Role of Soon-to-Retire and Retired Faculty on Student Research Supervisory Committees
(Recommended by GPACC, March 7, 2019; Ratified at EDST Department Meeting, March 14, 2019)

Background
As an increasing number of faculty retire, some questions have been raised (by both students and faculty) about the role of soon-to-retire and retired faculty members on research supervisory committees. On the one hand, it can be disruptive for the composition of supervisory committees to change abruptly upon the retirement of a faculty member whose expertise may be very helpful to the student. On the other hand, faculty who are retired have a different relationship to the university and may not be as accessible to the student or as aware of current policies and procedures. There has also been some concern raised about assigning a soon-to-retire faculty member to supervise or co-supervise a “new” student when that faculty member will retire before the student can complete program requirements.

The current policies of the Faculty of Graduate Studies address this issue under the heading “Supervision” (https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/supervision):

Members of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies may continue as members upon retirement, provided they are approved by their disciplinary Faculty (or functional equivalent) for membership in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and continue to meet the criteria established by their graduate program for membership in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. A retired member of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies may supervise, co-supervise, and serve on the supervisory committees of graduate students with the approval of the disciplinary Faculty.

Because it is very difficult to anticipate when the need might arise for an alternate supervisor, it seems prudent to establish a policy that spells out a process whereby the expertise and experience of the retiring/retired faculty member remains accessible to the student while protecting the student from unanticipated events that might seriously delay progress.

The Proposal
The expertise and experience of soon-to-retire and retired faculty members can be important resources for both masters and doctoral students in EDST. We propose a departmental policy that provides for a continuing role in graduate student supervision for those faculty who wish to do so. Therefore, we recommend the following policy be adopted in EDST:
A soon-to-retire or retired faculty member who wishes to do so may continue to serve as a member of student research supervisory committees (master’s and doctoral). If that member has been serving as research supervisor, arrangements should be made to formalize a co-supervision relationship with another qualified faculty member who will likely remain employed at UBC until the student completes program requirements. The responsibilities to be assumed by each co-supervisor should be discussed among the co-supervisors and the student and should be acceptable to all. If agreement cannot be reached on the allocation of responsibilities, unresolved matters will be referred first to the EDST Graduate Advisor and, if still unresolved, to the EDST Head. This co-supervision arrangement should be formalized no later than the date of retirement and recorded in the student’s file.

In assigning supervisors to new PhD and MA students, consideration should be given to the expected retirement dates of faculty. A person who expects to retire within two years of the beginning of a PhD student’s program should be assigned only as a co-supervisor with another qualified member. Faculty who are within one year of their date of retirement should not be assigned to supervise incoming PhD or MA students.

Each year, the Head will notify the Chairs of the PhD and MA Admissions Committees of known retirement dates of faculty.