

Graduate Education at Western

I. Introduction: Mandate of the Committee:

The *Ad hoc* Committee to Review the Faculty of Graduate Studies was established by Senate in January 2007, with the mandate:

To review the Faculty of Graduate Studies and report, with recommendations to the Provost, by April 30, 2007. The review shall include an examination of the role and operations currently provided by FGS, suggestions for alternative approaches, and consideration of the level of academic leadership (e.g. Dean or Vice-Provost) best suited to the graduate education portfolio in the future. The Committee will consult widely with the academy, including FGS, as part of its review.

The Committee met regularly from February until May 2007, receiving representations from all constituencies affected in the administration and provision of graduate education at Western, including academic leadership, faculty, staff, students and Postdoctoral Fellows. The Committee attended regularly-scheduled meetings of the Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Deans, and the Society of Graduate Students, conferred with representatives of graduate programs from across the University, and solicited comments from the entire University community and beyond *via* direct invitation, advertisement in *Western News*, and the University's website. Committee membership, a description of material available for review by the Committee, and a list of those contributing to the review process are contained in **Appendix 1**.

II. Overview of Recommendations

In the course of this report, the Committee advances recommendations in four principal areas:

1. That the University's leader in graduate education be at the level of a Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies), assisted by two Vice-Deans (Graduate Studies).
2. That the current Faculty of Graduate Studies be superseded by the School of Graduate *and Postdoctoral*¹ Studies, and that the School shall be governed through the Graduate Education Council, with defined representation from across the academic community and an established structure of Committees with prescribed responsibilities.
3. That several current operational responsibilities of the Faculty of Graduate Studies concerning graduate programs be directed to the academic Faculties; and that some administrative functions of the Faculty of Graduate Studies be reassigned to other support units, through a period of transition.

¹ The designation here and throughout the report including "*Postdoctoral Studies*" is contingent upon the outcome of discussions between the School of Graduate Studies and the Postdoctoral Association of Western as to the role and representation of postdoctoral fellows, as recommended by the Committee in Section X of the report.

4. That graduate education at Western fulfill the University's mission as formally adopted in *Engaging the Future*: "providing the best student experience among Canada's leading research-intensive universities."

III. A Brief History of Graduate Education at Western²

From its early years at the beginning of the 20th Century, when Western students often "migrated" to the University of Toronto to secure a recognized degree, until the mid-1920s, when both Arts and Medical degrees were appropriately accredited, Western steadily developed the foundations of a strong undergraduate institution. Graduate education was slower to evolve. Until 1947, Masters programs were conducted entirely within the Faculties of Arts and Medicine and their constituent Departments, with admissions criteria and program requirements established by the supervising professors and heads of Departments.

In 1947, the Faculty of Graduate Studies was established, to consolidate certain aspects of the disparate Masters programs (admission, progression and residence requirements, thesis supervision and examination), to oversee development of professional Masters programs such as the MBA, and to implement the offering of new PhD programs in several medical and science Departments. Doctoral study in the humanities and social sciences developed across a number of disciplines in the 1960s, reflecting Western's commitment to research and scholarship to complement its traditional mission of broad undergraduate education.

As graduate study expanded across the University, the need for a centralized administrative structure to ensure both academic standards and operational procedures solidified the mandate of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The introduction of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship program in 1962 and the need to ensure adequate student support at the graduate level added further operational dimensions for the Faculty, and these became increasingly important as tuition fee increases and corresponding provincial and federal student aid programs entered the equation in the 1990s.

In 2003, a Task Force of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), chaired by President Paul Davenport, recommended "that the province establish a 10-year goal of doubling graduate enrolment in Ontario's universities." A review of postsecondary education commissioned by the province and led by former Premier Bob Rae embraced this recommendation, and in response to the Rae Report the government in 2005 announced its "Reaching Higher" program of significant investment in graduate education in Ontario. At Western, a new Strategic Plan, *Engaging the Future* (2006), outlined the

² During his term as Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Professor George Emery (Department of History) produced *A Century of Graduate Studies at The University of Western Ontario* (2005), on which we have drawn heavily in this summation.

