

(Approved March 3, 2010)

BROCK UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of February 3, 2010 Sankey Chamber 2:00 pm

Present: K. Arnell, M. Berman, L. Boldt, D. Bruce, D. Butz, C. Daigle, R. Dimand, L. Duhaime, T. Feng (for S. Sekel), F. Fueten, H. Fuk s, A. Glazebrook, D. Hayes, J. Helleiner, M. Hennigar, J. Koustas, J. Leach, D. McCarthy (for S. Houghten), M. Plyley, E. Robb, M. Rose (Chair), K. Samokhin, D. Samson, B. Seeber, C. Sheridan, C. Ugulini (Recorder), M. Webber, P. Zelisko (for S. Rothstein)

Regrets: S. Sekel, V. Woloshyn

Programs not Represented: Biological Sciences, Applied Disability Studies, Child & Youth Studies

1. Dean Rose welcomed members and introductions took place.
2. Approval of Agenda - **MOVED** (B. Seeber/M. Webber) that the Agenda of February 3, 2010 be approved with the following additions to Agenda Item 9, Other Business: (a) Governor General's calculation; (b) Electronic reference form (requested by FOB) **CARRIED**
3. Approval of Minutes of December 16, 2009 - **MOVED** (D. Butz/M. Plyley) that the Minutes of the meeting of December 16, 2009 be approved. **CARRIED**
4. Business Arising from the Minutes – None
5. Dean's Report

A Dean's Update for February was circulated to Graduate Council in written form prior to this meeting. Dean Rose proposes preparing such a written update once a month to share with Graduate Council, the Senate Graduate Studies Committee, and others as distributed by the FGS and by representatives on these committees. In this way all of those involved in graduate studies across the university can be kept up to date on the work FGS is currently engaged in.

Discussion arising from the Dean's Report:

- a) The CGPSS Survey is underway, and the response rate at the moment is 18% (breakdown: for the Professional survey, for Business and Applied Disability Studies, 11%; for the Regular survey 21%). The winner of the first iPod is Kirk Stokes, MA student in Psychology.
- b) International Student Bursaries (we have created a fund within our Scholarships/Fellowships/Bursaries budget to support a limited number of international students through entrance bursaries, starting with the 2010/11 admissions cycle. The Committee is meeting again tomorrow and is in the process of making decisions on the application form and the process for applying. Concern was expressed that application dates differ among programs. This will be taken into consideration. Programs will need to help identify who the neediest students are. It should be noted that graduate support is

not intended to cover full living expenses for graduate students but to support them in their studies.

- c) Thesis Examination Room: We are experiencing enormous difficulty in securing a thesis defence room for our many defences. Jack Miller is attempting to arrange for a designated thesis room in renovated space subsequent to the next round of moves into a new building.
- d) CAGS/UMI Distinguished Dissertation Awards: There will be two recipients for these highly competitive awards. Doctoral students whose theses were recommended by their examination committees as suitable for consideration for internal/external awards should be considered by their graduate programs to be eligible. Dean Rose will strike a selection committee which she will chair, consisting of scientists and non-scientists.
- e) Consultants have now been named by OCGS for the appraisal of the MA program in English.
- f) Scheduling has asked for names of those who will be serving on Graduate Council next year so that they can attempt not to schedule them on Wednesdays at 2:00-3:30 when Graduate Council meets. A sign-up sheet was circulated to collect this information, which will be forwarded to Scheduling at the end of February.
- g) Writing Assistance for Graduate Students: Dean Rose has been in communication with Student Development Centre. They have indicated that the “Essay Zone” online writing tutorial can be made available for class access or through special workshops. **Action:** The Dean will forward links provided by Jill Brindle to members of Graduate Council.

The Dean feels that specialized workshops designated for graduate students would be beneficial. Ellen Robb noted that last year the general consensus was that the workshops offered were not quite advanced enough for graduate students. A suggestion was forthcoming that perhaps separate workshops could be offered for international students experiencing difficulty.

