Mourtzakis, Nicholas Pellegrino, Martin Ross, Marianne Simm, Siva Sivoththaman, Shirley Tang, Clarence Woudsma (co-chair), Alfred Yu

**Resources/Guests:** Melissa Benjamin, Gen Gauthier-Chalifour, Maysah Eid, Carrie MacKinnon Molson, Blake Phillips, Justin Wan

**Absent:** Mrittika Dreesha, Neela Hassan

**Organization of Meeting:** Charmaine Dean and Clarence Woudsma took the chair and Ashley Day acted as secretary. The secretary advised that quorum was present. The agenda was approved without formal motion.

**1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Council heard a motion to approve or receive for information the items of the consent agenda. Duncker and Sivoththaman. Carried

**2. MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 27, 2025 MEETING**

Council approved the minutes of the meeting as distributed.

**3. HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**

Council received for information the renewal of a member for HREB.

**4. CURRICULAR SUBMISSIONS**

Council approved items 4.1 and 4.2 on behalf of Senate.

**5. UPDATE TO RULES FOR MAJOR MODIFICATIONS – PROGRAM NAME CHANGES**

Council received for information revised classification criteria for program name changes.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

**7. CHAIR REMARKS**

Dean welcomed Hassan Baaj, Associate Dean, Research and External Partnerships for the Faculty of Engineering as a new member of SGRC.

A Tri-Council updated was provided by Dean regarding the harmonizing of all scholarship and fellowship programs from the granting agencies. The Canada Research Training Awards Suite (CRTAS) was announced on March 11, 20205. The CRTAS will include the Canada Graduate Research Scholarship for Master's and Doctoral, among others. This will be adjudicated in a harmonized way. SGRC will have the opportunity to weigh in over the summer. [More information can be found online.](#)

**8. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SGRC RESTRUCTURING**

Dean invited Gen Gauthier-Chalifour, University Secretary, to speak on the restructuring process. Gauthier-Chalifour gave a high-level overview of the environmental scan and findings that supported the proposal. Dean added that other Senate level committees are being combined for efficiency, the focus of the SGRC restructuring is effectiveness. Members discussed the size of both councils with some in favour of a larger membership with more opportunity for diverse academic discussions. Others noted the size as potentially challenging to find interested Senators or other members to participate. Members discussed the distribution of Senators, students and ex-officio, asking if the addition of Senators is duplicative if they have a vote at

## **Senate Graduate and Research Council**

### **March 17, 2025 Minutes**

Senate as well. Gauthier-Chalifour clarified that this is a common model in university governance and with UW's Board and Committees. This also allows Senators to voice support on the Senate floor, having been involved in previous governance discussions on related matters. This also allows us to be more inclusive of members of the community. Members inquired if we have enough interest from Senators to fill six seats and Dean confirmed that Senators have expressed interest in sitting on more Senate committees.

With respect to the addition of 'four members holding regular faculty appointments' on both councils, members inquired how those seats would be chosen. Gauthier-Chalifour responded that as per the note on page 5 of the proposal, the aim is to have broad and inclusive representation from all Faculties but will revisit the allocation of the four members in the next version of the proposal. The Secretariat is looking to provide more transparency around member selection on councils/committees in the future. Members asked for clarification about the new membership language 'Dean or designate' and the rationale for the change. Gauthier-Chalifour clarified that this approach is being implemented across all committees for consistency in language and to allow for flexibility at the Faculty level. Dean added that there is a strong sentiment across campus to find flexibility in senior level roles. The terms of reference requires both councils to conduct an annual review of their membership and responsibilities.

A member commented on the meeting cadence of the Graduate Studies Council in relation to academic calendar publishing. It was suggested that the Graduate Studies Council meet no less than four times a year to ensure pathways for Senate approvals. Gauthier-Chalifour responded that the word 'normally' is in the terms of reference under section 5.4 (page 11 of the proposal) to build in flexibility. The Secretariat will work with GSPA Office to ensure council meeting cadence aligns with curriculum approval requirements and noted that special meetings could be called at the discretion of the Chair. A member requested that the language in 5.4 be changed to 'at least four regular meetings' instead of 'normally hold four regular meetings'; Gauthier-Chalifour agreed.

