

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**Minutes of the March 3, 2008 meeting**

**In attendance:** A. Shome (Chair), M. Rose, B. Roy, N. Worth, J. Carre, B. Wright, V. Woloshyn, A. Reynolds, K. Klassen, J. Corlett, F. Razavi, R. Dimand, G. Pepper.

**Regrets:** K. Jaipal-Jamani, C. Daigle, M. Grove, B. Jeynes, T. Boak.

**1. Approval of the Minutes of the February 4, 2008 Meeting**

- It was **MOVED** (Wright/Carre) that the minutes of the February 4, 2008 meeting be approved.

**CARRIED**

**2. International Student Fees and Funding**

- The committee approved an alteration of the agenda to provide an opportunity for this discussion prior to R. Dimand having to leave the meeting.
- R. Dimand explained that he wished the item of international student fees and funding to be discussed since in the most recent year international fellowships have not been subject to an increase when international fees have. As a result international students receive less funding per term and the differential between the funding an international and domestic student receives has widened. The issue for discussion was the extent to which the University can support its international students.
- A. Reynolds noted that if we compare ourselves to our U.S. institution competitors, our funding packages for international students are much less than those offered by U.S. institutions. In the U.S. departments/supervisors often pick up the cost of the international tuition and offer the student a tuition waiver.
- G. Pepper explained the circulated material which outlined current and past practice re: international funding and tuition fees.
- M. Rose explained that Brock in comparison to many Canadian universities is supporting its international graduate students at a very high rate. Differentiated funding occurs at all levels and makes GPDs uncomfortable. The larger question is whether Brock moving forward will be able to continue to support international students to the extent that they have in the past.
- J. Corlett expressed the viewpoint that the international fellowship amount should be zero. Brock is a publicly funded institution and as such we should not be offering financial compensation to graduate international students. The discounting of international tuition is not done at the undergraduate level. He suggests that the institution instead explore new strategic and more appropriate means to assist international graduate

students. In his opinion, the model we currently have in place is not a good business model.

- F. Razavi noted the net gain to Canada when international students convert to permanent Canadian residents.
- N. Worth commented that she is not in favour of an increased anti-international student atmosphere and would like to see international students receive the same level of funding as a domestic student.
- B. Roy noted that we are using university operating funds to support international students on the backs of Ontario tax payers. The U.S. routinely charges higher international student fees. We offer good value for an international student and should be able to attract international students without special funding.
- M. Rose commented that the University is not a business per se and that we can't think entirely in terms of what is profitable. A number of our graduate programs are highly dependent on securing international student admissions. The funding of international students is both a practical and philosophical issue.
- As an outgrowth of the discussion on international student funding, the larger issue of undertaking a review of university-wide policy for graduate student funding was raised. International graduate student funding would be subsumed under this broader policy. The committee agreed that M. Rose would take responsibility for investigating how such a discussion could be best undertaken at the university. The SCGS suggested that its policy sub-committee could start putting some ideas together. M. Rose will report back.

### **3. Business Arising from the Minutes/Chair's Report**

- A. Shome reported that the committee's oral report to Senate re: the proposed Academic Plan was well received. The committee has also submitted a written report. He thanked J. Corlett and M. Rose for their assistance with this report.

### **4. Dean of Graduate Studies Report**

#### **Van Loon Report on OCGS:**

The Executive Heads decided at their meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup> that they would proceed with major reforms to OCGS, namely that periodic appraisals would be handled via an audit system, as is the case with UPRAC on the undergraduate side. New graduate programs would still need to go through an external appraisal process. A Task Force on Implementation will be struck consisting of a chair from OCAV, 2 members of OCAV, 2 members of OCGS, 2 Academic Colleagues, and one external representative with experience in quality assurance, perhaps from HEQCO. It is expected that the process of drafting the regulations pertaining to the periodic appraisals and the new program appraisals system will take a year at minimum and perhaps

longer. In the meantime, it is business as usual when it comes to appraisals, both periodic and new program appraisals.

### **New Programs**

OCGS has appointed consultants to review the proposal for a new PhD program in Applied Health Sciences and we expect the campus visit to take place in May.

The proposed cost-recovery Master of Applied Statistics program, to be offered in conjunction with the MSc in Mathematics and Statistics, has been returned to us with a recommendation that further work be done and the proposal be re-submitted in conjunction with the Mathematics and Statistics abbreviated periodic proposal to be submitted to OCGS in July. The program will probably submit a request for a new field to the MSc program rather than a separate applied degree proposal.

OCGS will run two appraisals committees over the summer to process new program proposals. This will probably be the last opportunity for the expedited appraisal of new program applications for some time.

### **Annual Meeting for Graduate Faculty**

The annual meeting for Graduate Faculty will take place in March. The session will be held twice in order to accommodate as many graduate faculty schedules as possible.

### **Theses**

Graduate Council has begun to discuss the question of “publication-based,” “integrated article” or “stapled” theses. Dean Rose inquired at OCGS to determine whether this practice is accepted elsewhere. That discussion indicated that it is acceptable at Toronto, Guelph, Waterloo, York, Wilfrid Laurier, Ottawa and Western. UOIT and Toronto are developing policy on this practice. All were adamant that the thesis must consist of more than several published articles stapled together: there must be an introduction, an overview, a yoking together of the work such that it reflects a research program. The student must have done substantial portions of the work in a multi-authored publication. The student must defend on the basis of his/her contribution. The supervisory committee still has the right and responsibility to closely read and demand edits, whatever the provenance of the articles being submitted in the thesis. The general consensus was that there are problems with this kind of a thesis. It is not an easy practice to oversee. Careful academic advising is required to ensure that the student is doing real and separate work for the thesis and not just “stapling together” work submitted to some other body for some other purpose than to demonstrate research competence within the parameters of a graduate program of study.

## **University Initiatives**

Initiatives and discussions currently underway at the University level include: the further development of the Academic Plan under the direction of the Provost, the Academic Integrity Policy, the development of Performance Indicators for the university (including graduate studies), and (this morning at the Senate Teaching and Learning Policy Committee) the possibility of changing Brock's grade reporting system to actual grades earned rather than the 0/2/5/8 scale currently being used. Sometimes these discussions are being organized by the Associate VP Academic who pulls together the Associate Deans, sometimes including the Associate Deans for Graduate Studies in the Academic Faculties. However, the Dean feels that FGS needs clear representation there too – e.g. in the development of Performance Indicators for the university.

## **Graduate Program Handbooks**

The Dean has asked all graduate programs to prepare and submit to FGS for review a program handbook. A suggested template was distributed at Graduate Council.

## **Graduate Expansion**

The Dean provided a brief overview of the way that Brock's graduate expansion achievement compares to that of other Ontario institutions.

### **5. 2008-09 Graduate Calendar**

- It was **MOVED** (Woloshyn/Carre) that the Applied Disability 08/09 Calendar entry be approved.

**CARRIED**

### **6. 2007-08 Graduate Calendar – Course Addition**

a. It was **MOVED** (Woloshyn/Roy) that CLAS 5P80 be added to the 2007-08 course bank as a late addition.

**CARRIED**

### **7. Faculty Handbook Change – 14.4 Programs Offered**

a. It was **MOVED** (Reynolds/Corlett) that the proposed changes to FHB 14.4 be approved and forwarded to Senate for approval.

**CARRIED**

The meeting was adjourned.