COUNCIL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES (CGPS)

James Administration Building, Room 301 Date: Monday, October 20, 2025 Time: 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For meeting attendance list, please see last page.

Guests:
Dr. Georgios Mitsis, Department of Bioengineering, Faculty of Engineering
Dr. Dan Nicolau, Department of Bioengineering, Faculty of Engineering
Dr. Codruta Ignea, Department of Bioengineering, Faculty of Engineering

Order was called at 2:32 p.m.
Dean Nalbantoglu confirmed quorum.

1.0 Adoption of the Agenda **CGPS-AGD_2025.10.20**

Motion was made by Philippe Depalle, and seconded by Ali Seifitokaldani, to adopt the agenda. Motion carried.

2.0 Approval of previous Minutes of Meeting **CGPS-MoM_2025.09.15**

Motion was made by Ali Seifitokaldani, and seconded by Laura Wittebol, to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday, September 15, 2025. Motion carried.

Business Arising

3.0 Update on CGPS Annual Report

Following a Council member's suggestion at the last meeting, the Chair confirmed that a new section has been added to the CGPS Annual Report, which includes discussion topics from the past academic year. The Report will be shared with APC and Senate.

For Approval

4.0 New programs

4.1 M.Sc. in Biological and Biomedical Engineering (Thesis) (45 credits): Synthetic Biology **CGPS-NP-MScBBMESynBioT_R00**

Presented by: Drs. Georgios Mitsis, Dan Nicolau and Codruta Ignea from Department of Bioengineering, Faculty of Engineering.

The proposers presented the new concentration program: M.Sc. Biological and Biomedical Engineering (BBME): Synthetic Biology (Thesis). The proposed concentration is necessary due to the highly interdisciplinary and unique nature of the field, which encompasses topics ranging from engineering, computation, health, life sciences, biotechnology, and plant sciences to ethics. The three main objectives of the program are 1) to produce students with interdisciplinary expertise in engineering biology; 2) to drive innovations in sectors of great importance such as health, energy, and industrial biomanufacturing; and 3) to boost the rapidly growing synthetic biology sector in Quebec and Canada. The proposers also outlined the program requirements and structure, emphasizing the concentration's uniqueness in Canada. Projected enrollment is estimated at 10-15 students per year for the first four years, with an estimated increase to 20 students annually starting in the fifth year.

Discussion:

- A Council member observed some similarities between the proposed concentration and the existing M.Sc.A. program in Biotechnology. The proposers responded that they are aware of this program and have initialed discussions with the relevant department. A formal consultation form has also been sent.

It was further noted that anticipated applicants of this new concentration differ from that of the M.Sc.A. in Biotechnology, as the proposed program is thesis-based and aims to attract students with stronger research backgrounds and interests, whereas the latter is a non-thesis program.

- A Council member inquired about the possibility of students transferring from other BBME programs into this new concentration. The proposers confirmed that, once the proposed program is in place, students from these other programs may transfer into this new program, provided they meet all admission requirements.
- A Council member asked about the level of computational competency required for this program. The proposers noted that while some courses have prerequisites to help students build a basic understanding, there is no required course in computation. Students with a strong interest in this area will have the opportunity to take complementary courses to further develop their knowledge.
- In response to a question about supervision, the proposers confirmed that there is a large pool of potential supervisors available.
- A Council member inquired about experimental course offerings in this program. The proposers responded that a few courses with experimental components have been included in the program requirements.
- The Chair added that a potential Dual Master's program in Synthetic Biology with a Greek partner institution is currently under development. Many students and faculty members have expressed strong interest in participating in this new initiative.
- In response to a question about student transcripts, the Chair confirmed that transcripts will indicate the concentration name.

Motion was made by Benoit Boulet, and seconded by Allison Gonsalves, to approve the program. The new program was approved unanimously with 23 votes (0 abstain, 0 against); it will be reported to APC for approval.

For Information

5.0 For Information

5.1 Report for Minor/Moderate Revisions and Program Retirements [including low-enrolment/obsolete **CGPS-RPTP_2025.10.20**

The Chair reminded Council members of the importance of retiring inactive programs.

Councilors' forum

None

Other Business

None

There being no further business, all were in favor to adjourn the meeting at 3:11 p.m.