339.1 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order and asked for approval of the agenda.

MOTION: DAIVISON/STOREY

That Council approve the agenda for the Faculty of Graduate Studies Council Meeting #339 of 16 March 2005

CARRIED

339.2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: KERTZER/KEELEY

That Council approve the minutes of the Faculty of Graduate Studies Council Meeting #338 held 19 January 2005

CARRIED

339.3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

339.4 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair urged Council members to be mindful of Faculty deadlines for the submission of scholarship applications, admissions, examinations and other areas covered by Faculty of Graduate Studies guidelines.

The Chair thanked the members of the Graduate Scholarship Committee who reviewed applications for the Open Scholarship Competition.

NSERC results have been published and the University of Calgary’s overall success rate was 84% (98 out of 116). 55 of the 65 Master’s candidates were successful. 18 of these were awarded a CGS (Master’s) of $17,500. 43 of the 51 doctoral candidates were successful, with 11 awarded the CGS (Doctoral) of $35,000.

The Trudeau Foundation award is worth $50,000 annually to each of the 18 recipients (stipend of $35,000 and a research allowance of $15,000). Last year one University of Calgary applicant was successful and...
this year one candidate has been invited to interview.

The Chair explained that, as Dean of Graduate Studies, he must report to the Provost on the use of the differential fee equivalent revenue that has been returned to programs. All programs were asked to define a policy stating how the funds will be used to support graduate students, and to report on the actual expenditure of these funds. The Chair thanked all Coordinators for their response.

The Chair noted that he also had to report on the progress of graduate programs in following the “Guidelines for Graduate Student Financial Support.” The Guidelines indicate that priority for funding is to new doctoral students, then to continuing doctoral students and finally to Master’s students.

He commented that the level of support is not always clear from the program website and that Ms Stroud would circulate some “best practise” material for information. A funding survey last year showed that 44% of doctoral students received $15k+ or more, and a more recent survey indicates 81% of doctoral students are currently funded at this level.

The Chair stated that Bill 1: Access to the Future, has passed first reading. This Bill includes the creation of a fund to develop, attract and retain excellent faculty, staff and graduate students. $3b is to accumulate in the fund over time and the interest ($147m per year) is to be spent, 50% to match donations and 50% to support innovation. The Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund (source of PAGS) is to be increased by $1b, generating interest revenue of $45m per year. The Ingenuity Fund is also to be increased by $0.5b.

In recognition of the University’s responsibility to support Postdoctoral Fellows, a Postdoctoral Program Office has been established, funded jointly by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Faculty of Medicine. A coordinator, Dr. Sherri Fraser, is in place in a 0.5 position. All programs have been informed, a campus-wide advisory committee has been established, and training opportunities with other services on campus have been instigated.

339.5 REPORTS FROM ASSOCIATE DEANS

Ms Kertzer had no issues to report.

Mr Sideris thanked all members of the NSERC Sub-Committee of the Graduate Scholarship Committee. 205 applications were read, 51 Master’s and 65 PhD applications were forwarded to NSERC, of which 55 and 43 were successful.

Ms Haines had no issues to report.

Mr van der Hoorn had no issues to report.

Mr Wieser reported that the website for Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs is being rebuilt to allow for easy access (www.grad.ucalgary.ca/programs/interdisciplinary.htm). He cited the University of Alberta web as an effective example – www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/art/ois/cfm – and noted that the University of Alberta is constructing a new building to house its interdisciplinary program – the Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Science www.science.ualberta.ca/ccis/cfm.

Mr Wieser drew the attention of Council to the new issue of Eye on Ideas. Copies are available for distribution through Nikki Croft. This issue concentrates on the Understanding Human Behaviour pillar and profiles graduate research in that area. Copies have been sent to all programs, funding agencies, donors, international partners and CAGS and it is available for distribution in electronic format. He noted that this publication is prepared in-house at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the only cost being the printing at ~$1/copy. The next issue will focus on Energy and the Environment and he invited members to contribute by sending suggestions for articles to Nikki Croft.

