

(Approved February 3, 2010)

## BROCK UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Meeting of December 16, 2009 Sankey Chamber 2:00 pm

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**Present:** K. Arnell, J. Barfoot (for S. Sekel), L. Boldt, D. Butz, L. Duhaime, A. Glazebrook, H. McGarrell (for D. Hayes), J. Helleiner, M. Hennigar, S. Houghten, M. Knuttila, J. Leach, M. Lemaire (for S. Rothstein), B. Minor, A. Odesski (for H. Fukš), T. Ogwang (for R. Dimand), G. Pepper, M. Plyley, E. Robb, M. Rose (Chair), B. Seeber, H. Skott-Myhre, C. Ugolini (Recorder), T. Vause, M. Webber, V. Woloshyn

**Regrets:** M. Berman, D. Bruce, R. Cheel, F. Fueten, D. Hayes, J. Koustas, S. Rothstein, S. Sekel

**Programs not Represented:** Biological Sciences, Biotechnology, Earth Sciences, History, Philosophy, Physics

1. Welcome and Season's Greetings were extended by Dean Rose.
2. Approval of Agenda - **MOVED** (L. Boldt/J. Helleiner) that the Agenda of December 16, 2009 be approved. **CARRIED**
3. Approval of Minutes of October 28, 2009 - **MOVED** (M. Webber/M. Plyley) that the Minutes of the meeting of October 28, 2009 be approved. **CARRIED**
4. Business Arising from the Minutes
  - a) CPGSS Survey: FGS has arranged to use the professional version for the course-based Faculty of Business, MAcc and MBA students.
  - b) Experience Plus funding for Graduate Students: The University has defined this program as specific to UG support. The criteria for eligibility are to be found at <http://www.brocku.ca/career-services/students-alumni/experience-works/fag>. We believe that grad students became ineligible owing to a reduction in money available for this program, and also that it was felt that graduate students are supported by the institution fairly comprehensively and through other means via our scholarships/fellowships/bursaries budgets.
  - c) Definition of First Draft – no comments have been received from Graduate Council, so far, to be forwarded to Associate Deans G/S for their discussion. **Action** going forward: Dean Rose to place on Associate Deans' Agenda for January.
  - d) Library User Fees: Margaret Grove indicated that U of T's decision to charge fees for direct borrowing privileges for graduate students from other institutions has held firm. U of T considers its decision to be final. The decision affects in-person borrowing only. Interlibrary loan continues to be an option, and is subsidized by the Brock Library. We are aware of two institutions that have made special arrangements – Ryerson and

McMaster. The former is paying a significant amount for a one-year period (\$70,000). The latter is paying a fee, presumably, commensurate with its students' usage level. York decided against a special arrangement even though its faculty and students were heavy borrowers. We are not considering a fiscal arrangement at Brock because the usage numbers are very low for Brock, and students can access U of T's holdings via ILL (and apparently prefer to do so).

5. Dean's Report

- a) We have almost concluded our enrollment meetings with GPDs and Deans or designates of their home Faculties and will be rolling up the numbers by the end of next week. Regarding 2010-11, we have been asked to match our admissions levels achieved for 2009-10 and to achieve, if possible, a 2% increase in domestic eligible enrolments, all in aid of the President's advocacy initiative. Our meetings with GPDs indicate that there may be some shortfall re: meeting last year's levels, but in most cases programs are coming close to or slightly exceeding their targets from last year. The university has now exceeded its Ministry-funded graduate spaces and has unfunded BIU graduate students (51 FTEs on November 1 count date). However, the President is convinced that this is the way to go if we are to secure growth positions for the future.
- b) We have presented our scholarships, fellowships and bursaries budget for next year. Looking at flowthrough from last year's growth in domestic students in funded programs, and the requested growth, we have asked for and been given approval (we think) for funding that will include support packages at the same level as last year, but for more students – an increase in our ask over last-year's "hold the line" graduate support budget from the centre. We have included in that budget a special initiative re: international students from impoverished backgrounds (further details under the funding discussion item below).
- c) The Research Café on November 25<sup>th</sup> was a great success and very exciting. Dean Rose extended thanks to the Faculties of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences for their participation, the strength of their various faculty research presentations and the wonderful focus on graduate students and research. The March Research Café, Part II of Mapping the New Knowledges next year, will feature work of the other three Faculties and promises to be a great success as well.
- d) Fall Preview Day. Informal Feedback is that this did not work as well as expected as a recruitment initiative on the graduate side. Suggestions for next year are invited.

6. Director's Report

- a) Grades: G. Pepper provided a reminder that submission of grades are due one month after the end of term. This will be the first time we are scanning records for students who fall below the 70% cumulative average to place them on probation. Both the student and the GPD will be notified if this happens. Graduate Programs are also reminded that they now have the capability to officially place a student on probation due to unsatisfactory academic progress by completing a probationary Status Request Form which can be obtained from the Faculty and Staff section of the FGS website (see Grad Regulation of FHB and Grad Calendar). It should also be noted that if the deadline for grades is not met, a grade of "F" will be assigned.