University's plans to increase graduate enrolment and focus both attention and resources on enhancing the student experience for those engaged in graduate study.

Western employs a dual-stream model of funding graduate education to distribute the tuition and government resources received in support of graduate education and, most recently, its expansion. The first stream, administered through the Faculty of Graduate Studies, provides tuition-derived support to graduate students in the form of scholarships and assistantships and flows from FGS to the academic Faculties according to a discipline-differentiated formula. The second funding stream supporting graduate studies is allocated directly by the University to the academic Faculties as part of the annual planning and budgeting process. These resources are distributed in various envelopes, which include the University Priority Investment Fund, the Enrolment Contingent Fund, the Graduate Expansion Fund and, most recently, the Graduate Expansion Plus Fund, the latter three of which are linked directly to enrollments. This funding is used across the Faculties, as approved based on their annual planning and budgeting submissions, in various ways: in support of faculty and staff appointments, infrastructure and equipment, and as direct aid to graduate students. The Faculty of Graduate Studies also flows funds derived from both streams, also differentially, to the three interdisciplinary graduate programs (Biomedical Engineering, Neuroscience, Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism) operating directly under FGS.

The *ad hoc* Committee to Review the Faculty of Graduate Studies grew directly from this complex and evolving environment. In its charge to review the current structure and administration of graduate study at Western, the Committee was challenged to identify creative alternatives that would best serve graduate education in this new environment.

IV. Concept and Goals of the Committee

Western's Strategic Plan, *Engaging the Future*, identifies graduate education as a major priority for the University as it moves ahead. In the context of the Strategic Plan, graduate education is not only to receive an increased emphasis in terms of expanding enrolments in established programs and the development of new programs at the graduate level, but the quality of the graduate experience is to be given particular attention. This includes all aspects of student and faculty engagement in graduate education and the administration of graduate studies at the program level, in the Faculties, and at the level of the central University.

During its four months of hearing representations from all constituencies, the Committee has gathered information and considered suggestions for improvements from across the academy. The perception is broad throughout the community that graduate education at Western in its current form is in need of redefinition and possible realignment. Points made to the Committee on several occasions included: (i) the administrative policies and procedures of the Faculty of Graduate Studies are not always fully understood at all levels; (ii) the approaches to funding of programs and financial support of students are not always as transparent and clear as some users might wish; (iii) rules and processes are

not always seen to have been developed in a fully consultative way and at times appear to some to be arbitrary in their application.

In its broad consultation with stakeholders, the Committee observed that two main themes emerged as consistent objectives. First, establishment of a new University structure for graduate education was needed that would effectively represent and ensure the priority of graduate studies. This structure would provide consistent messaging and clear, fair, transparent and collegial governance for graduate programs and students at Western. Second, there is an ongoing need to ensure an environment in the administration of graduate studies characterized by an emphasis on facilitation and assistance in working with students, staff and faculty involved in graduate education.

The Committee recognizes the fundamental position of graduate education in the academic Faculties. It believes that scholarly activity at the graduate level that occurs in the academic Faculties and across academic Faculties should be facilitated rather than constrained by a central administrative or governance structure. That said, a strong central structure continues to be needed to ensure appropriately high standards are applied and maintained across programs and acknowledged by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies and external granting agencies. The Committee believes that this structure should be headed by an academic leader at the level of a Vice-Provost. Responsibility, accountability and authority at this level is intended to ensure that Deans, Graduate Program Chairs and administrators within the Faculties, and all faculty participating in graduate programs have access to the information, resources and training required for them to be effective in their roles. It is also needed to ensure that graduate students have a forum for advocacy within the University and for appeal in cases requiring academic or disciplinary review.

V. A Student-Focussed Environment

It has been clear to the Committee throughout its consultations and discussions that the fulfillment of Western's commitment "to provide the best student experience among Canada's leading research-intensive universities" is dependent upon our fostering an environment that actively promotes each student's realization of his or her full potential. Superior scholarship and commitment to a satisfying academic life are nurtured by the example of distinguished, capable and sensitive supervisors, well-designed and effectively-delivered programs of study, and administrative structures that contribute to and facilitate the success of the programs and their students.

