

# Report of the Task Force on the Administration of Graduate Studies

September 2008

## 1. Introduction

In September 2007, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, Amit Chakma, established a “Task Force on the Administration of Graduate Studies”. The Provost’s memorandum, providing the motivation behind the initiative, the membership of the task force, and its mandate, is attached as Appendix I. Briefly, the initiative is motivated by the University’s Sixth Decade Plan goal of increasing graduate enrolment to about 8000 by 2017. To put this number in context we show in Figure 1 the total full-time equivalent (FTE) graduate enrolment for the period 1998/99 to 2007/08. Over this nine-year period graduate enrolment grew from 1,596 to 3,007; an impressive increase of 88.4% or a near doubling. Over the last six-year period, since the last review of graduate studies was done [1], which recommended a doubling of graduate enrolment over eight years, the increase has been 61%, again an impressive figure. Despite these increases, however, the graduate percentage of the total UW student enrolment has increased only moderately; from 9.2% in 1998/99 to 11.9% in 2007/08 (see Figure 2). This of course, is a result of the large growth in undergraduate enrolment. Achieving the Sixth Decade Plan goal then means more than another doubling of graduate enrolment over the coming decade.

To be able to implement such an expansion we need to make major changes to all aspects of graduate administration at UW; from marketing our programs and recruiting excellent domestic and international students, admitting and registering them, supporting them academically, socially, and financially, providing them with first-rate programs both discipline-based and interdisciplinary, to graduating them in a timely fashion. The need for change became

evident during the expansion of the past two years. Furthermore, it is the view of this task force that the change needed is not simply incremental or fine tuning in nature, nor is it simply automating the existing processes; rather, it involves a major redesign of various processes.

## 2. The Work of the Task Force

Our task force began its work nearly a year ago. We met about a dozen times and consulted widely. A listing of the many individuals and groups with whom we met is included in Appendix II. We have benefited greatly from these broad consultations and we wish to express our gratitude to the many individuals who took the time to explain their part in this complex administrative process.

Although it is unfortunate that we have taken a rather long time to report on our findings, a number of the issues identified early on in the process have been resolved or are on their way to resolution. This happy outcome came about largely because one of the members of the task force (Alan George) was appointed Interim Dean of Graduate Studies during the course of the task force's work. Another positive point to report is the tremendous progress that the University has made in graduate studies in the six years since the report on the last review was published [1].

## 3. The Big Picture

Before considering the various functions involved in the administration of graduate studies at UW, it is useful to briefly provide an overview of the current situation. The organization of graduate studies is described in a booklet that was last updated in 1999-2000 [2].

Graduate administration takes place at three separate levels: the Department, the Faculty, and the Graduate Studies Office (GSO). All three levels are involved in almost every function; e.g. admissions, scholarships, approval of major changes in individual student programs, etc., with considerable duplication. This duplication is often justified by the need to verify the work done at a lower level.

At all three levels, we found hard working and committed staff who feel overworked and report having to stay late in the evening on a regular basis, just to cope! On the perception of decentralization, we heard considerable talk about “downloading” and unfortunately little about “empowering”. Also almost always in our meetings there was initial suspicion about the objectives of the review, and a fear that our recommendations would bring more students and more downloading, but few, if any, additional resources. And there is concern that the automation of the admissions process would reduce rigor (less ability to catch fraudulent applications), and an expressed need for a commensurate increase in IT support.

In summary, while everyone is working hard, the admissions process, to pick one of the important functions, is cumbersome and the cycle is long; the service we are providing to prospective students and in many cases to existing students is not as good as it should be; and the staff appear in some cases to be overworked and demoralized. If this is the case now, how then are we going to cope with another doubling of enrolment?

#### 4. The Way Forward

The philosophy underlying the recommendations we make is to reduce and hopefully eliminate duplication by performing any given function only once and, except for those requiring

very specialized knowledge, at the lowest possible level. If this entails more downloading, then the resources required should be provided. As well, there is the need to attend to the HR issues, be it reclassification of staff positions to reflect the increased scope and level of responsibility, or the provision of training to enable staff to acquire the skills required with new processes and systems. That is, first redesign the processes, then automate, while recognizing that automated systems do not replace people, but elevate the quality of service provided and increase 'throughput'. Indeed, new systems and processes invariably require more highly trained staff.

