

GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting

PRESENT: Professor Rachel Spronken-Smith (Chair, Graduate Research School), Andrew Lonie (Graduate Research School), Peter Boston (Graduate Research School), Professor Richard Blaikie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Enterprise), Associate Professor Lisa McNeill, Division of Commerce), Christian Chukwuka (Sciences PhD Rep), Dermot Frengley (OUSA Postgrad Rep), Linda Buss (UOC Representative), Wei Zhang (UOW Representative), Yasmin Abdul Aziz (Health Sciences PhD Representative) Jasminda Ceron (Humanities PhD Rep) Mino Cleverley (Pacific Islands PhD Representative), Tam Lê (Commerce Masters Rep), Ellie Torbati (International PhD Representative)

APOLOGIES: Associate Professor Chrys Jaye (Division of Health Sciences), Alice Freeman (Sciences Masters Rep), Amanda Clifford (Maori PhD Representative)

IN ATTENDANCE: Ruth Sharpe (Academic Committees)

DATE: Friday, 31 May 2019

	Item	Action
1.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting The minutes for the meeting held on Friday, 22 February 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting</p> <p>a) <i>Regular meetings between Wei Zhang, Trevor Williams and the UOW Dean (Professor Spronken-Smith):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wei Zhang advised she is having regular meetings with Trevor Williams, however timing issues prevent meeting with the UOW Dean. <p>b) <i>Access to resources for PG Dip candidates upgrading to Masters (Andrew Lonie):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Lonie reported work is progressing on a dummy paper in eVision to allow for preparing for enrolment that will allow temporary access to resources, but with no cost attached. <p>c) <i>Student Supervisor Agreement amendments (Andrew Lonie)</i> Senate has approved the renamed Code of Conduct for Supervisors to Guidelines for Graduate Research Supervisors. These Guidelines will be circulated to the Committee.</p> <p>d) <i>Feedback on postgraduate support in AskOtago</i> Experiences have been mixed. In less than satisfactory responses, it was noted the information is known and present but that AskOtago staff are still coming up to speed with training in specialist areas such as postgraduate support. Mr Lonie meets the Group Leaders (postgraduate) regularly to update and relay items. One option for students is to log the query within the system, and the use of Chat Bot online. Several AskOtago hubs will be made.</p> <p>e) <i>Update on microcredentials for professional development</i> Work has been undertaken on developing microcredentials and the Microcredential Framework has been approved by Senate. However the processes for approving microcredentials are still being developed. We hope to make some microcredentials available in 2020.</p>	RS
3.	<p>Christchurch update (Linda Buss) Key points discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linda reported a range of social events that have occurred and are forthcoming. - She conveyed the postgraduate symposium on July 2-3, has been reduced to one day because of the two-day Student Research Symposium in Dunedin, to which many UOC students are attending. A 'PhD survival guide' is a session held within our postgrad symposium. The terror attacks have disrupted some planned events. A Hui whakapiripiri was held to allow staff and students to grieve and show support Also, David Murdoch (Dean of UOC) is advocating for UOC and the wider university to promote inclusivity and diversity. In alignment with this, PSOC are organising cultural visits to a Hare Krishna temple, the Al Noor mosque and Tuahiwi Marae. They are also looking at holding an international pot luck dinner. Notably, there is now a dedicated prayer space 	