Members discussed the addition of a postdoctoral scholar to the Research and Innovation Council. A member suggested that a postdoctoral scholar also be added to the Graduate Studies Council. Members were in support of adding a postdoctoral scholar to the Graduate Studies Council, as they often interact with Masters and PhD students and are involved in teaching courses. It will be critical that the supervisor supports participation of the postdoctoral scholar on any committee. Woudsma noted that this can be a grey area as postdoctoral scholars are considered students and employees under HR and the research mandate, but that their inclusion is important as they are a part of the university community and should be able to engage in strategic discussions.

Regarding student membership on the Research and Innovation Council, a member noted while other membership roles increased, there wasn't an increase proportionately for student members. The Associate Deans Graduate Studies confirmed that student members are present on the Faculty Councils, and SGRC is not the only body for student feedback and engagement. However, this is not consistent with the research items that come forward to SGRC. Dean noted that students have expressed interest in participating and further student consultation will be conducted on the proposed membership of both councils. The proposal aims to find a balance of having diverse voices at the table while reducing the burden on students to attend meetings.

In summary, the Secretariat noted the following key items of feedback:

- Revisit student membership on both councils, with clarity that they do not have to be Senators
- Consider additional consultation with student leaders
- Add a Post Doctoral member to the Graduate Council
- Revisit the '4 faculty members holding regular faculty appointments' on both councils
- Provide clarity on how appointments to the council are made (future item from Secretariat)
- Graduate Studies Council, item 5.4 be changed to 'at least four regular meetings' instead of 'normally hold four regular meetings'

In closing, Dean thanked the council for their thoughtful feedback. A revised proposal will be brought forward to the April SGRC meeting with a motion to recommend to Senate for a September 1, 2025 implementation date.

## **9. CENTRE FOR ACCOUNTING RESEARCH AND EDUCATION (CARE) RENEWAL**

Phillips, on behalf of CARE and the School of Accounting and Finance, presented an overview of the centre. The overview included the areas of focus of the centre and the importance of connection with the profession. Primary activities include the academic linkage to the profession done through symposia where practitioners and students can discuss client behaviour. The council then discussed the presentation and the renewal of the centre in camera.

**Senate Graduate and Research Council**  
**March 17, 2025 Minutes**

A motion was heard to approve the report to renew the Centre for Accounting Research and Education on behalf of Senate, as presented. Duncker and Ferrer. Carried.

**10. CURRICULAR SUBMISSIONS**

**10.1 Faculty of Arts**

Esselment spoke to the change rationale for the major modifications that impact three programs in the Faculty of Arts. Woudsma noted, in connection with item 5. Update To Rules For Major Modifications, that some name changes may be classified as minor modifications in the future.

A motion was heard to recommend that Senate approve the major modifications to the PhD in Psychology, MA in English - Critical Media Studies, and MA in English - Critical Media Studies (Co-op), as presented. Esselment and Ferrer. Carried.

**10.2 Faculty of Engineering**

Sivonththaman spoke to the new specialization and proposed collaborative programs in Master of Engineering (MEng).

A motion was heard to recommend that Senate approve the new specialization in Future Cities for the MEng in Civil Engineering, and the new collaborative programs MEng - Civil Engineering - Health Technologies (Co-op), MEng - Electrical and Computer Engineering - Health Technologies (Co-op), and MEng - Systems Design Engineering - Health Technologies (Co-op), as presented. Sivonththaman and Ross. Carried.

**10.3 Faculty of Environment**

Deadman spoke to the major modification which includes the removal of the Masters research paper study option and adds a new coursework study option that does not require a Graduate Studies Internship.

A motion was heard to recommend that Senate approve the major modifications to the Master of Climate Change (MCC), as presented. Deadman and Esselment. Carried.

**11. OTHER BUSINESS**

Dean spoke to the substantive work on the Report of the Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships. SGRC will have dedicated time to discuss the report at a future meeting.

**12. CREATE LOI ADJUDICATION**

With the exception the Associate Deans and Duncker, members left the meeting. Remaining members, with staff from the Office of Research, reviewed the ranking of the submitted NSERC CREATE submissions.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 7, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. in NH 3318.

March 19, 2025

Ashley Day  
Governance Officer  
Secretariat