Inherent in reducing multiple-level checking is that inevitably there will be some errors. It is our belief, however, that these can be dealt with retrospectively and that the risk involved is not high.

Our recommendations come in three flavours: those that we believe should be implemented immediately; those that require further review and study; and those that point to good practice that perhaps cannot be applied everywhere across the University.

Two important points to make at the outset are: first, this report does not and cannot provide a redesign of any of the administrative processes; rather it gives guidance about such a redesign, leaving the detailed redesign to others. Second, when we speak of "Department" we have in mind relatively large Departments such as those in the Faculties of Engineering, Mathematics, and Science. For the two small Faculties, Applied Health Sciences and Environment, our notion of Department may in some cases be taken to mean Faculty. Finally, the Faculty of Arts with its mix of large and small Departments presents a special challenge; while its large Departments certainly fit our notion of "Department", perhaps groupings of smaller Departments or the Faculty as a whole can perform the functions this report ascribes to

“Departments”. The point is that best practices in some circumstances may be more effectively applied to aggregations of small Departments.

#### 5. The Application Process and Admissions

This is perhaps the most important function in graduate studies administration, and it is one in which currently all three levels participate. We believe that most of the work on admissions should be done at one level, the Department. Here the role of the Faculty Associate Dean in admissions should be limited to exception handling (see section on the role of the Associate Dean); e.g., to decide on the admissibility of those who have unusual profiles and do not strictly meet the specified requirements. The GSO’s role should be that of facilitator; it should be available to the Departments as a resource and for consultation when needed; however, the Departments should make the final admissions decision and in this should determine their own “comfort level”. Needless to say, since the final decision rests with the Department, the Department will have the responsibility to ensure accuracy.

The GSO should continue to take the lead from the Departments in assessing the quality of international transcripts and institutions.

#### **Recommendation #1:**

**The admissions process should be redesigned to make it Department-centric. The Faculty Associate Deans’ involvement would be limited to exception handling. The GSO’s role would be as a resource to the Department, especially in assessing international credentials.**

### **Good Practice Recommendations:**

The following recommendations represent in some cases current practice in a number of units at the University. They are presented here as a means to spread best practices across the institution.

- **Applications should be reviewed as soon as sufficient information is available. Communication with applicants should take place immediately upon receipt of application.**
- **Prospective supervisors should be able to view and review applications electronically, decide on acceptance, and complete the transaction with the Associate Chair or Departmental Coordinator (see Section 6 on Automation).**
- **Ideally, Departments should accept excellent students into programs even before supervisors are found. For instance, any student with first class standing, that is, eligible for an Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) or Tri-Council grant, should be accepted.**
- **Departments should develop waiting lists; that is, overbook the number of acceptances (just as we do in undergraduate admissions).**
- **Applications should be accepted and processed year round.**
- **Application dates should be aligned with scholarship deadlines.**
- **Personal contact between the applicant and the Department should be increased.**
- **Large Departments that are organized on the basis of technical groups or clusters can take good advantage of such organization and accept students into these groups leaving the assignment to an individual supervisor to a later time, thus speeding up the**

**admissions process and allowing an opportunity for a more informed decision on student/advisor matching.**

#### 6. Automation and Document Management

The task force is aware of the work currently underway on the Graduate Admissions Project (GAP). A one-page description of the business process flow is attached as Appendix III. We see GAP as a system that can accommodate the redesigned admissions process recommended above, and we strongly support its continued development. Once GAP is implemented, however, there will be an obvious need for training and orientation for all concerned, but especially for Department personnel. This can be provided by the GSO.

GAP will enable Departments to view and review completed applications electronically. We recommend that this facility be available to all prospective supervisors, thus disposing of the current system of circulating paper copies of the applications with the attendant risk of delaying the process considerably, and possibly losing good applicants to competing universities. Ideally, a supervisor looking for new graduate students should be reviewing the list of the Departmental applicants available in workflow to recommend or to accept for admission, and completing the transaction with the Associate Chair or Graduate Coordinator.