	<p>available on campus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On behalf of the Committee Professor Spronken-Smith relayed our condolences to UOC and said it was good to see some great initiatives coming out of such a tragic event. 	
4.	<p>Wellington update (Wei Zhang) Key points discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A concern was raised that the winners of the 3 Minute Thesis in UOW would not automatically be flown to Dunedin for the Grand Final as in the past; instead the competition will be video-recorded and the recordings will be watched by the judges for Health Science in Dunedin. Professor Spronken-Smith explained that Health Sciences had been over-represented at the Grand Final because of the northern campuses and because we have Master's awards now. A reassurance was given by Mr Lonie that he is a common judge across campuses the competition, to ensure northern campus students are given due consideration. There are also a few wildcard places which can be given to high performers on any campus, at the discretion of the common judge. - Wei Zhang had just met with some PhD students who are developing a survey about postgraduate students paying more student service fees to get more affordable medical and counselling services. - Given the successful event last year, another Completion of Study celebration for Wellington PG students is planned for 20th September - Training courses in April and May by HEDC and GRS were welcomed by postgraduate students 	
5.	<p>Distance candidates update (Renee Hamel) No report received from Renee Hamel</p>	
6.	<p>Updates from all Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee Reps (ALL) Each of the representatives at the meeting gave feedback and several who sent their apologies submitted a report. Key points arising were:</p> <p><u>Christian Chukwuka (Sciences PhD Rep)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Christian reported lots of workshops and seminars at the Departmental level in 2019. - He thinks awareness is being raised of the Student Research Symposium in August. - He discussed the problem of communicating with students and asked if it is possible to develop list serves for graduate research students in each Division. Professor Spronken-Smith and others thought this was a good idea and said she would follow up with ITS. - He has encouraged some Divisional members to volunteer for the planning and register for the symposium. - There was a second phase of postgraduate orientation this year, mainly for masters/Dip students. - As it is his last meeting, Christian Chukwuka thanked the Dean for the opportunity to serve on the Committee. He also raised some ongoing concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The problem with the Student Service fee payment having to be paid in full at the beginning of each year (see discussion below). o The intent of OUSA to provide free breakfasts every weekday for students. Christian Chukwuka questioned whether this was a good use of funds as many postgraduate students would not get this meal. Other members though were in favour of this, saying that there was a need for such a service. - Christian Chukwuka commented that this would be his last meeting as he is resigning from Committee since his doctoral study is nearly finished. Mr Lonie thanks Christian Chukwuka for his contribution to the Committee. <p><u>Tam Le (Commerce Rep)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commented that the Commerce workshops for graduate research students were going well, and were complementary to other workshops offered by HEDC and GRS. She did feel that more workshops should be offered for Master's thesis students. - She would like a survival kit to be developed for Master's thesis students, discussing a boarding checklist to help induct students. - She also promoted the idea of a mentor scheme whereby more senior research students were matched with new research students. - She requested a report on average completion times for Master's thesis students. Professor Spronken-Smith commented that generating such a report was challenging given the number 	RSS

