

**REPORT
ON THE EXTERNAL REVIEW
OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
VANCOUVER**

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EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT ON FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AT UBC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is much to praise in the operation of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FoGS) at University of British Columbia (UBC). It is well-respected nationally as well as on campus. Its dean and some staff provide leadership within the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS). But there are also some areas of concern and some shortcomings which were identified both in the situation for Graduate Studies on campus and in some aspects of operations of the FoGS office. At the risk of under-appreciating the important accomplishments of FoGS, our recommendations focus on areas for improvement, internally and regarding its place at the University. The overall recommendation of the review committee is that the University maintain a strong central unit responsible for graduate matters. The remainder of this summary outlines the specific recommendations, which are discussed further in the body of the report.

- R1: Graduate issues should be represented within the Provost's executive level.
 - R1.1. The title of the leader should include Vice-Provost Graduate (VPG).
 - R1.2. The portfolio should include all graduate programs (including interdisciplinary and professional) and postdoctoral fellows.
 - R1.3. The VPG should foster an effective working collaboration with the Vice-President Students.
 - R1.4. The VPG should take an active role in international graduate education especially international student matters.
 - R1.5. The VPG should enhance relationships with the graduate student community.

- R2. The structure and role of the Graduate Council should be revised.
 - R2.1 The core quality and policy functions should remain with this body and be enhanced.
 - R2.2. The membership of a Graduate Council structure should be redefined.
 - R2.3. The VPG should work closely with this Council to articulate a plan for the future of graduate programs and enrollments at the University based on disciplinary capacity and objectives aligned with the vision and strategic plan of the University.
 - R2.4. The central graduate unit must develop policies that support and celebrate the wide diversity of graduate programs at UBC.
 - R2.5. Active advocacy for practical needs of graduate students (housing, child care, financial support) is required.
 - R2.6. The central unit should take a stronger role in quality assurance, especially program reviews.
 - R2.7. The VPG should have clear authority to deal with problem issues arising in graduate education and programs.

R3. The office that supports the VPG and central graduate functions should be redefined.

R3.1 The number of associate deans should be reduced and the proportion of time each spends in the office should be increased to at least 50%.

R3.2. The central graduate unit should enhance its reputation as the place where problems are solved rather than being seen as the barrier or as the place where problems are created.

R3.3. Those functions of the central office that add direct value to the graduate enterprise at UBC should be clearly identified.

R3.4. The VPG and office should identify a 'stop doing list' for historic FoGS activities that may not warrant central administration.

R3.5. The VPG and office should develop a process to delegate over time specific functions, as might be appropriate, to other units.

R3.6. The VPG and office should retain the communication lead on graduate education matters.

R3.7. The VPG and office should provide one window access to all graduate scholarships and bursaries.

R3.8. Central planning of data definition, quality of data collection, and analysis is required.

R3.9 Improved institutional IT systems are needed to support delegation and distributed administrative functions and at the same time maintain consistent central data.

R3.10. The first two IT projects requested by FoGS should receive sufficient funding to move these projects ahead in a timely fashion.

R3.11. The third component of GSLMP, awards and other funding management, should also receive funding to move ahead.

R4. The graduate residential Colleges should be outside the responsibility of the VPG and the central graduate office.

R5. The academic oversight of all interdisciplinary graduate programs should remain with the VPG.

R5.1 The administration of the Interdisciplinary Programs should remain at the disciplinary faculty level, with appropriate governance structure.

R5.2. The administration of the (individual) Interdisciplinary Studies PhD and Master's programs should remain within the central graduate unit.

R6. The administration of Postdoctoral Fellows should remain in a Postdoctoral office as part of the central graduate unit.

CONTEXT

As is typical university practice for an external review of an academic administrative unit prior to appointment or reappointment of a Dean, Provost Farrar invited a review team to visit UBC and conduct a review of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The specific purposes of the review were to:

- Review the academic and administrative strengths of the faculty
- Assess the balance among its various functions
- Assess the Faculty's stature; and
- Advise on future development of the Faculty.

The on-site review took place November 16-18, 2011 and included sessions with a wide variety of university personnel, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. The review committee report does not include the information provided in the self-study package, which should be made available to the community if that has not already been done. Our focus is instead on our thinking related to three main areas: providing a strong voice for graduate education; the role of a central unit; and an administrative model that has increased delegation of responsibilities.

The University of British Columbia has grown both in size and in reputation, and currently stands as a leading research university in Canada as well as internationally. As a research intensive university with a goal to improve its high profile in research, the University recognizes that graduate education is and must continue to be a key component for the continued success and growth of UBC. The Faculty of Graduate Studies (known on campus as FoGS) has evolved since its establishment in 1949. It has served the institution well in the past but has currently reached a critical juncture. During the evolution of the University from its roots as a largely undergraduate provincial institution to its current status as an internationally known research "powerhouse", the role of a central Faculty of Graduate Studies must also change. The questions at this juncture are: is a central unit appropriate and, if so, how best to position a central unit with oversight responsibilities to guide the graduate agenda at UBC for the future.