#### **Recommendation #2:**

**Support the completion of GAP implementation and use it to implement the Department-centric admissions process. Gear up to the provision of intensive training on the new system.**

Although automating the admissions process will be a great advance in the administration of graduate studies at UW, we should not stop with admissions. Indeed, there is obvious need for automating the process of tracking graduate students not only throughout their study at UW but also after graduation. Currently our knowledge of what the graduates of our graduate programs do is mostly anecdotal and very spotty. The University would benefit a great deal by improving its ability to track the careers of its graduates. The task force was informed that this is part of the objective that will be met through the development of a new system in ODAA, together with the implementation of the identity management project, WATIAM.

**Recommendation #3:**

**Extend automation and document management to tracking the progress of graduate students during their studies at UW and after graduation.**

7. Marketing and Recruiting

The task force is of the view that UW's efforts in the marketing of graduate programs and the recruiting of graduate students should be considerably enhanced. We also believe that marketing and recruitment are most effective when done at the Department level. Furthermore, we believe that most prospective graduate students find out about graduate programs and potential graduate supervisors via the internet. Thus we cannot recommend strongly enough that every Department should have a well-designed and well-maintained graduate studies website; and the same holds true for individual faculty members.



We are aware of an initiative led by the Vice-President, External Relations to upgrade and enhance websites across UW. We support this initiative and recommend that Departments take advantage of it to market their graduate programs.

Beyond the Department, it is not entirely clear to us what role the GSO should have in marketing and recruiting. Certainly a case can be made that economies of scale and enhanced expertise can be achieved by combining certain marketing functions. An exception is the attendance at graduate marketing fairs where the GSO should continue to play a coordinating role.

**Recommendation #4:**

**Marketing of graduate programs and recruitment of graduate students should be considerably enhanced and undertaken at the Departmental level, primarily utilizing the web. Additional resources should be provided, if needed.**

**Recommendation #5:**

**Further study is needed to determine the future of high level marketing functions related to graduate studies.**

8. **The Position of Dean of Graduate Studies**

The University of Waterloo does not have a Faculty or School of graduate studies. Rather, our structure places the responsibility for graduate programs with the Faculty Deans who have the authority over the resources needed for both graduate and undergraduate programs.

Faculties of graduate studies are useful in universities that do not have a long history of graduate education where they play an important role in establishing program quality standards and ensuring consistency in the application of these standards across the university. This need does not exist at UW where excellent graduate programs have existed for five decades. The negative side of having a graduate school is the bifurcation in the responsibility for graduate education and the attendant confusion.

At the time of the previous review, there were calls for the establishment of a graduate school, primarily as a means of raising the profile of graduate studies at UW. The review report, however, recommended against such a move. The current strong emphasis on graduate studies at the University and the substantial growth in the number of graduate students over the last six years is clear evidence that graduate studies can flourish without the structural problems inherent in creating a graduate school.

This brings us to the position of Dean of Graduate Studies. Although there is a clear need for a senior academic leader to represent graduate studies both inside the University, for instance, on Deans' Council and the Senate, and outside the University, for instance on the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies, the title of 'Dean' is misleading. This senior leadership position is obviously different from that of a Faculty Dean. A significant difference is that the Dean of Graduate Studies does not, and in our view properly so, control the resources needed to deliver graduate programs. Such resources flow from the Provost to the Faculty Deans and on to the Departments. The lack of budgetary authority has caused past Deans of Graduate Studies a great deal of frustration and has led to the misunderstanding of the role of the Graduate Studies Dean. We believe that the solution to this problem is simple: change the title from 'Dean' to

'Associate Provost, Graduate Studies', and clarify the responsibilities of the position. Not only will such a change reduce confusion, it will have the added benefit of signaling the close linkage between this position and that of the Provost. This in turn should facilitate the central planning for graduate expansion.

**Recommendation #6:**

**The title of Dean of Graduate Studies should be changed to Associate Provost, Graduate Studies, and the responsibilities of this senior leadership position clarified. Appendix IV provides a proposed position description.**

9. Role of the Faculty Associate Deans

A significant feature of the graduate administrative structure at UW is that each of the six Faculties has an Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Besides overseeing graduate studies in their Faculties, the Associate Deans work as a group with the Dean of Graduate Studies on both policy and operational matters affecting graduate education across the University. This is a very attractive feature of our administrative structure and should certainly be maintained. However, we recommend that the nature of the position of Associate Dean should be changed from one of supervising and checking the Departments' work, to one of planning, communicating, mentoring, and monitoring. These are functions that are needed at all times but acquire greater significance and relevance in times of expansion.