	<p>of research degrees, but Professor Blaikie said it could be done at least for the main research degrees. Mr Lonie asked for clarification regarding why this report was being sought, as that could influence how data are analysed and presented. Tam Le commented the concern was about the one-year length of the programme. She reported of 4 Master's thesis students in one department, only one finished the programme in a year and that was with extremely hard work. She asked on average, how long master's thesis students take to complete their programme. Professor Spronken-Smith agreed to follow up with Planning and Funding to generate the completion data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She raised an issue about the length of time given for visas for students on Masters' degrees. If the visa is only valid for 13 months this is problematic as the examination can take another couple of months and if extending on a non-student visa then that can have flow on effects for partners and their visa status/ability to work. Professor Spronken-Smith said this matter could be taken up with Immigration NZ when the NZ Deans meet with them in August. <p><u>Jasminda Ceron (Division Humanities Rep)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commented that some students perceive they are not receiving sufficient support from their secondary supervisor, advisers, and that they may be reluctant to raise this concern. Professor Spronken-Smith commented that the roles should be outlined in the Supervisory Agreement and revisited at progress meetings. She said ideally these issues should be discussed with the supervisors or the Postgraduate Coordinator or the Head of Department. Mr Lonie also suggested talking to the chair of progress meetings or using the confidential comment section in eVision when uploading documents for the progress meeting. - She wondered if it is possible for students (especially for international students) to receive funding for thesis proofreading? Professor Spronken-Smith commented that there is no central funding available for this, but some departments may be able to provide some support. - She had queries about the influenza vaccination and whether this was compulsory? She was concerned about the high cost international students have to pay for the vaccination (\$50 at Student Health). Yasmin Abdul Aziz commented that Pharmacy have a clinic where the vaccine was available and said she would find out the cost. <p><u>Yasmin Abdul Aziz (Health Sciences PhD Rep)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She commented that postgraduates in Health Science are not well connected so she has set up a Facebook group for the PhD students in the health sciences as a means for direct communication, networking and sharing information about relevant courses, workshops etc. This group now has various members from a variety of departments within health science. - She also relayed some questions/concerns from PhD students in the division of Health Sciences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A female student is asking about paid parental leave when working for 10 hours and is wondering about provisions for this. Professor Blaikie commented that it is up to the employer whether paid parental leave is available. o Students are asking what the GRS is doing to connect postgraduate students, both structurally (email lists, looking up a grad in a directory etc.) and also socially (any support/funding for the Otago Postgraduate Association). Professor Spronken-Smith commented that for privacy reasons we cannot disclose other student emails. Regarding social events, she said that over the years the GRS budget had been progressively cut and now only a few purely social events were funded e.g. the Dean's Morning Tea and the Dean's Sausage Sizzle. Some social events are funded in conjunction with academic activities such as networking, and Ākonga korero. o Concerns that healthcare for international PhD students may be inadequate given that they living here for 3 years rather than being 'on exchange/study abroad semester. Professor Spronken-Smith commented that if students are concerned the cover is not enough they can always purchase a higher level of insurance with more extended cover. <p><u>Dermot Frengley (OUSA Postgrad Rep)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He discussed the Postgraduate Student Rally to bring back student allowances for postgraduate study and thanked Professors Blaikie, Spronken-Smith and Nikki Fahey for their support in the rally. He discussed some forthcoming social events that OPA re running including a mid-winter Christmas. - He relayed key points from a meeting he and Professor Spronken-Smith had with the Director of Student Services Karyn Thomson and the Team Leader of Revenue Management Stephanie Mathias to discuss whether student service fee payment and the travel insurance payment for international students, could be split into monthly payments. They reported that monthly payments were not possible, but said that Revenue Management were receptive to requests to 	<p>RSS</p> <p>RSS</p> <p>YAA</p> <p>RSS</p>
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	<p>stagger these payments (or advance a scholarship payment) if it was causing hardship. A query was raised if at least these payments could be made each semester. Professor Spronken-Smith agreed to follow this up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He finished with a plea for postgraduate students to get engaged with OUSA <p><u>Mino Cleverley (Pacific Islands PhD Rep)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was complementary about the support that is available for Pacific postgraduates at Otago and he had been proactively meeting support staff. - He is a member of the PI reference group and indicated a desire to start a Pacific Island Doctoral Research Group. Professor Spronken-Smith thought this was an excellent idea and suggested he contact the GRS to get support in establishing this group. 	
7.	<p>Review of RSM – Research Student Management</p> <p>Professor Spronken-Smith commented that this report has identified some areas for improvement that have resulted in a roadmap for change. GRS is responding to Section 3 Topic Specific Feedback, while the Business Analysts in Teaching and Learning are picking up on changes needed in eVision.</p>	
8.	<p>Pacific Strategic Framework</p> <p>Professor Spronken-Smith highlighted that this Framework is positive and very important. Mino Cleverley noted that the PSF runs until end of 2020, and questioned what occurred then. Professor Blaikie commented that discussions are about to be held University-wide regarding the future of the University and that there will be opportunities to have input. He said that the Vice-Chancellor is very supportive of the PSF and of the need for Otago to position itself in the Pacific.</p>	
9.	<p>Convenor's Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The GRC is holding the annual Graduate Research Festival with a Student Research Symposium the weekend of 3-4 August to which all students including Christchurch and Wellington are warmly invited to attend. The Thesis Whisperer (Associate Professor Inger Mewburn from ANU) has been secured as a keynote at the Symposium. Abstracts are due by June 5! 2. The 3 Minute Thesis heats will be held in July, and a workshop is being held on how to prepare a 3MT presentation. Registrations are open on the GRS website. 3. Gratitude for the service of Christian Chukwuka to the Committee was expressed as he is close to finishing and the Committee offered best wishes for his future. 	
10.	<p>General Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Friday 7 June 10am to noon Postgrad tea and coffee at the Otago Room of Clubs and Societies. 2. The GRS Twitter account is now working. 	

The date of the next meeting is **Monday, 5 August 2019 at 2.00pm** **Committee Room North, first floor Clocktower.**

Distribution:

Professor Rachel Spronken-Smith (Chair), Dean, Graduate Research	Mino Cleverley (Pacific Islands Representative)
Professor Richard Blaikie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & E	(Pacific Islands Representative)
Andrew Lonie (Graduate Research School)	Linda Buss (UOC Representative)
Peter Boston (Graduate Research School)	Wei Zhang (UOW Representative)
(Division of Commerce Representative)	Amanda Clifford (Māori Representative)
Tam Lê (Division of Commerce Representative)	(Māori Representative)
Jasminda Ceron (Division of Humanities Representative)	Dermot Frenghley(OUSA Postgraduate Representative)
(Division of Humanities Representative)	Renee Hamel (Distance Representative)
Yasmin Abdul Aziz (Division of Health Sciences Representative)	Susan Craig (Graduate Research School)
(Division of Health Sciences Representative)	Dr Kevin Fisher (GRC Humanities Representative)
Christian Chukwuka (Division of Sciences Representative)	Associate Professor Sally Shaw (GRC Sciences Representative)
Alice Freeman (Division of Sciences Representative)	Associate Professor Lisa McNeill (GRC Commerce Represent
Ellie Torbati (International Representative)	Associate Professor Chrys Jaye (GRC Health Sciences Repres
(International Representative)	Ruth Sharpe (Academic Committees)