- b) Application to Graduate: Deadlines are February 1 and July 1. Graduate students who apply late are subject to a late fee. If a student applies for the earlier date and is not ready, they will not be required to pay the fee again.
- G. Pepper provided a reminder that student accounts must be clear in order to register for the following term. Finance can be contacted if special arrangements are needed.
- c) Recruitment: G. Pepper provided a summary of recruitment activities undertaken during the Fall Semester:
- Grad Fair Circuit in Ontario; significant newspaper coverage in University student newspapers prior to visits.
  - newspaper campaign coverage in the East; we did not touch the West this year
  - email campaign ongoing
  - trying to diversify what we are doing in the way of recruitment
  - the Ontario government has highlighted Vietnam as a potential market, and G. Pepper travelled to Vietnamese institutes that have government funds available for students studying outside of Vietnam. Dean Rose noted that this recruitment initiative was at the request of the President, and promises to bring us a wide variety of good students
  - for long-term planning, a website planning group will be formed together with University Communications. Through information gathered at enrolment management meetings, we have some ideas to offer.
- d) Restructuring of Graduate Coordinator Position: current position will become  $\frac{3}{4}$  time recruitment position for the rest of this year and we will then be asking for  $\frac{3}{4}$  permanent position. Will be advertising for a full-time Admissions Officer Position.
- e) Minor changes have been made to the Admissions Decision form; TA component will be called Graduate Assistantship to cover all categories – minimum value \$3595.
- f) Offer of admission: students want program information included in their letter of offer. We are looking at the feasibility of scanning offer to email in advance of hard copy. We would like to create a self-serve section on EXBU to enable students to pull information about their application status.
- g) All information sent out to GPDs is now archived under the Faculty & Staff section of Grad Studies website.
- h) An inquiry was made as to the potential designation of Room C206 as a thesis examination room. G. Pepper reported that a list of suggestions has been compiled and sent to Jack Miller. Dean Rose also noted that Plaza 312 can be booked for meetings, etc. through Cathy Ugolini.

7. GSA Report

- a) E. Robb reported that bursary applications are due in December. Awards are available for Conference funding.
- b) E. Robb noted that a new initiative has been developed for getting students together – monthly gym night
- c) The GSA Office (MC D350A) is open daily 8:30-4:30.

Appreciation was expressed for including part-time students in these initiatives.

8. Discussion Items

- a) Graduate Student Funding. The discussion focused on International Student Funding and the problems of some students in paying their accounts and living on the funds available to them.

Dean Rose was asked by Hans Skott-Myhre on behalf of “the Justice Committee” to report on the “shortfall” being experienced by some international students, as well as strategies for the future.

Accordingly we ran reports on student accounts and determined the following numbers as of November 18<sup>th</sup>. They will have changed since then. Of 148 VISA graduate students registered in funded graduate programs, 24 were owing fees at that point. Of these 9 owed less than \$1000. and were expected/expecting to be able to pay their fees by the end of the term. Of the remaining 15, we know that a number received further assistance, typically \$2000. per student in the FSS, e.g., through their Dean’s assistance. We will run a further report next week and see where the accounts stand at this point. Incidentally, we are scanning the whole graduate sector and there are unpaid fees and demonstrated need on the domestic side as well.

We will address remaining issues through the bursary process if programs have done all that they can. Students can submit bursary applications for adjudication in early January.

As for next year, a structural solution has been proposed through our initial budget submission. Our intention is to establish, as part of our budget for next year, a bursary fund for International students. A committee will be established to help to define eligibility and funding levels – i.e. how many such bursaries and for students from which countries. There is still need for increased endowed funds to support international students. M. Knuttila noted that contributions to the endowment fund can be matched (from the Ontario Graduate Fellowship Fund).

In the ensuing discussion, the following questions were raised:

Will the Dean’s Spring Fellowship Fund continue this year? It will probably continue, though the amount of the fund may be less than in previous years, and we may need to consider a needs-based criterion.

Can interest charges from Finance be waived for students in financial distress? Specifics need to be forwarded to G. Pepper, who will assist the student in contacting Finance to make these or other arrangements.

Will late fees be waived for International students? G. Pepper noted that she is working on this.

- b) Accommodation of Graduate Students with Disabilities: will need to be discussed very soon.
- c) Dean’s Honour List for Graduate Students – to be discussed at a future meeting

9. Other Business

In response to an inquiry regarding graduate student residence, G. Pepper responded that we do have a block of rooms reserved at Quarry View and that there has not been a great deal of demand for graduate student housing at this point.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 pm.