While maintaining many of the overall oversight responsibilities, under the new model the Associate Dean will become less involved in the day-to-day graduate administration that takes

place in the Departments. For instance, in admissions, the role of the Associate Dean will be limited to exception handling. However there will be a new role in monitoring the quality of admission decisions in a retrospective manner, more like an audit function. This will ensure that quality is maintained and that the quality standards are consistent across the Faculty.

The Associate Dean will have an expanded role in graduate enrolment planning and in the implementation of these plans across the Faculty. There will also be an enhanced role in propagating good practices across the Faculty. This will be done through the Departmental Graduate Associate Chairs for whom the Associate Dean should assume a greater mentorship role. As well, the Associate Dean will have an enhanced role in communicating changes in policies and procedures to the Departments. While not involved in the administration of graduate student funding on a day-to-day basis, the Associate Dean will have the responsibility of ensuring that the University's and the Faculty's funding policies are being consistently applied across the Faculty.

In matters such as setting up examination committees and arranging for comprehensive exams, the task force recommends that these processes be streamlined to reduce duplication and multiple handling.

In order to inform planning, the Associate Dean's Office should be engaged, in collaboration with the GSO and the Departments, in collecting data and indicators on all aspects of graduate studies in the Faculty.

Last but certainly not least, we see the Associate Dean as a facilitator in the process of establishing new interdisciplinary graduate programs that cross Departmental and Faculty boundaries.

**Recommendation #7:**

**The role of Faculty Associate Dean, Graduate Studies should be changed to include greater emphasis on planning, communication, monitoring, mentoring, facilitating the establishment of new interdisciplinary programs, and less involvement in day-to-day supervising and checking administrative functions that are performed at the Departmental level.**

10. HR Issues

The devolution of administrative responsibilities to the Departmental level will have to be accompanied by the provision of appropriate resources, as well as carefully considering human resource implications. In particular, special attention must be paid to the pivotal position of Departmental Graduate Coordinator.

**Recommendation #8:**

**The position of Departmental Graduate Coordinator should be reviewed and, if needed, re-classified to reflect the increase in scope, level of responsibility, and additional required skills brought about by the administrative process devolution and automation.**

**Recommendation #9:**

**Mechanisms should be put in place to encourage staff to acquire the new skills needed.**

**Recommendation #10:**

**A program of on-going workshops and orientation sessions should be designed to support all those involved in graduate administration, including Associate Deans, Associate Chairs, and Graduate Coordinators.**

11. **Graduate Programs and Supervision**

The focus of the task force has been on the administration, rather than the academic aspects of graduate studies. Nevertheless, a number of issues came up that straddle programs and administration. This has prompted us to make the following recommendations.

**Recommendation #11:**

**Departments should pay greater attention to the scope of their course offerings and devise means for ensuring the quality of course delivery including the use of specifically designed graduate course evaluation questionnaires.**

**Recommendation #12:**

**Greater attention needs to be paid to improving the quality of graduate student supervision, including the provision of workshops on the subject, and in sensitizing all concerned to the issues involved.**

**Recommendation #13:**

**The workshop provided by the Office of Research on UW's Intellectual Property policies as they affect graduate students should be presented at least annually.**

**Recommendation #14:**

**Where Faculties are not requiring it, the GSO workshop on Academic Integrity should be presented at least annually.**

12. Funding of Graduate Students

Some of the funding issues that the task force was originally concerned with have already been resolved. These include: a standard hourly rate for teaching assistantships across the University; separation of scholarship funding from the teaching assistantship wages, and perhaps most importantly, the establishment of a guaranteed minimum level of funding for all doctoral students. Appendix V includes a memorandum covering these items.