The perceptions of the Faculty that we were given during our visit are positive and largely affirming of its role. There is widespread recognition of the importance of graduate students and the Faculty to the future of the University. At the same time, members of the community have been critical of some aspects of its operations. The comments indicate that changes to the structure, policies, and functions of the Faculty of Graduate Studies have not kept pace with changes in the University as a whole. Nevertheless, there was overall strong support for the necessity of strong leadership in promoting the importance of graduate education at UBC, and in increasing the effectiveness of a central unit with overall responsibility for graduate education.

To frame our discussion on preparation for the next phase of graduate education at UBC, we identified the following principles that guided our analysis and recommendations.

1. The future of graduate education must be aligned with the University vision and strategic plan.
2. To be effective in alignment of graduate education with the strategic priorities of the University, resource allocation and accountability for efficient and effective use of the resources must follow that alignment.

Our goal in establishing these working principles is to frame recommendations to increase the profile, effectiveness, and impact of graduate education university-wide.

At this juncture it is critical that a vision for graduate education be articulated in a clear and forward-looking manner. The vision for graduate education must focus on establishing the next phase of the academic vibrancy of UBC. It should honour and be informed by the past but not be locked into the ways things “have always been done.” At the same time, the vision must articulate and project the future. We use as a metaphor the delightful Millennium Carriage on campus that lets the rider see the past projected in front (via the *camera obscura*), but the past is upside down.¹ This seems to reflect both the value and the difficulty as one strives to understand the future via the lens of the past.

UBC should formulate a clear vision statement for the role and nature of graduate education in 2020 and beyond. In defining this vision for graduate education at UBC, we suggest that the value and importance of graduate education be fully acknowledged as something fundamental not only to research excellence, but to student learning at all levels, and to the preparation of the future generations of scholars, scientists, educators, artists, professionals and global citizens. Because the essential nature of graduate students and graduate research spans all areas of UBC, the goals and perspectives of graduate education must be an integral part of the direction of the University. Graduate education cannot be an afterthought.

To accomplish the University’s mission in a time of change, leadership for graduate education must be identified and the pertinent roles and responsibilities clearly articulated. The leadership of graduate education must be empowered with the authority and responsibility for ensuring that the goals are met. The leadership would then be accountable not only for envisioning the future but for efficient, effective operations. Given the broad reach of graduate education, its leadership must not only be dynamic but also collaborative and consensus based, especially with respect to decision-making and delegation of authority.

¹The pictures of the carriage and its projected image on the cover of this report were found at <http://belkin.ubc.ca/graphics/47.jpg> and <http://belkin.ubc.ca/graphics/49.jpg>

The senior University leadership, with input from the Senate, must clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities for graduate education, must authorize and empower leadership in graduate education, must enable adequate resources, and must require accountability. The argument is strong that there are core functions that need to be in the jurisdiction of a central unit for quality assurance, consistency and advocacy. The nature of these core functions and responsibilities must be identified so that appropriate governance and resources can be allocated at the appropriate level. Among the responsibilities that the review committee identifies as core are advocacy, quality assurance, articulation of appropriate standards (not necessarily single standards) across the University, tracking of student progress, data collection and analysis, management of official graduate student milestones (e.g., defenses and convocation), and professional development of students and faculty.

Graduate education, like other university-wide endeavors, operates across the disciplinary boundaries. To be successful in achieving objectives that support the University's goals, the leadership for graduate education must provide a style of leadership that achieves strategic priorities through effective communication, collaboration, consensus building, and good management of resources.

While this report concentrates on ideas related to the next stage of the evolution of graduate education support, this is not meant to diminish the generally excellent programs and service provided by FoGS. Overall, the functioning and interactions of FoGS are seen positively by the University community, and received many compliments. As well, many individuals within FoGS were singled out in communications to us as exemplars of knowledgeable and dedicated members of UBC.

Our report uses the term central unit to mean a university wide unit reporting to the senior administration that has authority and responsibility, through the Provost's Office, for graduate matters at the University. The name of such a unit and the title of the leader of such a unit are, of course, related but best left to the community and senior administration to determine. Obvious options are Faculty, School, or Office, which are frequently used in Canadian universities. The use of the title Dean, alone or in conjunction with a Vice-Provost title, is also common but a rationale also can be found for Vice-Provost alone, or indeed some other title.

The Self-Study Report prepared by the office of the current Dean of Graduate Studies was excellent: thorough and well organized. The report should be made available in the same way that this report and the Dean's response are. In addition, we heard and received many complimentary statements about FoGS and its staff. From our own experience, we are aware of the strong reputation of UBC's graduate office within the graduate community in Canada and the U.S.. There is much to be praised in what has been accomplished there. That, however, is not the task that we were given, so we will not dwell on those aspects of the office. Suffice to say that the recommendations that follow are not directed to correcting errors observed to date, but instead are intended to prepare UBC and its graduate enterprise for the future.

