



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STUDENT ADVISORY GROUP (SAG) HELD AT THE OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATION AT 1867 WEST BROADWAY, VANCOUVER, BC, ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2006.**

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**Present:** Jo-Ann Johnston, CGA (Chair), Kevin Liang, Emmanuel Paul, Geoff Devereux, Eric Poersch, Fareen Wallani, Mark Moes, Rickey Leung, Shirley Whalen (by teleconference), Melanie Fugard (by teleconference), Gordon Gray, CGA (Recording Secretary) and Bill Johnson, FCGA (Secretary)

**Guests:** Cindy James, Student Advisor

**Regrets:** Jose Chill and Sandra Morford

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.
2. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked each person to introduce themselves.
3. **Amendments to the Agenda**  
Two items were added to the agenda:
  - Strategic Planning was added as item 10(a).
  - Marking of Discussion Groups was added as item 10(b).
4. **Business Arising From the Minutes**  
Gordon Gray reviewed a copy of the final draft of the 2006 student survey for current students, and pointed out that a similar survey document was also prepared for lapsed students – those who were current in 2004-2005, but chose not to continue on the program. Bill Johnson presented an overview of the purpose of the survey, and indicated that the survey results were expected by the end of March. (A summary of those results will be sent to all SAG members.)

It was also noted that the Association has attained access to software allowing self-generated online surveys, and that this tool has already been used successfully by Member Services. It is the intent of Student Services to make use of this survey tool on a regular basis for such things as determining how students access online services – e.g., through Course Windows or through edNET. The first of these short online surveys is scheduled for Session 3 (Spring).

In discussion, SAG members made the following points:

- Shorter surveys might draw a higher response rate, as it demands less time for the person being interviewed;
- It might be useful for the Association to consider offering incentives, such as entry in a prize draw, to encourage participation;
- Membership in the Association, either as student or member, should be sufficient incentive to encourage participation.

All suggestions will be carefully considered in planning any future survey activities.

## 5. **Online Strategies**

A SAG member brought forward for discussion certain concerns about the use of technology in the delivery and administration of the CGA program. This prompted an extensive discussion on all aspects of online applications.

The following is a summary of points raised:

- Fewer and more comprehensive assignments are good.
- The general presentation of online services, both regional and national, seems disorganized and not user-friendly.
- CD-ROM based Lesson Notes allowed text searching; edNET does not.
- Minimal feedback and/or direction on online discussions.
- National rules are needed for online discussion, such as earlier dates for initial postings.
- Too many different online resources, with too many different sources, with too many different passwords – should be a single access point with one user ID and password.
- Many applications require a minimum of 4 layers of drill-down to get to the service required – research suggests that one loses as many as 30% of users at each layer.
- Students should be extensively involved in “use-ability studies” for any online service, regional or national.
- Students should be able to provide feedback concerning the choice of a new national learning management system.
- SAG members unanimously supported the continued use of hard copy lesson notes.

Gordon agreed to forward this feedback to the appropriate curriculum and systems designers at CGA-Canada.

## 6. **Exam Issues**

**Exam Locations:** A SAG member asked why all Lower Mainland exams had to be written at UBC. Gordon Gray explained that the reason is basically one of cost. He noted that, because of the Association’s long-standing relationship with UBC, the rental rate for UBC lecture and exam rooms was quite inexpensive in comparison to other appropriate venues. He also noted that CGA-BC maintains 40 different exam centres through the province, including UBC.

**Access To Exams:** A SAG member asked why students were not allowed to see their exams after they had been marked, in order to see feedback from the examiner. Bill Johnson explained that feedback is available through request for an Examination Critique, which is a complete review of the exam paper by the examiner, pointing out both strengths and weaknesses of the answers. He further noted that non-access to exam papers is a standard rule for many professional certifying bodies.

**Waiting Period for Marks:** A SAG member asked why it takes 7-8 weeks to receive exam marks back. Gordon Gray explained the national marking process, pointing out that it must be designed to allow the marking, review and reporting of as many as 2,000+ exam papers for a given course, and that all of the marks had to be reviewed and approved by the National Education Committee.

Gordon also reported that CGA-Canada is currently investigating the use of computerized exams for certain courses and that, if adopted, might allow quicker turnaround of exam marks.

## 7. **UBC Lectures**

A SAG member asked for information on how UBC appoints and evaluates its CGA classroom lecturers. Gordon Gray explained that UBC aims to appoint only qualified

professionals with teaching experience, and that their performance is reviewed after each Session with the student evaluations at the end of the session being a key tool. The SAG member suggested that this might not be effective as students who didn't like the instructor's style will likely have stopped attending class long before that time, and wondered if there were other ways of reporting issues. Gordon Gray confirmed that any and all comments about the lecturers could be sent to CGA-BC Student Services staff at any time, and that such comments are forwarded to UBC as necessary.

#### 8. **Course Offerings**

A SAG member asked why there were not more course offerings, especially during the summer when students have more flexibility of time management. Gordon Gray explained that course offerings are dependent on the number of exams offered by CGA-Canada, and that the Association tries to make certain that students requiring supplemental or deferred exams have the maximum opportunity to write exams based on the same course material.

However, Gordon also noted that CGA-Canada has increased exam offerings over time, and that CGA-BC has made use of such offerings wherever possible. As an example, he noted the current summer exam schedule, which now totals nine courses (FA1, EM1, LW1, CM1, MA2, TX1, AU1, AT1 and FA4).

#### 9. **Degree Partnerships**

A SAG member asked if more degree options would be available in future. Bill Johnson responded that there would be, but that these would likely be regional partnerships with specific institutions. He noted that such regional partnerships already exist for several BC post secondary institutions, including BCIT, Kwantlen University College, and University College of the Fraser Valley. As the SAG member lives outside the Lower Mainland, he also noted the Association's distance education degree partnership with Thompson Rivers University (Open Learning Division).

It was also noted that the number of students entering the program with an acceptable degree had nearly doubled over the past five years and, as a result, the number of students entering the current national degree partner programs was much less than initially anticipated.

#### 10. **Other Business**

- **Strategic Planning**: the Chair requested that this item be tabled until the next meeting of the SAG.
- **Marking of Discussion Groups**: SAG members agreed that this item had been covered in item 5.

#### 11. **CGA-BC Staff Announcement**

Gordon Gray announced to the SAG that he is retiring from CGA-BC effective March 31, 2006, and this was therefore his last SAG meeting. He noted his sincere enjoyment in having worked with the many SAG members over the past ten years, and thanked the Group for their input.

#### 12. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006

#### 13. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.