Another funding issue that the task force was concerned with relates to the fair treatment, from a taxation point of view, of student earnings from research assistantships. We are pleased to report that this issue too has been satisfactorily resolved in principle through discussions between the GSO and the University's Department of Finance. This resolution involved the clarification of the nature of the various elements of graduate student funding. Implementation of these changes is targeted for January 1, 2009 or as soon thereafter as possible.

**Recommendation #15:**

**The GSO working with Finance should produce a matrix of definitions of fellowships, scholarships, assistantships, bursaries, and awards.**

There are various sources of funding for graduate students that are flexible in nature, such as the UW scholarship fund. We strongly believe such funding is most effectively allocated if pooled and placed in the hands of the Department.

In this regard we should point out that the task force detected a very high degree of conservatism and low tolerance for risk in the utilization of discretionary graduate funding. As a result, while Departments complain of the lack of funds to support graduate students, large carry forward amounts were accumulating in the Faculties' accounts.

**Recommendation #16:**

**Various flexible funds should be pooled together and allocated by Departments in a strategic manner.**

Two important sources for funding graduate students are the Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS) and the NSERC fellowships. The task force has detected some confusion and lack of clarity about the process employed to generate the list of nominees for these awards. We heard for instance, that Graduate Coordinators are asked to calculate averages for individual students



without full understanding of how to do this. Also, the task of determining the meaning of international student grades is currently left in the hands of Graduate Coordinators.

**Recommendation #17:**

The GSO should examine the processes used in generating lists of nominees for OGS and NSERC awards and issue a memorandum clarifying the rules and providing guidance to all those involved. Also, an annual workshop on this topic for Graduate Coordinators, Graduate Associate Chairs, and Faculty Associate Deans would be valuable.

**Good Practice Recommendations:**

- Departments should make one or two-year confirmed financial offers to applicants.
- Teaching Assistantships should be an annual, rather than a term-by-term, commitment.
- There should be more pooling of funds in Departments in order to be able to make offers to outstanding students in a timely fashion.

13. Housing and Student Services

**Recommendation #18:**

Work toward guaranteeing on-campus accommodation to international graduate students for at least their first year at UW.

**Recommendation #19:**

Explore with Career Services the feasibility of providing area-specific career counselors in particular for graduate students in the Faculties of Arts and Environment.

**Recommendation #20:**

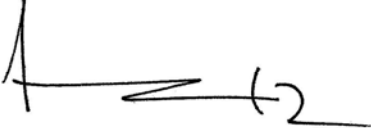
Rewrite and update the Senate Graduate Council booklet and the Organization of Graduate Studies booklet.

## APPENDIX I



### Office of the Vice-President Academic & Provost

To: Members of Executive Council  
Faculty Executive Assistants  
Department Heads  
Senators, Governors  
Daily Bulletin

From: Amit Chakma, Vice-President Academic & Provost 

Re: Task Force on the Administration of Graduate Studies at the University of Waterloo

Date: September 10, 2007

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UW's 6<sup>th</sup> Decade plan sets out an ambitious goal of expanding our graduate studies at the university in the next decade. By 2017, we plan to more than double our graduate student population. We aim to have 8,000 graduate students – 5,000 in research programs and 3,000 in professional and course-based master's programs. This represents a significant leap forward from the 2,600 graduate students now at Waterloo.

Our experience in handling this expansion over the past year suggests that there are opportunities for significant improvement in how we administer graduate studies across the campus.

I am therefore pleased to announce the formation of a task force on the administration of graduate studies at the University of Waterloo. The task force will be chaired by Dean Adel Sedra, who did the review of Graduate Studies at UW in 2002. The other members of the task force are Alan George (who will serve as interim Dean of Graduate Studies effective October 1, 2007 and Dean Ken Coates.

The mandate of the task force is to carry out a comprehensive review of the administration of graduate studies at the University of Waterloo with special emphasis on the admissions process. . The review will focus on the functions performed at all three levels: the Graduate Studies Office, the Faculty, and the Department, with a view of redesigning the various processes so that each specific function is performed at the most appropriate level, and redundancies eliminated. An important consideration is the empowerment of the departments to make local decisions. The review and redesign will encompass all aspects of the administration of graduate studies including marketing and recruiting, graduate scholarships and bursaries, etc. Both the processes and their automation will be examined. The Task Force recommendations will include the definition of a focused and strategic role for the Graduate Studies Office.