THE VOICE FOR GRADUATE AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION

Recommendation 1: Graduate issues should be represented within the Provost's executive level.

The mission and vision of UBC is to be a world leader as a research university. Critical to meeting that goal is the development and maintenance of a robust and dynamic graduate student population. In this context it is essential that issues related to the development of strength in graduate programs be a core consideration of the University and consequently be represented within the senior executive level. The review committee recommends that the appropriate level for this discussion to facilitate integration into University strategic planning is within the Provost's executive, rather than at the President's Executive.

Currently, the Dean of FoGS is a member of the Deans' Committee, which is chaired by the Provost. The review committee recommends that a higher level of engagement is required to provide adequate differentiation for graduate issues from disciplinary and from undergraduate issues. Many of the issues of graduate education are not disciplinary but are, uniquely, university wide and as such should be represented at the executive level of the Provost's Office.

R1.1. The title of the leader should include Vice-Provost Graduate (VPG).

In recognition of the increased need for integration of graduate matters into the University mission, the review committee recommends that the title of the leader of the graduate agenda include Vice-Provost Graduate. This is a clear signal of its importance to the community. Consideration could be given to the double title, Vice-Provost Graduate and Dean of Graduate Studies. In either case, the title clarifies the uniqueness of this position in the evolution of the University. In what follows, we will simply refer to this individual as the VPG, without foreclosing options with combined titles.

There may be some concern about title creep, or title inflation regarding this suggestion. Such concerns are understandable, but misplaced. In the days when universities were small, and had only five or six deans, it was often clear that the Dean of Graduate Studies was in some respects the "first among equals" in graduate matters. Now that UBC has over a dozen deans, plus Directors of several major programs, the importance of the individual with overall responsibility for graduate education often gets lost. It is important for this individual to be not just one dean among many at the Deans' Committee, but also the voice for graduate education in the Provost's executive leadership team. The title change (or addition) would make this clear. Nonetheless, this individual should continue to be at the Deans' table as well.

R1.2. The portfolio should include all graduate programs (including interdisciplinary and professional) and postdoctoral fellows.

Currently, professional programs in Management and Engineering have been excluded from the scope of FoGS. As the University moves forward, the review committee recommends that all graduate programs be included in the graduate portfolio of the University. All graduate programs should be considered in the planning functions at the highest level, whether or not specific programs have more locally based administration.

Although postdoctoral fellows (PDFs) are not, and should not, be considered graduate students it is not obvious that there is currently a more appropriate unit to represent their concerns. For the most part, and consistent with the experience across Canada, the graduate unit has taken on the responsibility for policies and processes for PDFs and we see no obvious benefit in changing this in the short term. In this regard the title of the position and/or office might well include Postdoctoral.

R1.3. The VPG should foster an effective working collaboration with the Vice-President Students.

The division of responsibilities for graduate and undergraduate students has its roots in both history and practicality. Canadian universities have, for the most part, evolved from beginnings as regional undergraduate universities. Nonetheless, the realities and expectations in the modern research university for undergraduates and for graduate students are very different in most respects. It makes considerable sense to continue to have two individuals and units with primary responsibility for graduate and undergraduate students respectively.

Nonetheless, there are significant opportunities for convergence and complementarity of services within the portfolios of the graduate unit and the Vice President Students, which is largely undergraduate focused. We recommend further exploration of areas of convergence with the undergraduate services, including career development, housing, counseling, and language and writing services. At the same time, clarification on who does what is essential to avoid duplication of services and/or misunderstandings in the community of roles and responsibilities.

R1.4. The VPG should take an active role in international graduate education especially student matters.

In the current and future context of the global university the importance of successful recruitment and integration of high quality international graduate students is critical to the success of the research enterprise of UBC. While the VP Research and International has the lead in this area, it is clear that greater synergies

with a VPG will provide additional strength not only for the recruitment of the best international students but also for successful completion of the programs of those students. The review committee recommends a much closer alliance of VPG with the office of the VP Research and International to realize that potential.

R1.5. The VPG should enhance relationships with the graduate student community.

In a research intensive university the voice and needs of the graduate students have increased importance. A critical function of the graduate unit and its leader is to hear that voice and to enhance the relationship of the administration with the graduate students in all of the programs, professional and research. The review committee recommends that there be regular meetings of the VPG with the GSS President or Executive, and occasional town hall meetings open to all graduate students.

ROLE OF THE CENTRAL UNIT FOR GRADUATE ISSUES

In addition to the voice at the appropriate decision tables, there need to be two items supporting the role of a central graduate unit: a consultative body for deliberation and decision on policy matters; and an office with staff to perform those functions that most properly are conducted at one place for the University. The next two sets of recommendations pertain to those two bodies.

Recommendation 2. The structure and role of the Graduate Council should be revised.