Mr Wieser reported that, in conjunction with the GSA, workshops are being offered to graduate students and faculty. A course in ethics and a workshop on intellectual property have already been offered, with 60 participants attending the workshop. The next in this series will be held on April 8 and will focus on Graduate Students and Graduate Supervisors. The Chair noted that the funding for this series is provided by the GSA and he thanked the members of the Association for working with FGS on this initiative which aims to help supervisors better understand their role.

339.6 QUESTION PERIOD

Mr Shimizu asked for the national success rate for NSERC applications. Mr Sideris replied that it is not yet available. The Chair stated that members will be informed when it is known.

Mr Seaman observed that the $1b increase to the Heritage Scholarship Fund is intended to sustain current funding and that, although the case was made for an increase to the operating budget, the balance of new money will be directed. The Chair emphasized that constant input from senior administration to government continues in an effort to sustain current levels and raise new funding.
MOTION: KERTZER/SEAMAN
That Faculty of Graduate Studies Council approve in principle the Collective Agreement between the Governors of the University of Calgary and the Graduate Students’ Association
CARRIED

Ms Kertzer drew attention to the summary document and the reasons for the move from an “Appointments Schedule” to a “Collective Agreement”.

Mr Keeley suggested that the guidelines for appointing individuals to a certain level of assistantship noted in the previous Appointments Schedule might become rigid rules in the new Collective Agreement, and this lack of flexibility would cause difficulties for Coordinators. Ms Kertzer said that this had been discussed and that Article 6.01 would be revisited in next year’s deliberations when concerns about the timeline language would also be addressed. The Chair recognized the concerns and asked Council for approval in principle with assurance that these issues would be addressed. Mr Seaman noted that Section 6.01 does refer to the guidelines as “suggested.”

Ms Sicotte noted that when the GA(T) line is announced in the faculties’ budgets, the level 1 amount is used, and with continuing budget cuts, the carryover fund is no longer an option to provide top-ups for experienced students who should be at level 2 or 3.

Ms Sicotte also asked if a student would be able to file a grievance citing the guidelines for the appointment of graduate students to different levels of Assistantships. The Chair stated that a student could not use the guidelines because they are clearly described as guidelines rather than regulations. Mr Seaman suggested that clear and transparent statements of funding, both at a program level and for an individual upon entrance to the program, would reduce student complaints. Mr Oetelaar noted that senior administration tends to be sympathetic to students with a grievance.

Mr Oakleaf asked whether the document would come back to Council if problems occurred after it was approved in principle. The Chair noted that “in principle” was in the motion to cover minor changes, and that if major changes became necessary, the document would be returned to Council for approval.

In response to a question, the Chair identified the negotiating committee as two staff members from Human Resources, representing the Vice-President (Finance and Services), Calvin Seaman and Christine Johns from the GSA, and Warren Veale, Adrienne Kertzer, Herb Emery, and Teri Jane Bryant from FGS. The pre-existing Schedule was used as the basis for the Collective Agreement. Mr Sideris commented that Faculty Councils should have access to the document and approve it. Ms Stroud noted that, if approved by the Board of Governors, the Agreement would become effective May 1.

The Chair concluded that the aim of the mover is to achieve approval in principle and make necessary adjustments over the coming year, for approval of Council next spring.

Mr Davison moved a friendly amendment: deleting “The following guidelines are suggested:” from the end of paragraph 2, Article 6.01, p.14, and adding the same phrase to the beginning of paragraph 2, Article 6.01, p.14. The friendly amendment was accepted.

The Chair added an assurance of sensitivity to the concerns expressed.

339.8.0 GRADUATE AWARDS
The Chair noted the regular addition of new awards, presented to Council for information.

339.9 OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: van der HOORN/SIDERIS
That Faculty of Graduate Studies Council approve a change from departmentalized Master of Science degrees to a generic Master of Science degree in the Faculty of Engineering
CARRIED

Mr van der Hoorn outlined the background for the motion. Ms Warren asked for information regarding the approval process. Mr Sideris explained that approval is internal and that Alberta government approval of specializations can be fast tracked with this change. Mr Oetelaar requested clarification on the difference between MEng and MSc(Eng). Mr Sideris explained that the MEng is primarily a course-based degree with an applied project/thesis, and the MSc(Eng) is a research degree with a thesis.

339.11 ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.