The task force will report to the Provost by the end of December 2007.

AC/kg

## APPENDIX II

Monica Barra, Graduate Advisor, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science  
Wendy Boles, Graduate Studies Coordinator, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Faculty of Engineering  
Christina Boucher, VP Student Affairs, GSA  
Sandra Burt, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts  
Edie Cardwell, Graduate Studies Coordinator, School of Planning, Faculty of Environment  
Trevor Charles, Graduate Advisor, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science  
Bill Cunningham, Chair, Department of Combinatorics and Optimization, Faculty of Mathematics  
Martin Day, Graduate Student, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts  
Peter Douglas, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Faculty of Engineering  
Mary Lou Dufton, Graduate Studies Coordinator, Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science, Faculty of Mathematics  
Ruth Gooding, Graduate Studies Coordinator, Department of Kinesiology, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences  
Murray Haight, Director, School of Planning, Faculty of Arts  
Roland Hall, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Faculty of Science  
Patricia Hancock, Manager, Financial Reporting, Department of Finance  
Michelle Heng, Graduate Student, Department of Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering, Faculty of Engineering  
Dennis Huber, Vice-President, Administration & Finance  
Richard Hughson, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences  
Lynn Judge, Director of Graduate Studies Academic Services, Graduate Studies Office  
Victoria Lamont, Associate Chair Graduate Studies, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts  
Susan Lolle, Professor, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science  
Ian MacKinnon, President, GSA  
Jane Manson, Director, Finance, Department of Finance  
Stephen McColl, Chair, Department of Health Studies and Gerontology, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences  
Kevin McGuirk, Chair, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts  
Kirsten Morris, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Faculty of Mathematics  
Richard Nutbrown, Chair, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts  
Tamer Ozsu, Director, School of Computer Science, Faculty of Mathematics  
Bill Power, Associate Dean, Research, Faculty of Science  
Rashid Rehan, Graduate Student, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering  
Leo Rothenburg, Chair, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering  
Craig Sloss, VP Communications and Organization, GSA  
Doug Stinson, Director of Graduate Studies, School of Computer Science, Faculty of Mathematics  
Nancy Theberge, Associate Chair Graduate Studies, Department of Kinesiology, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