R2.1 The core quality and policy functions should remain with this body and be enhanced.

There need to be university-wide policies and quality expectations, and an appropriate deliberative body to ensure that these are relevant and current. This body would replace the current Graduate Council, and take on some of its functions. But it is time to reconsider the mandate of a Graduate Council, especially in light of recent changes to program approval processes. One of Graduate Council's former functions has already been delegated to its New Program and Curriculum Committee (NPCC), which is the same committee as the Senate Curriculum Subcommittee on Graduate Programs. NPCC recommendations go to the Senate Curriculum Committee and then to Senate for approval, and are simply reported to Graduate Council. Council's primary role now in this process is the appointment of the Chair. It is important to maintain that role at least.

Another outstanding issue that Graduate Council should address is the role of the international application fee, which was brought to the attention of the review committee several times. The level of the fee was asserted to be at the high end of

the range of North American application fees. More important than these complaints, however, was the news that a number of departments have constructed shadow application systems in order to prescreen all international applicants before advising the successful ones to apply officially and pay the fee. It is not the lost revenue that concerns us, but the duplication of effort and the risk of loss of private information (see R3.9). It seems appropriate that the Graduate Council meet to discuss and form policy around the setting of such fees as old stereotypes about who can afford what may need revisiting.

The new Graduate Council needs to have appropriate terms of reference that outline its authority on policy and implementation issues. Graduate Council should focus on matters that are currently the purview of the current Graduate Council committee on Policy, and the policy component of its Awards Committee, and policy and processes that ensure the quality of graduate programs at the University. The renewed terms of reference and authority structure should be presented and approved at Senate.

R2.2. The membership of a Graduate Council structure should be redefined.

The structure of the existing GC is unwieldy to the point of appearing dysfunctional. Membership exceeds 80 persons, and a 60% quorum requirement means that it is very difficult to achieve meaningful discussions of details, much less quorum. This raises a question of viability. A much smaller body seems more sensible – something on the lines of the make-up of the existing Academic Policy Committee. That is, there should be representation from each Faculty, the Dean and Associate Deans of the central graduate unit, and student representation. This is a workable size, with coverage from across the University without being unwieldy. Members of the Council would be expected to be fully engaged in Council's work and have clear expectations for attending Council meetings. The manner of selection of the Faculty representatives we leave to the graduate central unit and the Provost to decide, but we suggest that clear terms of reference be described, accepted and presented to Senate.

R2.3. The Vice Provost Graduate should work closely with this Council to articulate a plan for the future of graduate programs and enrollments at the University based on disciplinary capacity and objectives as well as the vision and strategic plan of the University.

To a large extent, the existing mix of programs, program types, and enrolments and with it the ratios of PhD to research Master's to professional Master's enrolments has "just happened." It is not clear that a continuation of this approach will get the University to its goals as described in "Place and Promise." There needs to be a discussion of the target portfolio of graduate programs at UBC, and the consequent target profile of enrolment. What should the graduate landscape look like in a

decade? Such a discussion can help identify the priorities for graduate programs and resources in reaching that vision.

Strategic management is now taking place for undergraduate enrolment and it needs to be considered for graduate enrolment too. A renewed Graduate Council would have an important role in making recommendations based on analysis of data and broad consultation that will drive the discussions both at the Senior Administration level and at Senate. In the modern research university, graduate issues must be drivers not afterthoughts. A recent publication by the US Council of Graduate Schools provides useful information for this discussion on a number of fronts: the demographics of who attends graduate schools – and in which programs; the need of the economy for continued innovation; and the increase in demand for graduate degrees.² Admittedly these are US data, but the issues discussed are germane for the Canadian context, and for any university offering graduate programs.

R2.4. The central graduate unit must develop policies that support and celebrate the wide diversity of graduate programs at UBC.

Many of the existing policies that FoGS administers were developed at a time when central control was the only way to ensure program quality – and when the range and diversity of graduate programs was much narrower. It is now appropriate to review those policies and when necessary develop new ones that not only recognize but celebrate the diversity of graduate programs. Established programs may be delegated some authority over aspects of the administration while other programs may need continued support or stricter oversight. The policies need to be able to support new and innovative programs, which currently might not “fit the mold” historically. The graduate enterprise at most universities, including UBC, is very different from what it was 40 or 50 or even 20 years ago when standard policies like those of FoGS were initiated. It is time for Council to rethink graduate policies in light of the reality of the current diversity, and in anticipation of further change in the profile of graduate education and graduate students.

One current example of this is reflected in the number of complaints we received about the new FoGS policy of a single structure and format for all UBC dissertations, in which (we were told) previously published work must be “smoothly integrated into the flow of the thesis to produce a unified and appropriately sequenced argument,” which may require “changes and re-writing” of the previously published work. This strikes us as a regressive step. There are indeed disciplines for which a unified thesis is appropriate. But there are others for which such a document is pointless: the only publications that matter are those in journals. This new policy does not support the diversity of graduate research and programs at the University.