Graduate students come to Western from a variety of backgrounds and at different stages of their personal and academic lives. The University community is richer for this diversity, which contributes to the learning environment for all Western students. At the graduate level, Western's student population is broadly international and multicultural and often includes mature students with family and other personal responsibilities. Every effort must be made to ensure that support and flexibility are principal characteristics of graduate education in light of a student constituency with a wide spectrum of needs. Western has long prided itself on the level of funding available to graduate students, and

a competitive financial package is recognized as important in attracting the most promising and able students across the full range of disciplines.

Graduate students and Postdoctoral Fellows are also unique in their direct and immediate supervisory relationship with a faculty mentor. It is important that every aspect of this relationship is directed toward success: assurance in the qualifications and capability of the supervisor through training, mentorship and credentialing; appropriate safeguards surrounding the personal and academic integrity of the relationship, recognizing the full dimensions of its sensitivity; and a transparent and just appeal process for adjudication of disputes.

A reconfiguration of graduate education at Western provides the opportunity not only to address central issues in the administration of Graduate Studies, but also to effect changes that will enhance the experience of students in graduate programs across the Departments and Faculties. Many of these changes will involve the interaction between the central University administration of graduate education and those closest to the programs in the academic units. Others will involve exploring new opportunities to streamline administrative process at both levels and to do so in a collegial and constructive manner. Some of the most important, however, will involve increased attention to meeting the academic and personal needs of students at all levels of graduate study, within their programs and at the University level.

VI. Graduate Education at Western: Leadership and Structure

The appropriate level of leadership for graduate education was specifically identified as an area to be addressed in the Committee's mandate. The Committee recommends that a new post be created: Vice-Provost (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies). The rationale for this recommendation is as follows:

- Graduate education is a major institutional priority and, as such, requires representation at the senior levels of University administration as a distinct and unique responsibility. A Vice-Provost would be engaged in institutional priority and budgetary decisions and would have the breadth of vision across all Faculties and programs to participate effectively in the allocation of resources to optimize the provision of graduate education within the academic units.
- Deans are leaders of academic Faculties, with responsibilities for teaching, research and the support of faculty members and students within their programs. A Dean of Graduate Studies does not have corresponding responsibilities nor a budget to support these activities directly and therefore may not have the influence or authority to ensure appropriate attention or provision of resources to graduate education.

In terms of responsibilities:

- The Vice-Provost would be the academic leader for graduate studies at the University, would be the administrative head of the School of Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies, would Chair the Graduate Education Council and take the leadership role in the communication of all policy, procedural, funding and other decisions taken by the Council and implemented through the School of Graduate Studies and in graduate programs in the academic Faculties.
- The Vice-Provost would represent Western in all direct connection with the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, including overseeing the review of graduate programs and submission of new programs for OCGS approval and ensuring the integrity and accountability of OCGS and its processes in its interaction with the University and Western programs.
- The Vice-Provost would participate in regularly-scheduled Deans' Meetings and meetings of the President/Vice-Presidents group.
- The Vice-Provost would represent Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies at Western and at the provincial and national levels in advocacy before government and engagement with granting bodies and organizations focusing on graduate education.
- The Vice-Provost would encourage, advocate on behalf of and protect the interests of interdisciplinary graduate programs and lead in the development of international initiatives.
- The Vice-Provost would meet on a regular basis with graduate student leaders.

The Committee also recommends that there be two Vice-Deans (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies) in support of the Vice-Provost. They would be designated by the program areas for which they are responsible, i.e., the arts, humanities and social sciences, on one hand; and the physical and life sciences, on the other hand. The Vice-Deans would be the principal academic links between the University and graduate programs within their discipline areas and would be direct advocates for faculty and students within graduate programs embraced by their discipline areas. The Vice-Deans have key administrative roles in all operational areas of the School of Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies, working directly with the Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies).

