

From the Dean's desk

Admissions update

Many of your program application deadlines have passed, and all programs have completed the first round of offers of admission. Responses to our offers have begun to come in and we now need to take stock of where we are, look at the responses to our offers, and if need be, turn to our B-list of potential students to see if additional offers can be made.

The following is a summary of where we are at this point (as of May 10, 2012) in terms of student intake:

- we have received 2042 applications (729 FT DOM, 182 PT DOM, 1131 VISA),
- collectively there have been 1065 offers sent (374 FT DOM, 98 PT DOM, 593 VISA),
- 564 students have accepted our offer (233 FT DOM, 56 PT DOM, 275 VISA),
- we are awaiting responses to 329 offers (73 FT DOM, 33 PT DOM, 223 VISA) that have been sent out (172 offers have been declined - 68 FT DOM, 9 PT DOM, 95 VISA).

Our combined targets from our various program meetings in December and January for the 2012-13 year were 690 new students (277 FT DOM, 121 PT DOM, 292 VISA). Lastly, we have a number of applications for which we have not received a decision as yet; for these applications we request that GPDs get them back to us as soon as possible so that we can send appropriate responses to students who have applied - thanks. These data are shown in a tabalized form below:

| | FT Dom. | PT Dom. | VISA | Total |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|------|-------|
| Applications | 729 | 182 | 1131 | 2042 |
| Offers Sent | 374 | 98 | 593 | 1065 |
| Offers Accepted | 233 | 56 | 275 | 564 |
| Offers Declines | 68 | 9 | 95 | 172 |
| Offers Awaiting a Response | 73 | 33 | 223 | 329 |
| 2012-13 Intake Targets | 277 | 121 | 292 | 690 |

Many of you will examine your number of acceptances and compare those numbers to your program targets. One word of caution in this regard that we learned painfully from last year's intake — some attrition does happen between the accept and registration phase. If you experienced this in your program last year, you may wish to send out some additional offers of acceptance if you have a good pool and available supervisors. In the end, what we are looking for in the FGS is a match between program targets and students registered — obviously we do not get these data until the Fall, so there is no chance to make up differences at that time.

Several of you have indicated that you want to close web applications. We feel that given where we are overall at this point, and based on our experiences last year with the final conversion of acceptances to registrations, that it is best that we do not close the web application to new applications until we are in a positive position with regard to our admission targets.

We ask that you continue to review any late applications and determine if they are acceptable to your program. If acceptable you can make an additional offer, or you can place the applicant on a wait list, in case more offers are declined than you anticipated. If they are not acceptable you can forward them back to us with a reject decision.

Additional alternatives to consider if you find yourselves with acceptable applicants but no space left in the program is to offer the acceptable student early admission to the program next year, or we can set aside these applications for now, and bring them forward for consideration next year if the applicant decides that they'd like their application to be re-considered again next year.

Please do not hesitate to contact Charlotte or Gail if you have any admission questions/concerns.

Graduate Skills Professional Program

A recent article published by The Chronicle of Higher Education detailed a U.S. report, titled "Pathways through Graduate Schools and Into Careers." The report was prepared by the Council of Graduate Schools and the Educational Testing Service to examine the critical link between graduate education and preparation for careers. You can read the article at <http://www.pathwaysreport.org/>

Professional skills development is a hot topic that we are hearing more and more about as graduate programs are being asked to provide training not only for careers in research but also the necessary skills for our students to be competitive for careers in other areas of society. As Dean, I believe we must continue to put a priority on efforts to broaden the focus of graduate education at Brock to include development of more professional skills. The Faculty is working with people from across campus on several fronts.

Earlier this month, we completed our first six-part series of graduate student professional development workshops. As a trial run, we're very pleased with the response by students as more than 300 graduate students attended the various workshops, with the largest attendance (70 students) being the first session on Communications. On average, participation in each session was between 20 to 30 students. The feedback from students has been positive and useful in planning our series for 2012-13. As with this year, the next set of workshops will feature topics that focus on key competencies needed by graduate students to pursue careers.

We are currently discussing plans to invite all incoming graduate students to a half-day session in early September. Thanks to everyone who provided feedback on your various program-specific orientation sessions. At this stage, the plans for our event are to provide incoming students with a tool kit of skills and resources that will see them able to navigate successfully a route that takes them from the starting line of orientation through to the finish line of convocation. The agenda for the event will feature topics to provide students with information on how to maximize their graduate experience at Brock through a combination of research and academic studies, student life activities, and opportunities to develop professional skills.