²The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States. April 2010.
http://www.fgereport.org/rsc/pdf/CFGE_report.pdf

R2.5. Active advocacy for practical needs of graduate students (housing, child care, financial support) is required.

Certainly it is the role of a VPG and, indeed, everyone in a central graduate unit, to advocate for the practical needs of graduate students, but it should also become the role of the members of the Graduate Council, both as individuals and as a deliberative body that develops new ways to accomplish these ends. We include financial support in this list not simply as a recommendation for more funding (although that is always useful), but in the sense that it is up to this body to make strong arguments for more graduate support and for innovation in graduate support in the context of the annual budget processes at the University and in the development of new policies. Clearly, if graduate student research is to be one of the pillars of the University in the future, there has to be adequate funding for those research students.

R2.6. The central unit should take a stronger role in quality assurance, especially program reviews.

While quality assurance for graduate programs may be the responsibility of the VPG, this is best accomplished by the articulation and agreement of clear criteria through the authority of the Graduate Council. There need to be discussion and agreement in that body of the relevant quality indicators for different types of programs, and the kinds of data to best represent those indicators. In addition, we suggest that when external review teams are invited to discuss the graduate programs in a department with interested people, the group invited should always contain the VPG or delegate, who should be a member of the Graduate Council.

R2.7. The VPG should have clear authority to deal with problem issues arising in graduate education and programs.

Unfortunately, issues occasionally arise that require action such as suspension of admissions, or suspension of supervisory privileges. It is not that such actions should always come before the Council for ratification before appropriate action but that the procedures for taking such actions should also be deliberated at Council in a consultative way and made clear for the VPG and programs. At present, so far as we could determine, it is not clear who has the authority to take action when it is deemed that a program or supervisor is not performing well. That authority needs to be clear in the establishment of the office of a VPG, and there also need to be clear criteria for when and how such an action can be taken. Those criteria should be the subject of full deliberation within this group -- prior to any need for them -- and communication in advance to all programs affected.

An important consideration is how such matters are brought to the attention of the VPG. What are the criteria that would identify unacceptable performance? This is part of quality control – albeit part that one hopes does not have to be invoked. But discussions of this kind should be held at Graduate Council to establish the minimum standard and procedural expectations, and in that sense are necessary.

Recommendation 3. The office that supports the VPG and central functions should be redefined.

R3.1 The number of associate deans should be reduced and the proportion of time each spends in the office should be increased to at least 50%.

There are several problems with having associate deans ostensibly providing only 30% (or 20%) of their time to the graduate studies office. This leads to a fragmentation of office responsibilities that is not conducive to efficient functioning. It necessarily leads to situations in which “the person who deals with that is not here.” If the associate deans try to overcome these, they spend more time with graduate studies than they are being recognized and compensated for.

We realize that this low proportion is intended to allow the associate deans to remain active in research and teaching, and agree with that goal. Our experience at other universities is that 50% appointments also allow this other part of their role to be effective while providing a strong presence in the graduate office.

At the same time as the number of associate deans is reduced, there should be reconsideration of their responsibilities.

R3.2. The central graduate unit should enhance its reputation as the place where problems are solved rather than being seen as the barrier, or the place where problems are created.

There remains a need for continued attention to a change in attitude that has already begun in establishing a service and assistance culture rather than the culture of a “gate-keeper.” A primary example based on what we heard would be the flexible application of policies and regulations. This is another reason for more consistent availability of associate deans: to the extent that this flexibility reflects or embodies an academic decision, it should be made by an academic, not a staff member. Other examples might include better training of new coordinators, and better communication of policy changes. On the other side of the coin, the new policy regarding unified theses, referred to in 2.4 above, gives FoGS a reputation as a barrier, and a creator of problems. Does that policy add value to a UBC degree, or simply create a bureaucratic hurdle?

R3.3. The functions for the central office that add value to the graduate enterprise at UBC should be clearly identified.

This wording implies that there may be some traditional activities that do not add value. That is intentional – and is the subject of the next recommendation. But this recommendation is not intended to imply that there are many activities that do not add value; it is simply a call to rethink in a “zero-base-budgeting” way of where those activities occur. If a particular activity were not already being done by FoGS, would they start doing it? Would they do it for all programs, or only for those where difficulties have been identified? Certainly there are new activities that have recently begun that do add value across disciplines, such as the Graduate Pathways to Success (GPS), and workshops for supervisor development. We commend these developments, and suggest that the new office continue with and expand on these efforts. Other areas for similar expansion of efforts include staff development, both for staff in the programs relative to FoGS activities, and for the staff within this office.