The Committee proposes that a Graduate Education Council be established to replace the current Faculty Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and that the Faculty be redesignated the School of Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies. Composition of the Council would be:

- Vice-Provost (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies), acting as Chair
- 2 Vice-Deans (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies)

- 4 Faculty Associate Deans (Research/Graduate Education), one representing each of the Arts, Social Sciences, Physical Sciences and Engineering, and Biosciences
- 4 Graduate Chairs, one representing each of the areas identified above
- 4 Graduate Assistants, one representing each of the areas identified above
- 11 Faculty Members, one representing each of the academic Faculties
- 1 Faculty Member representing an Affiliated University College
- 8 Graduate Students, two representing each of the areas identified above
- President of the Society of Graduate Students
- Appropriate representation of Postdoctoral Fellows (*to be determined in consultation with PDFs*)
- As resource (non-voting): Associate Registrar; Senior representative of Teaching Support Centre
- As support: Senior staff member and additional staff member from the School of Graduate Studies.

Membership cycles of elected members³ will be of sufficient length to enable Council members to become familiar with its mandate and operations. The Council may create Committees reflecting the broadly representative nature of the Council to address such issues as: Operations/Agenda and Nominating, Policy, Programs and Credentialing, Scholarships and Funding, Internal Appraisals and OCGS, Mentorship and Professional Development, Accommodation and Appeals (admission/disciplinary/academic), etc. Upon request or invitation, any member of the University community involved in a graduate program could be given the opportunity to bring issues to the Council through one of its standing Committees. The full Council shall meet at least once each academic term.

Suggestions as to standing Committees of the Graduate Education Council proposed by the *ad hoc* Committee are detailed in **Appendix 2**. The Graduate Education Council may modify these suggestions as appropriate through the process of transition and implementation.

All graduate policy and program matters correspondent to those currently covered under the terms of reference of the Senate Committee on Academic Programs and Awards (SCAPA) at the undergraduate level would be transmitted to SCAPA by the Council and through SCAPA to Senate. The terms of reference of SCAPA would be revised to include explicit responsibility for graduate programs.

The Graduate Education Council would designate a Coordinating Committee composed of:

- Vice-Provost (Graduate *and* Postdoctoral Studies) acting as Chair
- 2 Vice-Deans (Graduate *and* Postdoctoral Studies)
- Chairs of Standing Council Committees

³ Membership terms for students will ensure no student is ineligible for election because of the length of academic program.

- SOGS President
- *PAW President*
- As resource (non-voting): Associate Registrar
- As support: Senior staff member from the School of Graduate Education; administrative staff if needed

The Coordinating Committee should meet at least monthly, and more frequently as business arises.

The Committee believes that this proposed structure is both streamlined and representative, that it engages the academic Faculties directly in graduate policy and decision-making, and that it engages key support areas in the Office of the Registrar and Teaching Support Centre (for both faculty mentorship and student 360°-type programming).

The Committee further believes it is essential that the Vice-Provost (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies) and Vice-Deans (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies) meet with the Associate Deans (or equivalent positions) responsible for Graduate Studies within the Faculties as a group on a frequent and regular basis and that this group meet collectively with all Graduate Chairs at least once each academic term. A similar structure should be created through which Program Assistants within the Faculties meet as a group at least once each academic term. Such meetings would provide opportunities for communications, fostering general discussion and the sharing of “best practices” across the full range of graduate programs and identifying issues to be considered by the Graduate Education Council.

VII. The School of Graduate Studies: Academic and Administrative Roles

The Committee recognizes fundamental areas of academic and administrative responsibility that must reside in a central unit with authority across the full range of graduate programs offered by the University. The School of Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies, led by the Vice-Provost (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies) and two Vice-Deans (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies), should have overall responsibility for the academic quality and accountability of all graduate programs in accordance with the guidelines, principles and procedures of the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies. Operating under the guidance of the Graduate Education Council and its appropriate Committees, the School will manage all University interaction with OCGS, particularly with regard to program review and its attendant preparation, including (i) counseling on CV preparation, (ii) sequencing of internal appraisal and accreditation reviews to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, and (iii) the assembly of documentation and coordination of site visits. This is an institutional responsibility and must be managed centrally.