Since January, I have been meeting monthly with the partners of the Graduate Student Professional Development (GSPD) program. Gathered around the table are representatives from the Library, Student Development Centre, Career Services and Experience Plus, Graduate Students' Association, Academic Integrity Office, Centre for Pedagogical Innovation, International Services, and Research Services. We have also asked Marilyn Rose to be part of the discussions in conjunction with her involvement in the professional development workshop series.

All parties are very enthusiastic about establishing and participating in this program, and to providing a greater coordination and awareness of the resources and services available to graduate students and also to identify the needs of our post-doctoral students.

We are working toward a new model for the GSPD that we will rename Grad Plus: Professional Skills Development for Graduate Students. We are in the process of putting together a faculty advisory board to provide feedback and input as we go forward. We expect to launch Grad Plus for the beginning of term and the key features of the program will be:

- an enhanced website presence
- an online Calendar of graduate student professional development activities and events offered by all Grad Plus partners
- a Grad Plus transcript, adapted from the Experience Plus model, for graduate students to track co-curricular activities and highlight accomplishments as part of their portfolio and career search documentation
- the ongoing development of new resources and services with internal and external partners

We are confident that Grad Plus will lead us to the next level in establishing an effective and comprehensive professional skills program designed to enrich the graduate experience and augment professional skills for transition to careers.

Graduate awards — good news

It's been a good news month for graduate student awards. This week we celebrate student achievements at our annual reception at which we also recognize and thank our donors for their support. I would like to express a special thanks to everyone who was involved in adjudicating the various internal and external awards.

A week prior to our event, Scotiabank became our newest donor with the announcement of the new Scotiabank Graduate Award as part of a \$750,000 donation to Brock. Scotiabank committed \$250,000 to support the work of leading young researchers. This will be matched by the Ontario Graduate Fellowship Program, creating a \$500,000 endowment fund.

As many of you likely read in the University's media release, the award will be given to full-time graduate students at Brock who have achieved high academic standing. Preference will be given to a student who demonstrates exemplary leadership in a student club, organization, association or team; who did something exceptional that helped advance Brock's academic reputation; and/or who made a significant contribution to Brock or the Niagara community. Students from countries where Scotiabank operates will be eligible to apply for the award.

I will be having further discussions with University Advancement regarding how we will incorporate the Scotiabank Graduate Award to our awards process and will keep you apprised of any details.

From the Director's desk

Applications to Graduate

Graduate Program Directors now have the option to defer an application to graduate to the next scheduled convocation date. This is done via the Graduate Record Form. When applications have been deferred, it is currently the graduate programs responsibility to inform the students. FGS has submitted an ITS ticket to have an automated student email function added to this procedure so that the system will inform the student. We'll let you know when this is implemented. The deadline for the approval of Graduate Record Forms for Spring 2012 Convocation has now passed (May 4), only exceptional cases can be accommodated after this deadline.

Student Records Deadlines

A reminder that Winter term grades were due May 11. Spring Course Authorizations were to be completed by May 14.

Graduate Admissions

Application files that programs have for SPRING 2012 entry must be returned to the FGS with a decision as soon as possible. Please forward a list of any approved deferrals the program has made as some deferral requests originate through the graduate program. A maximum one-year deferral is the current regulation. An electronic deferral request and approval process is being developed as part of the new electronic Admission Tab.

Update on Electronic Admission Project

GradAppSnapshot is the new report developed with additional information (ie. Title, reference names, admit and final averages, etc.). This report is currently in production and will replace the GrAppsOverview and Snapshot Extra reports that the programs were previously using.

The next phase to be put into production will be the Assessment tab and the EPT self report function. More information on these two new tabs/features will be forwarded once they have been fully tested and finalized. Work has also commenced to design and build the Admission Decision tab.

Update re: Issues of Concern that arose at a previous Graduate Council meeting

The following issues of concern were identified:

1. Scores migrated to the new academic background screen from the Application (Shari)
2. Browser question re Referee Reports downloads (J. Atkinson and S. Sekel)
3. Question will be sent to the OURA list serve regarding online referee system and possible fraud (Miriam)
4. URL added to the referee system (as per Nota, this is being done by universities abroad)
5. Gradebook question and possible workshop by ITS (Shari)
6. Email notification to the GPDs from student responses (Shari)
7. Approvals sorted on the Course Authorization (Renee)

Action/Outcome:

1. GMAT and GRE score migration was not working correctly for a period of time but is now working properly.
2. This is a BROWSER issue and a resolution has been found.
3. Gail will be posting this to the OURA list serve.
4. This will be reviewed as a possible change to the referee instructions.
5. GradeBook workshops (2) were scheduled.
6. An email notification of the student response might be possible. We will look into this with ITS.
7. This is being reviewed and will be identified to ITS.

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