We are aware that some offices on campus feel that the GPS initiative duplicates what they do in other student service areas, or within individual academic departments, and think that GPS may be too generic or not relevant to their students. We see these as complementary and would encourage those academic departments to continue with their efforts, but not to discourage their students from attending the GPS events. Graduate students need to be able to function in more than just narrowly defined academic environments: the more opportunities to learn about and develop abilities for those situations, the better placed they will be in the future. Similarly for other service areas on campus which feel their work is being duplicated by GPS: in many instances graduate students do not want to share in events with undergraduates, and in other instances they feel they have slightly different needs. It is not necessarily duplication of effort if opportunities are available in several places or if these are complementary activities.

R3.4. The VPG and office should identify a “stop doing list” for historic FoGS activities.

While FoGS has provided admirable service under both its historical role and in the transition that Dean Evans began, it is time to take a fresh look at its activities in light of the proposed service attitude, and ask what it could stop doing. We are not recommending new funding for the office, but in the previous item we recommended an increase in services. To do that, it will be necessary to stop doing some things – not simply downloading them to other places on campus. Are there items that no longer need doing? How could IT improvements facilitate reductions in effort? We do not have a definite answer to this after only three days on campus, but it is a question worth asking.

R3.5. The VPG and office should develop a process to explore opportunities to share or delegate specific functions and responsibilities as might be appropriate to other units.

UBC, like other research intensive universities in Canada, has evolved from one with a primarily undergraduate focus into an institution with both an undergraduate and graduate focus. During this time the research focus and related administrative strength of the departments and other units for dealing with graduate students have also grown. Many units are mature in their understanding and dealings with graduate students and consequently not all administrative decisions need to be made centrally for all programs. In this context, the review committee recommends that consideration be given to when and how administrative functional responsibilities could be delegated to units. Clearly, the responsibility for risk management and effective oversight of graduate quality and administration remains with the central university unit responsible for graduate affairs but the operationalization of appropriate functions need not be solely within that unit.

The recent change to allow department to make the first contact with a prospective external examiner is a small but useful example of collaboration that improves the overall effectiveness and timely execution of a graduate function. On a more substantial scale, the review committee recommends that a similar collaborative approach be taken in identifying improvements in the workflow related to admission.

R3.6. The VPG and office should retain the communication lead on graduate matters.

Having said that there should be a stop-doing list, we recommend that this office retain the mandate to provide timely, focused, and coherent communications pertaining to graduate matters. To rely on a central university communications office for graduate matters would put these communications at the mercy of someone else's priority list, with very likely negative results. At the same time, there should be regular attention to the nature and effectiveness of communications from this office with a view to revising as necessary.

R3.7. The VPG and office should provide one window access to all graduate scholarships and bursaries.

We received a number of complaints about the confusions pertaining to available funding, both merit-based and need-based, for individual students and for units. From our own experiences, we know that graduate merit-based awards need to be handled very differently from undergraduate scholarship awards, for reasons related to the much higher value of the awards, the nature of the adjudication process, and external competitions. That said, there is clearly confusion among students and staff as to which awards are managed by FoGS and which by Student Financial Assistance & Awards (SFAA). This needs to be addressed and resolved,

not treated as a turf war between competing offices on campus. It should be possible to “advertise” all graduate awards on one site regardless of which office administers them, and on the same site to identify the office responsible. The SFAA website seems aimed primarily at undergraduates, and that is entirely appropriate. Our recommendation, based on our own experiences, is that all graduate merit-based awards should be handled by the graduate office, even if the source that funds some of them calls for the money to be used for both graduate and undergraduate awards.

R3.8. Central planning of data definition, quality of data collection, and analysis is required.

The central graduate office needs to be responsible for the analysis of data (but not necessarily the collection of data) pertaining to graduate matters. Part of this pertains to issues of data definition (i.e., head count, FTE, and other key parameters), and to the quality of the data. Ideally these would be resolved by PAIR, but if PAIR uses definitions that do not meet the needs of the VPG, then there needs to be in-house capability to work appropriately with the data. For example, time to completion statistics need to take into account approved leaves of absence. Standard data definitions (such as for the U-15) do not take these into account. The analysis needs to be on items that are meaningful and significant for graduate programs and their pursuit of quality. As an example of one current item that does not meet these needs, we heard several times that the data on number of applicants and percentage of applicants accepted are of no use to departments – because they run shadow systems to the application system and invite to apply officially only those students they have already decided to accept.

R3.9 Improved institutional IT systems are needed to support delegation and distributed administrative functions and at the same time maintain consistent central data.

For the purposes of effective university planning it is critical to have consistent and clean institutional data. For this purpose, the review committee recommends that institutional level IT systems be put in place so that distributed delegated functions are working from the same underlying data system. In our meetings, we learned that many departments maintain shadow systems of their own data. This gives rise to frequent disagreements among units on key data such as enrolments. Much more significant than this nuisance item however is the risk that arises for the University in the unauthorized use or loss of the student personal information contained in these shadow systems. They may be on servers within departments not maintained (and secured) by central IT, or files from these may be downloaded to personal computers, laptops, or portable data storage devices. While our primary argument for promoting better IT systems is for operational needs and efficiencies, the privacy risk to the University from shadow systems is very real.