The Committee also believes there is an important role for a central University presence in reviewing the credentials of those authorized to teach in graduate programs and to supervise students working at the Masters and Doctoral levels. While the basic locus of

credentialing should reside within the program and the academic Faculty, the Graduate Education Council, through its Mentorship and Professional Development Committee, should have an oversight authority and monitoring role in setting criteria for appropriate levels of graduate teaching and supervision, and should ensure that development of mentorship programs is given high priority through the Teaching Support Centre and within the individual programs.

The Committee also heard that the administration of graduate scholarships and granting council and other external awards is most effectively handled centrally. The resources, processes and expertise are in place for these activities, but it may be necessary for the University to add staff and increase coordination with the Office of the Registrar in some areas of scholarship administration, especially where this may touch on the need to consider other types of financial assistance. It was also noted that a particularly helpful role could be played by a central University capacity to provide mentorship and guidance for applicants for external awards, perhaps as an extension of the Teaching Support Centre 360° initiatives for both faculty and students.

Correlatively, the Committee believes that the present central coordination of thesis processing and examination is effective and appropriate. Some streamlining may be necessary in the approval process for external examiners and those drawn from clinical settings. These are issues to be considered by the Graduate Education Council through its Mentorship and Professional Development Committee.

All students in graduate programs at Western will be admitted to and enrolled through the School of Graduate Studies. This invests the School with an essential “ownership” of graduate students and a responsibility for their academic, professional and personal success as members of our University community. Obviously, many if not most of the determinants of student success lie within the programs themselves, in the academic Faculties, and in the support services provided both students and faculty from outside Graduate Studies. It is therefore extremely important that the Vice-Provost and Vice-Deans (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies) are fully integrated with graduate programs and that every effort is made to ensure clear, effective and timely communication between the School and the individual programs in the Faculties. It will also lie within the purview of the Vice-Provost and Vice-Deans (Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies) to interact in a collegial relationship with those associations representing the interests and employment conditions of graduate students at Western. These include the Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) and the Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) union – and, if discussions with Western’s Postdoctoral Fellows lead to their integration into the School of Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies and representation on the Graduate Education Council, with the Postdoctoral Association at Western (PAW).

VIII. Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity

The currently-constituted Faculty of Graduate Studies has a responsibility for the distribution of funding for program and student support in a fashion that reflects (or

approximates) the relative ability across the disciplines to secure external support for graduate study. It is acknowledged that some families of disciplines have access to considerably greater opportunities for support from granting councils, faculty research grants, student fellowships and scholarships, and private-sector funding or matching funds. Patterns of scholarship and research also differ substantially across the disciplines, ranging from clinical and Institute laboratory environments to individual critical and creative endeavours. All this has a direct implication for both the resources required to sustain scholarship appropriately across the disciplines and the infrastructure, equipment, and space requirements to support it.

It has traditionally been a role of the central University administration of graduate education, working through FGS, to create mechanisms to compensate for variations in the level of funding opportunity across the disciplines through selective allocation of internal funds, both in terms of resources directly supporting academic programs and funding available to students in these programs. This will be a specific and ongoing charge for the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), working with the Graduate Education Council and its appropriate committees, and will continue to have a University-wide effect on the way graduate education at Western is funded.

Engaging the Future places considerable emphasis on stimulating and providing clear passages for interdisciplinary scholarship at Western. This impetus from the Strategic Plan has resulted in a formal mechanism for the proposal and development of interdisciplinary activities in general (Interdisciplinary Development Initiatives – IDI). This mechanism requires that programs be embedded within the academic Faculties, with specific commitments from the sponsoring Faculty and all participating Faculties in support of the program. The Committee embraces this initiative and accepts the IDI process as a workable model for supporting and administering new interdisciplinary graduate programs. In addition, the Committee recognizes the long histories behind each of the three established interdisciplinary programs (the Centre for the Study of Theory & Criticism, the Program in Neuroscience, and Biomedical Engineering). Therefore, the Committee advocates a formula of flexibility that would allow a program's official residency within a sponsoring Faculty, with the possibility of relocation based on shifts in either program emphasis or leadership. It is the Committee's recommendation that all interdisciplinary graduate programs be hosted in the academic Faculties supporting those programs, that an appropriate model of financial and academic support be established within the Faculties, and that teaching and research responsibilities in interdisciplinary programs be recognized effectively in faculty workload assignments and evaluations within the home units of participating faculty members.