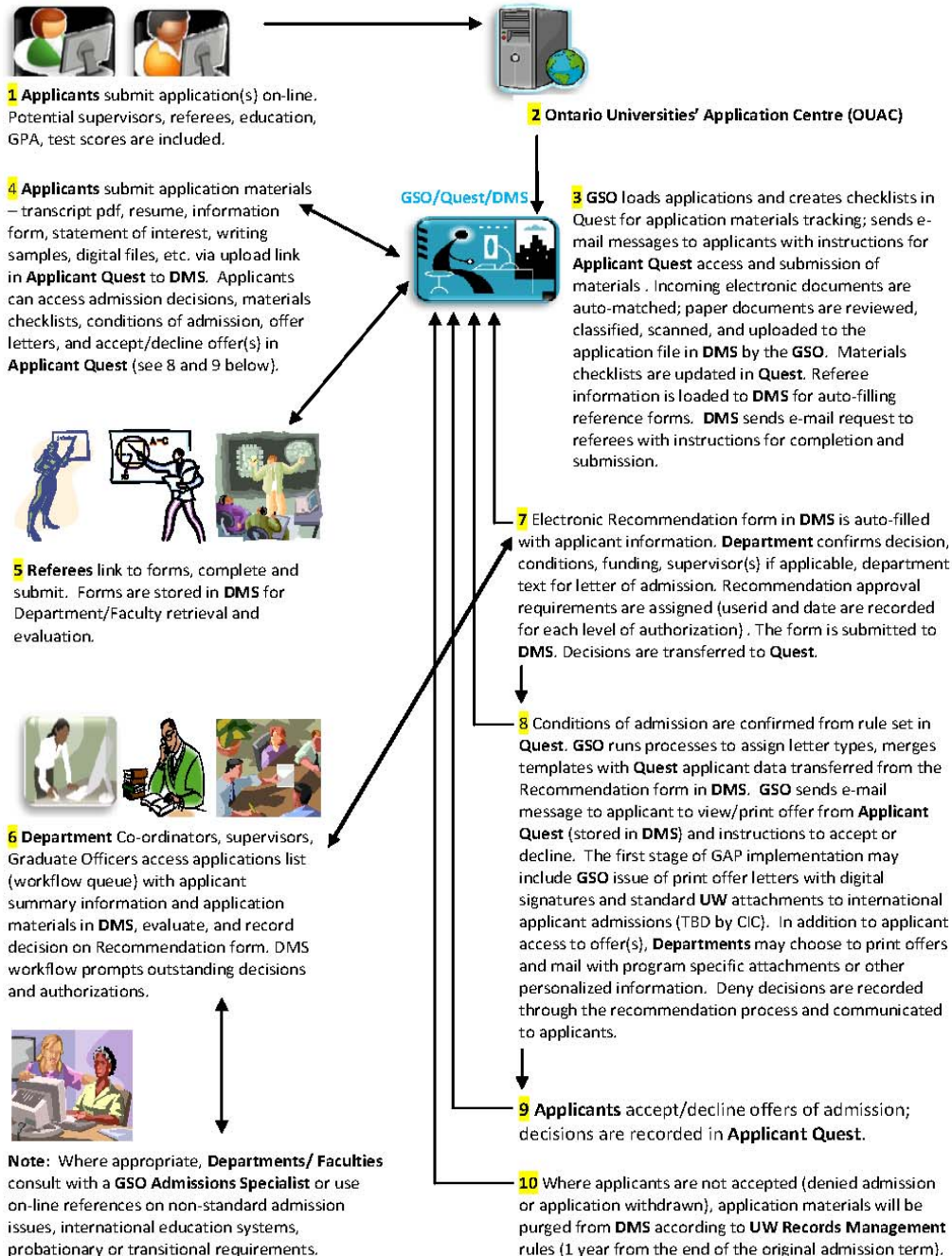
Maria Trainer, VP Operations and Finance, GSA

Barry Warner, Chair, Department of Earth and Environmental Science, Faculty of Science

Jian Zou, Graduate Studies Coordinator, Department of Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering

## APPENDIX III

### Graduate Admissions Project (GAP) – Business Process Flow – May 22, 2008



## APPENDIX IV

### 1. General

The Associate Provost, Graduate Studies (AP-GS) assists the Vice-President, Academic & Provost in providing leadership in graduate studies throughout the University, and represents the University externally on matters related to graduate studies.

### 2. Qualifications, Duties and Responsibilities

The AP-GS is a senior faculty member of considerable scholarly stature. The AP-GS is a University Officer, serving in that capacity on the Senate, appropriate major committees, and on other such University bodies. As a University Officer, the AP-GS has responsibility for making independent judgments on total University matters, representing the particular interests, policies and point of view of graduate studies as determined by the Senate Graduate & Research Council, and being the external representative for the University with regard to graduate affairs.

The AP-GS is co-Chair and academic mentor of the Senate Graduate & Research Council, together with the Faculty Deans, he/she is responsible for setting and maintaining a high academic standard of scholarly activity within graduate studies throughout the University.

### 3. Appointment and Term of Office

A. The AP-GS is appointed by the Vice-President, Academic & Provost. In doing so, the Provost will seek advice about candidates from members of Executive Council, the President of the GSA, and other individuals and groups as appropriate. When the position is to be filled, its availability will be made known on campus and elsewhere as appropriate, so that suitable candidates can apply or be nominated.

B. The term of office for the AP-GS will be a length that is mutually agreeable to the candidate and the Provost, but with the initial term normally being at least three years, renewable for additional terms by mutual agreement.

C. In the event of the AP-GS's absence for any prolonged period, arrangements should be made for the Vice-President, Academic & Provost to appoint an Acting AP-GS for a period of no more than one year.

## APPENDIX V

### **Graduate Student Support at the University of Waterloo**

Financial support for graduate students normally consists of a combination of scholarships, bursaries, research awards from contracts and grants, and compensation for service as a teaching assistant. The actual mix and the portion of student income subject to tax will depend on circumstances within each department or school, and may vary from one unit to another.