R3.10. The first two IT projects requested by FoGS should receive sufficient funding to move these projects ahead in a timely fashion.

Specifically, the review committee recommends that the first two phases of the GSLMP proposal be fast tracked for implementation. The first, Admissions (application, evaluation and recommendation processes), represents considerable functional improvement over the existing SynApps software currently used, which at its core is well over a decade old. In addition, the new software would be maintained by IT rather than by the Faculty of Dentistry. Other universities that used SynApps have changed or are changing to in-house software. So also should UBC. The second software package, Student Progression Tracking, also represents current practice at a number of other universities.

R3.11. The third component of GSLMP, awards and other funding management, should also receive funding to move ahead.

We were shocked to learn that students, both graduate and undergraduate, are still issued checks for awards, that these can only be issued once per month, and that the students must come to a particular office to pick these up. That these checks come from a separate system that is not integrated with other graduate payroll was also astonishing. These separate systems certainly contribute to the difficulty in knowing how much income a graduate student is receiving, by source. It also helps to explain a concern voiced more than once regarding errors in making changes to internal awards when a student receives an external scholarship. We would suggest that the scope of this project be clarified to deal with all of graduate student payroll, not simply a focus on awards “and other,” and that it too receive high priority for speedy implementation. There should be a single access point for information about total funding received by an individual graduate student from all sources. Currently, multiple accesses to different data sources are required to identify the total funding package for a student. This is detrimental to recruitment and to ongoing management of funded students. In some respects, it seems more fundamental than progression tracking.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Recommendation 4. The graduate residential Colleges should be outside the responsibility of the central graduate office.

Green College and St. John's College are graduate residential facilities with targeted academic focus: Green College focuses on interdisciplinarity and St. John's on international. In as much as the Colleges are primarily residentially based, and do not operate graduate degree programs, they should be outside of the responsibility of the graduate unit. Communication with the colleges and the central graduate unit could be continued as appropriate for the recruitment and retention of graduate students. Issues related to individual graduate student well-being and academic program would, of course, still be with the graduate unit.

We do not offer an opinion on where the Colleges should report, which we know is already under study within UBC.

Recommendation 5. The academic oversight of all interdisciplinary graduate programs should remain with the central graduate unit.

UBC has two types of interdisciplinary programs; prescribed programs with multiple Faculty contributions, and individual uniquely described graduate programs. In the case of interdisciplinary graduate programs that are defined to span multiple disciplines, the role of the graduate unit is the same as for all other graduate programs. That is, the approval of the program, quality assurance of the program, and progress of graduate students in those programs are the business of the central graduate unit. In these cases, it is appropriate that the administration of the program is the business of the participating Faculties, in the same manner as disciplinary programs. The review committee recommends that joint committees representing the contributing Faculties, led by one of the participating Faculties, be set up to manage the execution of each such interdisciplinary program.

The jurisdiction of the individually tailored programs is, however, not best served by affiliation with one Faculty. These programs are built on an individual basis and the support for these programs is best served by a campus wide unit, like the graduate unit. There is no natural "home" for these students and consequently a campus wide unit is the best support unit for the development of those academic culture artifacts such as space, seminars etc., that disciplinary programs take for granted and that are often critical for student engagement and student success.

R5.1 The administration of the Interdisciplinary Programs should remain at the disciplinary faculty level.

While we are well aware that many of the Interdisciplinary Programs wish to return to the situation in which they reported to the Dean of Graduate Studies, we agree with the decision to remove them from FoGS administratively. They will still be responsible to the VPG for the academic quality of their program, as are all graduate programs, but the VPG should not be in competition with Faculty Deans for faculty resources and budget to run programs. The College for Interdisciplinary Study was a feasible idea, but has been found wanting in some respects by UBC. That is not a sufficient argument for returning these programs to Graduate Studies administratively.

R5.2. The administration of the (individual) Interdisciplinary Studies PhD and Master's programs should remain within the central graduate unit.

The Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program is different from the other programs discussed in the previous recommendation. It allows an individual student to design a degree program drawing on faculty from across the University. It does not bring together faculty members to offer the same coherent program to a number of students simultaneously. In this difference lies the primary reason for maintaining this program within Graduate Studies.

R6. The administration of Postdoctoral Fellows should remain in a Postdoctoral office as part of the central graduate unit.

The number and importance of postdoctoral fellowships to both the research enterprise of the university and the positioning of new PhDs for academic positions have increased dramatically in recent years. As a research intensive university, UBC has an opportunity and an obligation to make this experience a positive experience for each of its postdocs. These young researchers need to be engaged and mentored in their transition from student to colleague and recognized as such. This includes protection from exploitation and access to basic benefits such as CPP, insurance and health care benefits.

Postdoctoral fellows across the country have formed PDF associations for both career and social support. The University has sought ways to provide support and recognition to these scholars including the establishment of a Postdoctoral Office within FoGS. Although there is clearly some synergy of PDFs with the Vice President Research Office, the review committee recommends that the graduate unit continue to advocate for these researchers and continue to manage their portfolio.