- h) Dean Rose noted that a letter has been sent to the Ministry in the hope of obtaining more funded spaces for domestic eligible students. While Brock received no such spaces in the second round of the Reaching Higher distribution, our admissions have exceeded our funded spaces from the first round of Reaching Higher by 51 FTEs in 2009/10, which is expected to support the President’s advocacy efforts well.

6. Director’s Report

- a) C. Sheridan provided a summary of external scholarship applications:

6 – SSRHC Doctoral
25 – SSHRC Master’s
25 – CIHR

We have two successful applications for NSERC IPS scholarships. Heart & Stroke will not be offered this year. We are moving forward with Mackenzie King adjudication.

- b) Admissions: We are heavily into application processing, and would like to have letters processed within 3-5 days. Interviews have just been completed for the Admissions Officer position.

- c) Grades: C. Sheridan noted that grades are not being submitted in a timely manner. Fall grades were due on January 23 and quite a number are overdue at this point. Meeting the established deadline is important with respect to adjudication for awards and for determining probation.
- d) Recruitment: G. Pepper and T. Woodhouse-Gilby are meeting with programs regarding their recruitment needs.
- e) With our funding offers, we have developed a screen that shows funding details. Online access to all graduate funding information is available on the portal under the Brock DB menu item GradAdmissions, submenu item GradFunding, submenu item GradStuFunding.

7. GSA Report

E. Robb noted that there has been a very good turnout at GSA events. Elections are approaching and further details can be obtained from the GSA website. Dean Rose remarked on how successful Ellen has been in leading the GSA in its attempts to continue to build a graduate culture at Brock.

With regard to graduate student professional development, C. Sheridan noted that we are working with Jill Grose and Pat Beard to send out a survey in March to determine what students would like to see offered in the way of workshops. This will be part of a one-stop shop on the website where students can see what is being offered throughout the year.

8. Discussion Items

- a) Graduate Enrolment Projections (summarized in Dean's Update): Enrolment meetings were honest and positive overall. Although our numbers are tentative at this point and cannot be confirmed until the University Reporting Office and Institutional Analysis run our target numbers through the University's Graduate Enrolment Model, with a combination of flow-through and new admissions, it looks as though we should be able to meet and exceed last year's numbers by 2%. (We may be a bit short on the Master's domestic intake, but won't know until ACID confirms our projections.) We will need to continue to work hard in terms of recruitment and conversion of offers to acceptances. How do we secure students who have been sent offers? Funding is the determining factor in some cases, but not in all. For some, quality of experience is more important.

In response to the Dean's question as to how we encourage acceptances, the following strategies were forthcoming:

- a visitors' day where programs bring in prospective students, who are billeted or offered hotel accommodation in some cases. This may include lunch, dinner, meeting with faculty, tour of the University by graduate students.
- Will often "court" students - calls from supervisors or graduate program directors go a long way towards influencing students to come to a university
- a Saturday afternoon conference where current students present their work with supervisors. Prospective students are invited and prospective supervisors contact each student two or three times during the process.
- Different strategies for domestic and international students (electronic contact most important in latter case).

- b) Accommodation of Graduate Students with Disabilities: This Academic Colleague Working Paper Report has now been sent for copy editing for posting on the COU

website. Programs will need to develop clear expectation of the essential degree requirements in each of their cases, so that students can be accommodated but without compromising the essential components of the degree program in each case. An Essential Requirements Workshop is being organized by Judith Brooder (SDC) and Jill Grose (CTLET) with input from Dean Rose.

- c) Dean's Honour List – Graduate? : Dean Rose surveyed the responses she has received from her OCGS colleagues and will circulate them at the next meeting.

9. Other Business

Aaron House asked Dean Rose to share information with Graduate Council regarding the Surgite Awards. Web applications are due January 1 through February 13 through the Student Awards and Financial Aid website.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 pm.