IX. Placement of Academic and Administrative Responsibilities

In its discussions with members of the University community across the constituencies engaged in graduate education, the Committee was offered advice as to where specific academic and administrative functions should most appropriately reside. The Committee heard representations from the Faculty of Graduate Studies, from graduate programs within the Faculties and from students – all of whom suggested specific refinements of

current processes and revisions of current structures. The Committee is advancing recommendations in several basic areas of operations, but wishes to make it very clear that the relocation of some functions will require a period of transition and a mechanism to assure that transition is handled in a way that preserves the integrity of the administrative processes, protects and is fair to all individuals affected by change, and results in improved service to faculty and students engaged in graduate study at Western.

The Committee also recognizes that these recommendations carry with them a change in the amount and the nature of work in specific units and believes that reassignment of tasks must be accompanied with appropriate resources to ensure that processes are in fact improved and enhanced. New approaches, new and more accessible systems and work processes, and the most appropriate assignment of responsibilities should cumulatively result in increased efficiency and an improved academic and administrative environment for graduate studies at the University.

Basic areas in which the Committee recommends that specific responsibilities be devolved are:

- Recruitment: The primary recruitment initiatives should reside with individual programs and their faculty members, but central support and coordination of University-wide recruitment activities is very helpful for some Departments and programs. The Committee recommends that a central facilitating role continue to be made available to the programs and that every opportunity for mutually-beneficial recruitment and interest-generating events, programming, advertising, and access to timely, accurate program information be pursued. The currency, accuracy and completeness of web-based information was held to be of particular concern. To facilitate development of their websites, programs and Departments should work in close coordination with the School of Graduate Studies.
- Admissions: Graduate programs should have the primary responsibility for admission on behalf of the School of Graduate Studies. The Committee recognizes that the special nature of graduate studies makes it appropriate that the first stages of recruitment and admissions reside with the individual graduate programs. The particularity of discipline orientation and the knowledge of the qualifications of potential applicants from a variety of institutions may be more familiar to faculty in the programs. However, central compilation of application information, particularly with regard to international applicants from a variety of backgrounds, can be facilitated as a resource to programs if maintained as institutional records and correlated with success in academic progression and completion rates. Admissions and funding requirements and standards should be defined by Faculties, Departments and programs and approved by the Graduate Education Council (*e.g.*, through its Scholarships and Funding Committee), and the School of Graduate (*and Postdoctoral*) Studies should maintain an overall monitoring and auditing role in the program-level admissions process.

- Career Counselling, Training and Personal Academic Support: The Committee was very impressed with the breadth and success of programs mounted under the “360° Initiative” through the Teaching Support Centre. This resource has the potential to contribute significantly to the quality of student experience by providing supervisory and mentorship training to faculty, teaching and learning skills development programs for students, and a wide variety of personal, professional and career services for those who may wish to pursue avenues both within and outside the academy.
- Academic Records Management: Although the Committee recognizes that there are considerable differences in the nature, structure and administration of graduate and undergraduate programs, it believes that the essential function of academic records management can be broadened within the Office of the Registrar to encompass most if not all of the clerical and record-keeping roles currently divided between that Office and the Faculty of Graduate Studies. In course and program registration, student financial aid, and monitoring of academic progress, operating systems are currently in place that could successfully manage those aspects of graduate student records not currently being provided by the Office of the Registrar. The Committee understands that there will be substantial transitional issues to accommodate the recommended consolidation of services, but believes there are significant economies of resources and effort to be gained in integrating records management within the Office of the Registrar.

X. Timelines and Transition

The *ad hoc* Committee’s initial terms of reference indicated an anticipated reporting date no later than April 30, 2007. Because of the extensive consultation process, taking the Committee into May, this draft report has taken longer to complete. It is the Committee’s intention to make the draft report available for comment across the University community, through the University’s website, beginning in June 2007. At the conclusion of this discussion stage (early September), a final report will be brought forward to the Senate Committee on University Planning (SCUP) and to Senate in September 2007. It is anticipated that, also at the September meeting of Senate, the Nominating Committee will advance nominations for a selection committee charged with the appointment of the Vice-Provost, should the recommendation of the Committee be approved.