Faculty of Graduate Studies Review Interviewees, 16-18 November 2011

David Farrar, Provost and VP Academic
Susan Porter, Dean of Graduate Studies *pro tem*
Jenny Phelps, Asst. Dean, Student Admin. & Strategic Initiatives
Rebecca Trainor, Director, Student Academic Services
Jens Locher, Manager, Web Strategy & Student Recruitment Initiatives
Tony Farrell, Assoc. Dean, PDFs
Hourik Khanlian, Manager, Human Resources and PDFs
Jacqui Brinkman, Manager, Graduate Pathways to Success (GPS)
Elizabeth Wallace, Manager, Special Projects, GPS; former Manager, GPS
Philip Loewen, Assoc. Dean, Graduate Policy & Program Review
Wendy Hall, Assoc. Dean, Faculty & Program Development
Bill McKee, Chair, New Programs and Curriculum Committee
Max Read, Assoc. Director, Student Academic Services
Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe, Assoc. Dean, Scholarships & Awards
Dianne Tromba, Asst. Dean, Finance, Awards, & Development
Brendan Morey, Graduate Awards Manager
Mark Vessey, Principal, Green College
Henry Yu, Principal, St. John's College
Hillel Goelman, Chair, Interdisciplinary Studies Grad. Program
Andrew Irvine, Professor of Philosophy, member of Board of Governors
Kerry Ross, Asian Research
Beth Hensler, Population and Public Health
Suzanne Lawrence, Geography
Louise Soga, English
Alan Jay, Cellular & Physiological Sciences
Cornelia Reichelsdorfer, Experimental Medicine
Andrea Walus, Rehabilitation Science
Milind Kandlikar, IRES
Rehanna Frankland, Occupational Science/Occupational Therapy
Lee Yupitun, Mathematics
Judith Lynam, Nursing
Jane Roskams, Zoology
Karen Bartlett, Population & Public Health
? Patti Jansen, Population & Public Health
Patricia Badir, English
Les Lavkulich, Land and Food Systems
Alejandra Bronffman, History
? Larry Walker, Psychology
Peter Stenberg, European Studies
Shauna Butterwick, Educational Studies
John Church, Cellular & Physiological Sciences
Gwen Chapman, Nutritional Sciences
Michael Murphy, Microbiology & Immunology
Maureen Ryan, Art History
Susan Stanton, Occupational Therapy

Bryan Wade, Creative Writing
Colin Brauner, Zoology
Simon Peacock, Dean, Science
Cindy Prescott, Associate Dean, Forestry
Chuck Shuler, Dean, Dentistry
Hugh Brock, Principal, Interdisciplinary Studies
Lea Starr, Assoc. University Librarian
Ross MacGillivray, Vice Dean, Medicine
Mary Holmes, Director, Strategic Initiatives, Continuing Studies
Ian Burgess, University Comptroller
Anna Kindler, AVP Academic, Academic Affairs & Resources
Michelle Suderman, Assoc. Director, International Student Development
Shirley Nakata, Ombudsperson for Students
Paul Save, GSS Executive, VP Administration
Jamie Paris, GSS Executive, VP Academic & External Affairs
Maggie Hartley, Assoc. Registrar & Director
Oliver Grüter-Andrew, Chief Information Officer
Gord Uyeda, Manager, Development, IT
Ed Putnins, Assoc. Dean of Research & Grad./Post-Grad. Studies, Dentistry
Doug Harris, Associate Dean, Research & Graduate Studies, Law
Curtis Suttle, Associate Dean, Science
Lesley Bainbridge, Assoc. Principal, College of Health Disciplines
Darrin Lehman, Assoc. Dean, Arts
Louise Cowin, VP Students
Dan Patton, Postdoctoral Association, VP Operations
Jason Winget, Postdoctoral Association VP Communications

Written communications were received from:

A. Rivera, graduate student
Robin Ryan, Enrolment Services
Nirupa Goel, President, UBC Postdoctoral Association
Marvin Cohodas, Art History, Visual Art & Theory
Kishor M. Wasan, Assoc. Dean, Pharmaceutical Sciences
Megan Levings, CRC, Surgery
Rafael Wainer, graduate student
Tatiana Teslenko, Professional Skills Development, Applied Science
Estella Qi, Professional Skills Development, Applied Science
Vincent Duronio, Director, Experimental Medicine
Joanne Elliott, Case Manager, Student Development & Services
Darrin Lehman, Senior Associate Dean, Arts
Pam Davidson, Manager, Student Financial Assistance & Awards
Patricia Badir, Assoc. Head (Graduate), English
Gunilla Öberg, IRES
Terre Satterfield, Director, IRES
David Waddell, Director of Communications, CUPE 2278

The reviewers also received a synthesis of comments, prepared by an external consultant, from six correspondents who wished to remain anonymous.