#### ***Teaching Assistants***

##### **Hourly Rate**

Apart from the Faculty of Engineering (and now Science), the hourly rate paid for TA duties is artificially high because it is a combination of compensation for duties performed, together with a component that is a research award (scholarship). Given recent changes in the tax regulations that make scholarships and research awards tax-exempt, continuing this practice is prejudicial to students. With these considerations in mind, ***effective May 1, 2008, the TA rate will be \$27 per hour, plus vacation pay.*** The rate will continue to be subject to annual adjustment via a recommendation by the Graduate Student Support Advisory Committee to the Provost.

##### **Hours Per Term**

The maximum allowed by regulation is 160 hours (maximum 10 hours per week for 16 weeks) each term. It has been agreed that ***the number of hours of service per term for one TA unit will be between 100 and 160 hours. A half TA unit may be awarded.***

Ideally, ***each Faculty should have a common number of hours of service per TA unit; failing that, uniformity must be sustained at the department/school level.***

When a graduate student is essentially serving as the instructor for a course, he/she should be appointed as a sessional lecturer and paid at least the minimum sessional instructor stipend, which is established annually.

#### ***Scholarship Funding Originally Imbedded in the TA Rate***

The part of the support previously provided through artificially high TA rates will remain within the Faculty budgets and be available to provide graduate student research awards. That funding will be adjusted annually consistent with the change in the TA rate. Faculties may choose to link a research award with each TA, so that the aggregate funding provided to a student via a TA will remain the same as in the past (although the after-tax amount will increase). The Faculty of Science has proceeded in this way by creating Science Graduate Experience Awards (SGEAs). The award is intended to provide financial support for graduate students who acquire experience as teaching assistants during the course of their graduate studies program. Students who hold a graduate student teaching assistantship are eligible to receive the award. The value of the award is department/school specific. It forms part of the total financial support committed to the student, and is not an additional award. If other Faculties choose to follow Science's path, it is strongly suggested that the same title for the award be used: [Faculty] Graduate Experience Award.



### ***Minimum Level of Funding for Doctoral Students***

An early objective of UW's 6<sup>th</sup> Decade Report is to establish a minimum level of support for doctoral students, with a longer term objective of also establishing a minimum level of students in research-based masters programs. It has been agreed that ***the annual minimum level of financial support provided for doctoral students whose admission is effective January 1, 2009 or later will be not less than \$19,000. This commitment applies to the first three years of full-time enrollment in a doctoral program, and includes support from all sources – external and internal scholarships and other awards, teaching assistantships, and funding provided by faculty members from research grants and contracts.***

Changes to this guaranteed level of support will be reviewed annually. Departments and schools may set higher guarantees, as dictated by their financial situation and the competitive environment.

Alan George  
March 31, 2008

Figure 1

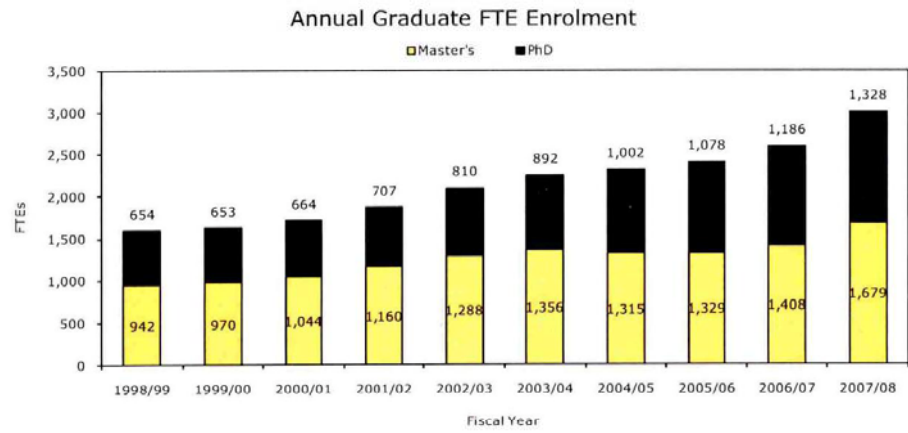


Figure2