It is the recommendation of the Committee that the new School and its leader be in place by July 1, 2008. Even as the selection process for the Vice-Provost moves forward, however, it will be useful to begin preparations for the structural transition from the current Faculty of Graduate Studies to the proposed School of Graduate (*and Postdoctoral*) Studies. During that time, it would also be helpful to initiate the devolution of some activities and functions from the current FGS to the academic Faculties and those administrative units designated in Section IX of this report. To enable these transitions, the Provost may wish to appoint one or a number of Transition Teams focused on the process and implementation of the Committee’s recommendations. It is important that: (1) the structural changes occur in as seamless as possible a way, with

no disruption in services to programs, faculty, staff and students; and (2) the new Vice-Provost be appointed and become engaged in the transition as an active shaper of its final outcome as soon as possible.

XI. Issues for Continuing Discussion

The Committee has certainly not addressed every issue raised by those with whom it consulted, nor has it brought forward an exhaustive list of concerns and resolutions. Among these, four particular areas emerged from the Committee's work that require special comment here and subsequent consideration:

- Postdoctoral Fellows: The Committee believes that discussion should be initiated between the representative organization of the Postdoctoral Fellows (PAW) and the School of Graduate Studies, led by the Vice-Provost and Vice-Deans, aimed at bringing Postdoctoral Fellows under the academic and administrative umbrella of the School. Such integration would lead, perhaps, to the leadership's designation as Vice-Provost and Vice-Deans (Graduate *and* Postdoctoral Studies) and result in appropriate representation of the PDF constituency on the Graduate Education Council and its standing committees.
- "Category I/Category II" Graduate Programs: Issues with regard to Category I/Category II programs were brought before the Committee on a number of occasions, both in terms of the appropriate designations of particular programs in terms of the nature and expectations of research and with regard to the differences in tuition fee policy and funding opportunities for students within the respective categories. There is also a perceived status differentiation on the part of students in some programs. The Committee believes that these matters require further consideration.
- Implications for graduate education within the Faculties: The Committee's recommendations involve significantly increased responsibilities at the Faculty level. To facilitate effective communication and discussion, Associate Deans (or the equivalent officers with responsibilities for graduate studies) within the academic Faculties should meet on a regular basis with Graduate Chairs and Graduate Assistants within the Faculties. The School of Graduate Studies should ensure that appropriate mentoring/training for Graduate Associate Deans (or equivalent officers), Chairs, and Assistants within the Faculties is accessible and encouraged. It is the responsibility of the Faculties providing programs to identify and advance issues appropriate for consideration by the Graduate Education Council – and of the Vice-Provost and Vice-Deans (Graduate *and* Postdoctoral Studies) to ensure that actions taken by the Graduate Education Council are clearly communicated and understood within the Faculties.
- Structure of the Office supporting the School of Graduate *and* Postdoctoral Studies: The specific administrative configuration of the Office will follow determination of the general allocation of functions and responsibilities and be a

key part of the implementation/transition process. Every effort is needed to protect the wealth of knowledge currently available in FGS and support all those affected by the transition.

Appendix 1: Committee Membership and Consultation

Ad hoc Committee to Review the Faculty of Graduate Studies (established January 2007)

Membership:

- Fred Longstaffe – Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Chair
- Ted Hewitt – Vice-President (Research and International Relations)
- Michael Bartlett – (Engineering), Chair of SCUP
- Michael Milde – (Arts & Humanities), Chair of SCAPA
- John Doerksen (Music) – elected by Senate
- Chris Ellis (Medicine & Dentistry) – elected by Senate
- Julie McMullin (Social Science) – elected by Senate
- David Wardlaw (Science) – elected by Senate
- Mark Kuprowski (Graduate Student – Science) – elected by Senate
- Jane Toswell – (Arts & Humanities), UWOFA
- Shannon Dea – (Arts & Humanities), SOGS

Consultation:

Since February 8, 2007 the Committee met for eighteen two-hour sessions over the course of four months, plus one full-day retreat on Saturday, May 26, 2007. At these meetings, the Committee talked with administrators and staff of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, former Deans of Graduate Studies, Associate Deans responsible for Graduate Studies within the Faculties, Directors of Interdisciplinary Programs administered through the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Graduate Program Chairs, Graduate Program Assistants, administrators in corresponding positions at other universities, representatives of support units (Teaching Support Centre and Office of the Registrar, Institutional Planning and Budgeting), and the Postdoctoral Association at Western.

