

SENATE GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE, ANNUAL REPORT, MAY 2007

A. Major goals for 2006-07 and items outstanding from 2005-06

1. Creation of a Faculty of Graduate Studies

The establishment of FGS in March 2007 represents a significant step forward for graduate studies at Brock University, and signals a major step forward in creating a graduate culture here. This is the single most important accomplishment of our committee this year.

2. Review and update of critical sections of Faculty Handbook, Section 14

- a. Definition of full and part-time graduate students
- b. Admissions, including English language proficiency requirements

3. Library funding for graduate programs and courses, especially new graduate programs

Some progress was made but this issue requires considerable work as yet (see below).

4. Relationship between Brock University, Graduate Studies, and the Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary

Circumstances at the Seminary have changed as the Seminary grows and develops. Although the relationship still requires clarification, discussion of this topic has been deferred for the immediate future.

B. Structure of SGSC

- a. Library Resource Sub-Committee
- b. Graduate Calendar Review Sub-Committee
- c. Faculty Handbook Sub-committee
- d. Awards Sub-Committee

All sub-committees met on a regular basis to the Senate Graduate Studies Committee. The Chair of SGSC was on the first three of these committees, which is probably excessive if this person has a heavy administrative load outside Senate.

C. Major policy issues that developed during the year

1. The Graduate Council Working Group Report on Graduate Theses, Projects and Major Papers. This document was read and discussed by the whole Committee as well as the FHB Sub-Committee. Suggestions for policy have been made but FHB language has not been suggested as further consultation is warranted.

D. Items regularly discussed throughout the year

1. Revisions to Graduate Calendar submissions for the academic year 2007-08
 - a. The 2007-08 Graduate Calendar was updated in a relatively timely and painless fashion. A more or less standard template has been developed for calendar entries, which has made updating the calendar considerably easier.
 - b. A discrepancy in reporting to Senate of changes to the Graduate versus the Undergraduate Calendar was eventually clarified. SGSC was requesting that Senate approve all changes to the graduate course bank, whereas UPC was simply reporting most such changes to the undergraduate course bank as matters for information only. Beginning with the 2007-08 calendar, SGSC will only seek Senate approval for changes to program requirements (e.g. changes in minimum time registered, numbers of courses required, etc.). We note that changes to the course bank rarely generated any discussion in Senate, as there seems to be a general consensus that individual programs are best qualified to design and maintain their own course offerings.
2. Revisions to the Faculty Handbook
 - a. As major revisions are required for the entire Graduate Studies section of the Faculty Handbook (which is extremely out of date in many particulars), we developed the following protocol to streamline this process. This process general takes 2 months (2 meetings of SGSC):
 - i. Documentation is distributed for initial discussion/feedback at SGSC, with the Director of Graduate Studies, the Dean of Graduate Studies, authors of Graduate Council Working Group documents and so on, being invited to provide pertinent background.

- ii. The issue and any documentation is sent to the FHB subcommittee for the development of proposed FHB language.
 - iii. Proposed FHB language is brought back to SGSC at its next meeting for approval, and then it is forwarded to Senate.
- b. The following sections of the FHB were updated and approved by Senate this year:
- i. FHB II: 9.6.I Graduate Studies Committee Terms of Reference.
 - ii. FHB III: 14.2 Calendar Year
 - iii. FHB III: 14.5 Graduate Studies Admissions
 - iv. FHB 14.6 Registration and Student Status
 - v. FHB 14.1 Establishment and Review of Graduate Programs (for the review of Senate May 30th)
 - vi. FHB 14.5.7 English Language Proficiency (for the review of Senate May 30th)

E. Items to place on the agenda for 2006-07

1. Library funding for graduate programs and courses, especially new graduate programs

A library subcommittee was formed and should probably be reconvened in 2007-08. A major issue is clarification of funding for library resources required for the establishment of new programs and maintenance of quality in established programs. Progress was made this year in establishing lines of communication between SGSC and the Library. No policy was formulated on fiscal responsibility for library resources. Indeed, graduate programs have been established that require major investments in library resources such as new journals, but there is currently no mechanism for ensuring that these resources are acquired if new programs commence. This is an important topic that we considered to be a priority, but which was overshadowed by the considerable effort required to bring the proposal for establishment of the Faculty of Graduate Studies to fruition.

2. Establishment of standards and regulations for graduate theses, supervisory committees, and thesis defences (see above).

F. Acknowledgements

The effort, time and hard work of all members of the committee is greatly appreciated. Special thanks to Heather McGuinness for logistical support and to Charlotte Sheridan for organizing the awards subcommittee. The most important member of the Committee is Gail Pepper, whose hard work, dynamism, and perpetual good cheer are the force that keeps the Committee moving.

On a personal note, I would especially like to thank Committee members who have participated in the two years that I have been Chair. This Committee has been a stirring example of how Senate activities can produce important and long-lasting contribution to the whole University. For those who do not believe that anything ever happens at Senate or who don't think progress is ever really made, I just point to the accomplishments of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee. These result largely from committee members' commitment, energy, and enthusiasm for graduate studies in general (not to mention a definite fondness for debate). Thank you to all members of the Committee for making it all worthwhile.

Respectfully submitted by

Miriam H. Richards
Chair, Senate Graduate Studies Committee