The Committee attended regular meetings of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, of the Society of Graduate Students, the Deans, and the Chairs and Directors Forum. Specific comments were sought from the University of Western Ontario Faculty Association, Affiliated University Colleges and Research Institutes, the Graduate Teaching Assistants Union, the University Ombudsperson, and student groups representing graduate students at the national level.

Calls for submissions were placed in *Western News* and on the homepage of the University website during March and April. In all, the Committee received written representation from a total of nearly fifty individuals, groups and organizations, all of which were read thoroughly and considered in assembling this report.

The Committee was provided with a vast array of documentation relating to the structure and operations, funding and planning processes of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and of corresponding units in other universities across Canada and North America.

Appendix 2: Proposed Standing Committees of the Graduate Education Council

The Committee advances a number of suggestions as to the appropriate standing committees of the Graduate Education Council (GEC) and their anticipated functions:

Operations/Agenda and Nominating

- Nominate members to GEC and its Committees
- Set agendas for GEC meetings
- Provide procedural advice during GEC meetings
- Responsibility for terms of reference of GEC and its Committees

Policy, Programs, and Credentialing

- Develop graduate handbook and calendar
- Review proposed changes and additions to programs
- Facilitate the development of interdisciplinary programs
- Formulate policies concerning admissions, program time-lines and progression, disciplinary processes and appeals
- Establish criteria to be applied in the academic Faculties with respect to credentialing for graduate supervision and review credentialing procedures and decisions to assure evenhanded and fair application across the University

Scholarships and Funding

- Establish criteria and periodically review discipline-based differential funding to programs and ensure funding transparency
- Oversee central adjudication and administration of graduate scholarships
- Oversee administration of external scholarships (including facilitating application, processing awards and the tracking of success rates)
- Establish minimum funding levels for graduate student funding
- Explore flexibility in funding time-lines
- Oversee administration of bursaries and loans
- Oversee election and functioning of SSHRC, NSERC, and OGS ranking committees
- Monitor relationship with GTA union

Internal Appraisals and OCGS

- Perform appraisals of existing and proposed programs
- Set time-lines for internal review prior to OCGS review
- Ensure that appropriate resources are in place to support new programs and that interdisciplinary proposals are facilitated

- Monitor relationship with OCGS to ensure mutual accountabilities are being fulfilled

Mentorship and Professional Development

- Provide advice on the development of programs in the Teaching Support Centre 360° initiative to aid faculty members in developing and maintaining supervisory abilities
- Monitor development of programs in the Teaching Support Centre 360° initiative to aid graduate students to understand and manage relationships with supervisors, instructors, and their programs of study
- Encourage appropriate teaching and training opportunities for graduate students
- Gather and publicize information with respect to “best practices” in mentorship
- Assess surveys (including National Survey of Student Engagement and Survey of Graduate Student Satisfaction) and recommend changes to practices if appropriate

Accommodation and Appeals

- Ensure that appropriate policies and mechanisms are in place to provide flexibility in meeting the particular needs of students at the graduate level, recognizing the more complex personal obligations confronted by graduate students in such areas as family and parental responsibilities and particular challenges often confronting international graduate students.
- Provide accessible and fair avenues of appeal in cases involving admission, disciplinary issues (academic ethics or code of conduct), academic issues (supervision, progression, evaluation, etc.)
- Encourage development of informal dispute resolution processes at the program and Department levels
- Adjudicate cases (as above) proceeding beyond the Faculty level on behalf of the School of Graduate *and Postdoctoral* Studies
- Provide an avenue to the forum of final appeal at Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA)