
Review Report

School of Graduate
Studies

May 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Context.....	2
The Review Process.....	4
Consultation Findings.....	5
Overall.....	5
Academic Programs	6
Students	7
Faculty.....	10
Operations	11
Recommendations	12
Overall.....	12
Academic Programs	14
Students	15
Faculty.....	16
Operations	16
Appendix A: Terms of Reference	17
Appendix B: Committee Membership	19

CONTEXT

The University of Toronto awarded its first PhD degree in 1899, and today, graduate education is central to the University's mission. Indeed, our Statement of Institutional Purpose not only identifies "graduate programs of excellent quality" as fundamental to our mission, but also links the quality of graduate education and the quality of research, observing that our "determination to remain a major research institution is therefore in itself a commitment to high quality graduate teaching." Graduate education has undergone a series of transformations in Ontario over the past decade and this changing context for graduate education has resulted in questions about how best to support this commitment. Our proposed Strategic Mandate Agreement (2013-14) affirms the University's goal to "reinforce its unique strengths in research and scholarship, as well as our acknowledged leadership position in graduate and second-entry professional education provincially and nationally". Thus, leadership in graduate education, including the strategic recruitment of the best and brightest students in Canada and around the world, is a key component of the University's differentiation mandate.

A central objective of the review was to consider the ways in which the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) supports the University's commitment to excellence in graduate education, and to recommend ways in which that commitment can be better supported. In doing so, the review considers how SGS and other centralized units intersect in the service of the graduate component of the University's mission. The Terms of Reference for the review are available in Appendix A.

Since the last review of SGS in 2008-09, the landscape of graduate education at the University of Toronto has changed in the following ways:

- The implementation of the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) has resulted in a different type of review process for academic units and programs, emphasizing formative rather than threshold evaluation and "continuous improvement" rather than compliance. The same process now applies to both undergraduate and graduate programs, and multi-departmental divisions are responsible for the development and review of their own programs in alignment with academic goals.
- Graduate Centres and Institutes that previously resided in SGS now reside in the academic divisions.

- Under the University's New Budget Model (implemented beginning 2006-07), SGS is considered a central administrative unit, as opposed to a Faculty or division. Both the revenues and the costs associated with graduate education are attributed in large part to the divisions that are home to the students who enrol in – and the faculty members who deliver – graduate programs.¹
- Provincially and institutionally, the University continues to operate in a period of significant graduate expansion: graduate enrolment at U of T has gone from 12,068 in 2004-05 (the reference year for Ontario), to 13,891 in 2008-09 (the year of the last review), to 15,884 in 2013-14.²

To provide broader context for the review, we asked the Education Advisory Board to conduct interviews with representatives at six large peer institutions.³ These interviews indicate that:

- All institutions surveyed have an administrative unit responsible for graduate education. Some institutions maintain more centralized schools, which provide more services to divisions; others delegate more responsibility to academic units. Commonly provided services include records management, and coordination of theses, exams and graduation procedures. Less commonly provided services include communications and advancement support.
- All institutions delegate admissions decisions to program directors and faculty members, though applicants must meet institution-wide admissions standards, and most institutions process applications centrally.
- All institutions hire faculty members at the level of academic programs.
- At many institutions, the dean of the graduate school is also a vice-provost (or equivalent).
- Communicating available services to graduate students was a common concern at all surveyed institutions.
- At some institutions, graduate schools are responsible for program reviews (e.g., UBC, Washington) while at others (e.g., University of Michigan, McGill, Ohio State University), other university officers are responsible.
- Several institutions rely on graduate schools to manage interdisciplinary graduate programs.
- The graduate schools at McGill University, UC-Berkeley and University of Washington work with their institutions' centres for teaching support to provide teacher training for graduate students and supervisors.

¹ Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that many policies and procedures continue to reflect SGS's formal status as an academic unit.

² At the time of the 2003-04 review, enrolment was 11,928.

³ McGill (graduate enrolment 8,000), UBC (10,000), UC-Berkeley (10,000), Ohio State (13,000), U Michigan (15,000), U Washington (15,000).

- The graduate schools at UC-Berkeley and McGill work with their writing centres to support skills development for graduate students.
- Graduate schools' coordination of career and professional development services is particularly valuable to small programs who struggle to provide these services individually.
- There are about 20-30 staff at the six peer schools of graduate studies.⁴

THE REVIEW PROCESS

In June of 2013, the Provost called for nominations for the advisory committee that would conduct an internal review of SGS and recommend the appointment of a new Dean. At the same time, she requested a self-study of SGS from the current Dean, Professor Brian Corman. The Dean was asked to address the themes outlined in the Terms of Reference, provide an assessment of the School's success in meeting the goals of the *Towards 2030* framework (including *The View from 2012*) and the recommendations of the 2005 Task Force on Graduate Education, as well as identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement at SGS.

In September 2013, the Provost announced the membership of the advisory committee and invited comments and suggestions from the U of T community. (PDAD&C#20, 2013-14; see Appendix B.)

The self-study and Terms of Reference were provided to the advisory committee, which began meeting in October 2013. Between October 2013 and March 2014, the committee met ten times. In addition to the consultations outlined below, the committee reviewed materials (the self-study, a brief on graduate education at peer institutions prepared by the Education Advisory Board, supplementary materials prepared by SGS, and 11 written submissions), and discussed the role of SGS in supporting graduate education and the graduate student experience at U of T.

The committee sent dozens of invitations to students, faculty members, and staff from across the University to participate in consultation meetings. Invitations were issued with the goal of hearing from students, faculty, and staff affiliated with all three campuses; a variety of disciplines; both professional- and doctoral-stream programs; and both single- and multi-departmental divisions.

Consultations were organized around key themes: Students (two meetings), Academic Programs, Faculty, and Operations. Each consultation meeting was typically organized into three panels, each bringing together relevant individuals from SGS, the divisions, and central administrative offices, respectively. All panelists received discussion questions in advance, based on questions that had arisen

⁴ SGS's staff complement is 40-45 FTE. This complement has remained relatively stable over the last decade or so, with 42 FTE in 2003; 45 in 2008; and 43 in 2013.

in the course of the committee’s deliberations, and around which panelists were encouraged to make a brief presentation, followed by a Q&A period led by the committee members.

Through the consultations and written submissions, the committee heard from: the current Dean, both Vice-Deans and professional staff of SGS; student representatives from the Graduate Students’ Union (GSU), Governing Council, the Graduate Education Council (GEC), and divisional or departmental graduate student associations; Deans or Vice-Deans from a number of divisions; current and former department and graduate Chairs, associate Chairs and coordinators from a number of divisions; graduate program staff from a number of divisions; other senior academic leaders; and representatives from Student Life, Enrolment Services, Planning and Budget, and the Office of the CIO. Additional consultation meetings were also arranged with various individuals and groups comprised of deans, senior academics, and other academic and administrative leaders.

This report is organized according to the consultation themes, and results from the process outlined above. The report will be presented to members of the University community in various fora, and a summary will be presented to Governing Council for information.

CONSULTATION FINDINGS

OVERALL

Strengths

There was widespread praise and appreciation for the SGS Dean and Vice-Deans. They are seen as wise senior academic leaders, acting as resources for graduate coordinators, Chairs and divisional Vice-Deans. The committee heard of many occasions when the SGS Dean and Vice-Deans stepped in, advised, assisted, or served as a “help line”. Also, the vast experience of SGS allows it to provide advice and recommendations regarding best practices. This advice function is especially valued by staff and administrators at the program level, and by units with limited in-house expertise or institutional memory. The volume of work undertaken by SGS is significant: SGS annually processes 30,000 applications, including 10,000 international, and coordinates 1,000 final exams/defenses. Tri-campus issues were discussed by the committee in many different contexts, and the involvement of the Dean of SGS in searches for tri-campus graduate Chairs was also appreciated.

Challenges and Opportunities

Consultations revealed a significant need for central services and divisions to address more comprehensively U of T’s reputation and partnerships when it comes to graduate recruitment, research, and education.

More specifically, consultations referred to potential gaps when it comes to enhancing U of T's graduate reputation in terms of internationalization and leveraging partnerships with other institutions globally. The differentiation strategy outlined in the University's proposed 2013-14 Strategic Mandate Agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities also defines a need for more support and focus on graduate education and international recruitment as a key mandate. Defining and protecting U of T's reputation for excellence in graduate education is critical to (a) developing high quality partnerships for research and advanced study, and (b) recruiting the best students from around the world. All of this will require more coordinated efforts among SGS, divisions, and other central offices such as University Relations.

Increased time-to-completion constitutes another challenge that calls for coordinated efforts across central and divisional portfolios. This multi-faceted challenge was raised in discussions throughout the consultation period and involves the divisions, SGS, and the Planning & Budget Office.

The committee also noted that SGS plays a role in supporting the needs of postdoctoral fellows. In the near term, SGS (along with other portfolios such as Human Resources and Equity) is re-examining roles and responsibilities when it comes to support for postdoctoral fellows in the changed environment brought about by the recent certification of a subset of U of T postdoctoral fellows (those funded primarily by the University).

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Strengths

Faculty, students and staff throughout U of T share a commitment to excellence in graduate programs. Faculty and staff view central support for program reviews and for the development of proposals for new academic programs and changes to existing academic programs and units as an important and necessary resource.

Challenges and Opportunities

Faculty and staff across the University who are responsible for program development and change consistently commented on the significant overlap between SGS and the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs when it comes to consultation, approvals, and reporting requirements for the creation, change, and review of graduate programs. This overlap is perceived to in some cases negatively affect the process for making modifications to graduate programs, undermining the University's flexibility to respond to student needs and government opportunities. Both written submissions and panel presentations indicated that smooth implementation of the UTQAP more generally had been hindered by the duplication of responsibilities between these two central offices.

While the UTQAP placed responsibility for programs reviews with Deans' offices or the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, a decision had been made to position the review of collaborative programs within SGS. However, faculty members associated with collaborative programs and academic administrators in divisions that participate in collaborative programs expressed concern to the review panel regarding the manner in which collaborative program reviews are conducted. Despite letters from SGS outlining the review process, at times Faculties or departments indicated that they were not aware that their own collaborative programs were undergoing review until after a review was already underway. Faculty members also questioned why review committees for collaborative programs did not always reflect the disciplines being reviewed.

Finally, some commentators suggested that the current SGS model (which focuses exclusively on graduate education) does not support the nimble development and approval of "combined" programs (such as five-year combined bachelor/master's programs that require intimate coordination between undergraduate and graduate portfolios). Faculty members and graduate administrators felt that the development of such potential programs required support centrally, but not necessarily through SGS.

STUDENTS

The committee heard from a wide range of graduate students, as well as from faculty and staff who engage with graduate students in the course of administering graduate programs or program components, or who provide services to graduate students in various capacities.

Strengths

Excellence in graduate education requires coordination, tracking and support of the distinctive components of master's and doctoral level work, such as candidacy, thesis/dissertation submission, and final oral examinations. Faculty, staff and students generally saw central support for these activities as necessary.

Students, faculty and staff also praised various activities that supported the unique components of graduate education at U of T, such as the Graduate Professional Skills (GPS) initiative. GPS was held in especially high regard in instances where offerings have been customized to address divisional needs and meet high student demand. The Office of English Language and Writing Support (ELWS) also provides well-regarded services in an area of great demand.⁵

⁵ In response to growing demand, the number of non-credit courses offered by ELWS has increased dramatically over the last decade or so, from 52 in 2002-03, to 67 in 2008-09, to 85 in 2012-13.

A number of commentators singled out the SGS Awards Office as being especially helpful to students and graduate coordinators/administrators. Faculty and staff value up-to-date advice on external awards and efficient coordination of tri-council, OGS and similar processes.

Faculty and staff positively highlighted SGS expertise in analyzing international credentials,⁶ and expert coordination of graduate appeals and academic integrity processes, especially in cases involving non-coursework components of graduate programs.⁷ Some commentators also appreciated the ‘one-up’ role SGS plays in adjudicating non-standard admissions cases. The presence of local expertise and resources also shaped views regarding SGS’s role in these three areas. In general, single-departmental faculties were more likely than multi-departmental faculties to view this central expertise as helpful.

Challenges and Opportunities

The committee heard that many valuable supports are offered to students – and to support faculty and staff in their interactions with students – through SGS, as well as through other central and divisional offices. However, the most significant challenge named by students, faculty and staff was identifying where students needed to go to find supports for a wide range of their needs – from mental health counselling, to information on graduate funding packages, to career services. Students expressed frustration at being “bounced around” from office to office in the University. Faculty and staff expressed concern that advice given to students from one source often conflicted with advice received by faculty or staff from elsewhere.

Queries about graduate funding packages appear to go unresolved in many cases. Confusion in this area is compounded by the fact that different aspects of student funding are handled by Enrolment Services (OSAP, UTAPS), SGS (e.g., tri-council grants, OGS, and doctoral completion awards) and the academic unit. The absence of clarity regarding which office is responsible for coordinating student funding was seen as a significant problem.

Communication issues contribute to challenges faced by students when it comes to locating resources and services. Although some commentators spoke positively about the revised SGS website, some students indicated that they do not find it accessible and divisional administrators have difficulty

⁶ A few commentators indicated that the highly valued support for analysis of international credentials may not be as comprehensive as in the past, as local knowledge in units has increased. Nevertheless, 140 people attended this year’s workshop on assessing international credentials.

⁷ Although they comprise a tiny fraction of overall graduate student enrolment, the number of Code of Academic Behaviour (9 in 2003; 14 in 2008-09; 22 in 2012-13) and GAAB Appeals (3 in 2003; 3 in 2008-09; 7 in 2012-13) cases has increased over the last decade or so. Cases involving the Code of Student Conduct or Research Misconduct remain very rare (0-1 each, per year).

navigating it. A comprehensive yet easy-to-use central source of information regarding graduate studies is necessary in order to convey accurate information to current and prospective students.

The need for an effective central portal of information for prospective graduate students, alongside challenges identified with the application process (see ‘Operations’ below), contributes to concerns about the lack of a coordinated approach to graduate student recruitment. Although the single-department faculties in particular find the Hobson’s Connect CRM to be useful, many discussions touched on the slow pace of its implementation and the need for more strategic recruitment efforts in support of our graduate expansion goals.

Many students expressed concern about graduate supervision and a need for clearer pathways for resolution of supervision issues. There was a call for greater education of faculty members regarding their roles as graduate supervisors, education of students as to their rights and responsibilities as supervisees, and access to central conflict resolution resources. Most students, and many faculty and staff that met with the committee were unaware that SGS has recently released updated guidelines regarding graduate supervision.⁸

SGS relies on consultations with the Council of Graduate Deans⁹ when instituting changes to policies and procedures. Many commentators nevertheless felt that consultation was not sufficiently broad or timely. An example cited was the recent change to the composition of the final oral defense committee. While such rules may have been developed to address concerns about local practices in some departments, they are reported to hinder students in some cases and unnecessarily increase the workload of some graduate faculty. Increased consultation with departments about their discipline-specific needs in the development of graduate policy and procedures is desired.

While GPS and ELWS are clear strengths, the fact that ELWS exists alongside other campus and Faculty writing centres causes some confusion, as does the fact that the GPS program is delivered by more than 20 other units (with tracking and coordination provided by SGS). Although commentators affirmed the value of GPS and ELWS programming, they noted that demand for such programs exceeds supply. A decision to offer more sections of a single ELWS course rather than many different courses means that some areas are not covered, and a decision to emphasize depth of support means that not all students who seek support receive it. Some departments have ceased offering local programs, placing increasing demand on ELWS. Also, many graduate-specific services available on the St. George campus do not exist (e.g., walk-in services provided at 63 St. George or ELWS), or exist in very limited

⁸ <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/Documents/Supervision+Guidelines.pdf>.

⁹ The membership of the Council of Graduate Deans includes the SGS Dean and Vice-Deans; the Vice/Associate Deans (Graduate) of all multi-departmental divisions, and the Rotman School of Management; and a representative of the single-department Faculties.

supply (e.g., GPS), on the UTM and UTSC campuses. These concerns point to a need for a review of resources allocated to such programs and a determination about where they are best located.

Finally, although graduate career services do not fall within the mandate of SGS, students and others spoke about their interest in these services in the course of consultations. Demand for graduate-specific career services through the Career Centre operated by Student Life appears to exceed supply. The committee noted the need for more creative and innovative career services targeting PhD students interested in non-academic careers.

FACULTY

Strengths

Divisions value the authority they currently have when it comes to decisions about graduate faculty appointments, which is an outcome of previous reviews. It was generally felt that increased coordination between SGS and the Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life in the management and tracking of graduate faculty appointments has been helpful.¹⁰ The SGS Dean/designate also provides a valuable perspective on tenure committees, especially for single-department faculties.

Challenges and Opportunities

On a day-to-day basis, many felt that the concept of graduate faculty membership was out-dated and produced unnecessary confusion. In an era where tenure-stream hires are made with the expectation that faculty members at U of T will contribute to graduate education, the requirement of having first a University appointment and then a graduate faculty appointment was identified as duplicative. In addition, not all units or faculty members understand graduate appointment categories (or the idea of graduate faculty membership as opposed to tenure-stream appointment categories), which can lead to misinterpretation of how correspondence from SGS relates to a faculty member's appointment status at the University.

Although in principle many commentators viewed the contributions of SGS decanal assessors as important to the tenure process, some observed that not all SGS decanal assessors have extensive experience with the tenure process.¹¹ Their contributions may, therefore, be less informed by a sense of institutional standards, and thus less effective for the stated purpose of maintaining quality.

¹⁰ Approximately 1,000 graduate faculty nominations are processed annually.

¹¹ Of the roughly 100 tenure cases annually, the Dean and Vice-Deans participate in 40%; decanal assessors handle the remainder.

Despite increased coordination between SGS and the Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life, there is a lack of clarity as to who holds responsibility for faculty development when it comes to activities related to graduate education. This may make it more difficult to identify appropriate mechanisms for offering faculty development opportunities in areas such as graduate supervision.

OPERATIONS

Strengths

Faculty and staff involved in the administration of graduate education agree on the importance of business processes and information technology that can support:

- the efficient, accurate and high quality completion of day-to-day tasks in the service of outstanding graduate programs and graduate student experience;
- the answering of complex questions about graduate registration, funding, and program completion;
- and the development of required reports as well as strategic planning documents.

Challenges and Opportunities

Consultations highlighted concerns regarding the efficiency of SGS business processes and information technology projects. At the present time, the University is dealing with many constraints on its financial resources, including capped increases in tuition fees, frozen per-student operating grants, and introduced cuts to grant revenue in the name of “efficiency savings”. Units across the University are looking for ways to improve performance, rationalize administrative organization, and gain cost efficiencies.

Despite consensus regarding the importance of having effective business processes and information technology, SGS-developed processes and systems were often not viewed as serving the local needs of students, faculty and staff in divisions and departments. This was seen in part as a result of a lack of consultation with divisions in the design and/or implementation phases of such projects. The result in some cases has been additional cost in terms of duplicative paperwork and the development of local IT (or ‘shadow’) systems built to fill gaps left by central systems. Such local systems were described as costly not only in terms of dollars spent on technology, but also in terms of data integrity issues. Data integrity problems between divisions and central offices and between various central offices are described as impeding the production of key reports on which funding depends (e.g., November enrolment counts) or on which key decisions may be based (e.g., cyclical reviews).

In particular, faculty, staff, and students identified concerns about the following processes and systems:

- Multiple online and paper application systems for U of T graduate programs coexist because the SGS system does not support customization of applications to accommodate local admissions processes and documentation needs. This complicates the applicant experience and creates additional work for staff. The committee heard repeatedly of negative application experiences that undermined U of T's goal of recruiting outstanding graduate students.
- Two admissions/registration letters must be generated for each incoming student (one from SGS to confirm registration and one from the department to confirm funding).
- In some cases it appears to be unclear how the phases of the scholarship application process relate to each other (e.g., departmental rankings; University-wide deliberations). A single process for allocating SGS award fund quotas directly to graduate units prevents deans (in multi-departmental faculties in particular) from leveraging limited funds to support strategic priorities.
- Paperwork for degree recommendations and grade submissions (which are completed locally for undergraduate programs) require collecting and entering data into multiple systems, or in both paper and electronic formats.
- The in-house email system at SGS makes it harder to create group lists, find proper contacts, and work with other central portfolios, all of which are on the Exchange system.
- The new progress tracker for supervisors and students is being developed separately from other pre-existing tools such as the Course Progress Tracker, Degree Explorer, and the Student Life Career Centre's dossier product, though plans are in place to roll the new tracker into NGSIS eventually.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee arrived at the following recommendations, based on consultation meetings and written submissions from students, faculty and staff; examination of reports on graduate education at peer institutions and other supplementary materials; and engagement in thoughtful and extensive discussions:

OVERALL

1. Consider redefining the position of Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Vice-Provost Graduate Education as "**Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education.**" This portfolio would be responsible for linking with other offices to support the University's commitment to excellence in graduate education, focusing on aspects of student experience unique to graduate life (e.g.,

supervision, theses), the quality of research opportunities available to graduate students, international partnerships, and more. The VP-GRE would be the same as the Dean of SGS for all policy purposes. The new VP-GRE must be given the scope to develop a vision – as well as specific solutions – that respond to the broad need for change outlined in this report.

2. The new VP-GRE should consider ways to coordinate with other units where there are existing strengths, and add value creatively in service of the graduate student experience.¹² Where duplication exists and efficiencies can be found, the committee recommends that such **duplications be eliminated and services moved to only one central portfolio.**¹³
3. Communication concerns are frequently identified at the University of Toronto due to our size, history and decentralized structure. Nevertheless, **two-way communication and consultation** at an early stage of graduate initiatives in particular are essential to developing coordinated solutions that address shared goals and challenges. Communication should be tailored to suit the needs of different audiences: students, departmental staff, central offices, and Dean’s Office administrators. Better communication and consultation could lead to better services (e.g., customized GPS programming), more helpful processes and guidelines, and more useful tools (e.g., website and Hobson’s Connect). Central coordination of graduate education is intended to promote consistency and fairness; clearer and broader communication can also prevent inadvertently inconsistent advice. Finally, communications that go to graduate units should also be sent to divisional graduate deans’ offices.
4. **Students should experience any transition in SGS’s operations and services as seamless.** The implementation of structural change must be carefully planned, and must balance the need to be responsive to urgent calls for change in some areas (e.g., academic programs) with the need to consider students, faculty, and staff. Any implementation efforts should anticipate the effect that rapid changes in one area might have on other functions. If responsibilities are moved out of SGS, appropriate processes must be put in place to ensure that graduate student needs are well met within other portfolios, whether central or divisional.

¹² Better coordination is already addressing duplication in some areas. For example, SGS and Student Life now collaborate to produce a single graduate welcome package.

¹³ Better service and more efficient use of resources have already been achieved by integrating some graduate-specific functions into other central portfolios. For example, Grad House is managed by Ancillary Services alongside Chestnut and Family Housing, and Student Life provides UHIP for international graduate students with families.

5. Minimum **University-wide standards** (for example, related to admissions or final oral exams) should continue to exist in order to protect the value of the U of T graduate degree. However, the need for universal standards should be balanced with the need to account for disciplinary variety.
6. Improve the **physical space** for graduate final oral exams and other activities at the core of graduate education.
7. Of the many **possible models** for supporting graduate education across the University, the committee recommends further consideration of the following options (taken separately or in combination with each other):
 - a. **Seamless connections model:** a centrally coordinated presence to seamlessly connect students, faculty, staff and others to the graduate education resources they need, regardless of what portfolio provides those services. This would include a centrally maintained website. It could also include a physical location where students could go to be connected to resources (academic, wellness, etc.) and to engage with each other. Staff members could act as “case managers” – linking students to resources and tracking outcomes.
 - b. **Embedded model:** some portion of SGS services (especially student-focused services) could be embedded within divisions. (cf. Student Life embedded counselling model.)
 - c. **Service provider model:** SGS as a service provider, regardless of divisional resources. Graduate administrative services could be offered as a shared service in some cases (cf. Human Resources – professional faculties north/south).
 - d. **Consultant model:** SGS experts ask departments what they need and then coach them in providing discipline-specific services. As consultants, experts from SGS would go into departments to work with graduate deans, directors, and other administrators to find ways to strengthen local communities.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

1. Move responsibility for all UTQAP-related processes currently shared between SGS and the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs to the **Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs only**. This move would include responsibility for major modifications and program closures, which currently “receive special attention from the Vice-Provost, Graduate Education” under the UTQAP. As before, academic oversight, quality control, and governance roles will be maintained centrally, focusing on overarching standards and quality; UTQAP-prescribed responsibilities of divisions will similarly continue. This will align processes for undergraduate and graduate programs.

2. Identify an appropriate solution for producing and updating calendar information for graduate programs, including a rethink of the entire current calendar process.
3. Ensure that prospective and current students, faculty and staff can easily access up-to-date, searchable information about graduate programs.
4. Examine the processes for reviewing and maintaining existing Collaborative Programs and for developing new collaborative and combined programs.
5. Review current practices for thesis formats and defenses.

STUDENTS

1. The new VP-GRE should undertake an extensive consultation with graduate students to determine how to best improve their experience at U of T, which services they find valuable, and how students feel it would be best to offer such services.
2. Draw on U of T's wealth of expertise (central and divisional) in undergraduate student recruitment to inform the development of more effective recruitment and support of prospective graduate students. Drawing on this expertise, graduate student recruitment needs to be revamped, reconsidered and coordinated across U of T.
3. Find ways to connect students to the resources, supports and information they need quickly, particularly related to graduate funding. This should include a comprehensive web portal that assembles resources relevant to graduate students, regardless of where they are housed or their type of program.
4. Address gaps in services, professional development courses, and other supports for graduate students at UTM and UTSC, without duplicating supports already in place on those campuses.
5. Ensure that students understand the nature of student-supervisor relationships and have access to support outside of their departments in the event of difficulties, ideally in coordination with existing services (or those already in development) in Student Life or elsewhere.
6. Address the need for graduate professional skills development and career services focused on non-academic careers, perhaps building on the existing GPS program.
7. In the context of the changes recommended in this report, consider the appropriate configuration of convocation ceremonies.
8. In addition to the above specific recommendations, the new VP-GRE, in collaboration with other student service providers across the University, should review the services provided to graduate students and identify the best ways to meet student needs (registrarial, financial aid, awards, mental health, etc.).

FACULTY

1. Ensure that all faculty members supervising graduate students have the support to do so in a manner commensurate with the University's commitment to delivering programs of outstanding quality. This might include, for example, programming, training, mentoring, etc. Draw on expertise across the University (in VP-FAL, CTSI, divisions) to develop and provide such support.
2. Review the categories of graduate faculty appointments, the mechanisms for appointing graduate faculty, and the role of SGS in that process.
 - a. Ensure that appointment categories account for U of T's broad range of graduate programs – and the range of responsibilities that faculty have within those programs.
 - b. Consider automatic or streamlined graduate appointment processes for tenure-stream faculty, but maintain central approval or oversight for other categories of graduate faculty appointments in VP-FAL.
3. Review the role of SGS decanal assessors in the tenure process.

OPERATIONS

1. Conduct a specialized review of IT systems related to graduate education and graduate student life.
2. IT for graduate education should not function in isolation. Systems that track and support students, programs and faculty should be **integrated** so that they can support a broad range of activities (e.g., combined programs).
3. When developing new IT services such as NGSIS, specifications should ensure that:
 - a. The full range of programs (graduate, undergraduate; professional, research; combined, etc.) is accommodated.
 - b. Data entry/signature processes are streamlined (and do not require duplicating the activity in hard copy).
 - c. Optimal, authoritative data are available for multiple purposes (Ministry submissions, forecasting, reviews, etc.).
 - d. New solutions do not duplicate or overlap with existing ones.
4. Streamline the graduate application process to ensure that the student interface does not deter students, undermine recruitment efforts, or result in multiple systems and inefficiencies for staff and administrators.
5. Continue development of a tool that can track graduate student progress through key milestones, with reporting functions for administrators and a progress tracker for students and supervisors. But, this tool should not duplicate Degree Explorer or other existing systems.
6. Explore ways in which further use of technology could streamline services and better support underserved graduate divisions, including UTM and UTSC.

APPENDIX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review of the School of Graduate Studies**Terms of Reference**

June 2013

Institutional support for excellence in graduate education and graduate student experience is central to the University of Toronto's academic mission as a world-class research university.

The University's School of Graduate Studies was last reviewed in 2008 as part of the decanal appointment process. Several key changes anticipated at that time have occurred in the graduate studies landscape at U of T, nationally and globally. For example, at U of T:

- The expansion of graduate studies on all three campuses, including professional graduate programs.
- The harmonization of undergraduate and graduate quality assurance processes through the implementation of the provincial Quality Assurance Framework and the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process.
- The movement of SGS centres and institutes to Faculties.

These changes render even more relevant the observation of the 2005 Task Force on Graduate Education that "graduate education permeates virtually all University activities, rather than being a special function carried out by a minority of the faculty."

Given changes such as these, the review committee will assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the following, and make recommendations for improvement:

1. The role of SGS in administering graduate education and academic programs:

- SGS procedures for supporting program development and modification.
- SGS mechanisms for supporting program delivery and quality (e.g., supervision guidelines, graduate faculty appointment process, online education, final oral exam process).
- SGS mechanisms for supporting the development, delivery and quality of collaborative graduate programs.

2. The role of SGS in supporting graduate students and the graduate student experience:

- SGS activities and processes for the recruitment and retention of domestic and international graduate students.
- The School's provision of student services such as admission, registration, enrolment, awards, financial aid, research support, and graduation.

- The School's support of student life, community and professional development (e.g., Grad Room, Office of English Language Writing Support).
3. The dual role of the Vice-Provost, Graduate Education and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.
 4. The relationship between SGS and the wider University community:
 - Relations between SGS and the departments, Faculties and campuses where students pursue their programs, and where budgetary responsibility for graduate education resides.
 - Relations between SGS and administrative units involved in academic appointments, student services and quality assurance.
 - The School's implementation of University-wide policies and processes (e.g., Code of Student Conduct, Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, UTQAP).
 - The School's mechanisms for providing expertise, advice and information, and for communicating with other units about policies, guidelines and procedures.
 5. The relationship between SGS and external organizations:
 - The School's support of the collection, analysis and use of graduate education data within the University and beyond it.
 - The School's relations with external organizations such as the tri-council agencies.
 - The role of SGS as an advocate for the University's graduate programs and students.
 6. The role of SGS in addressing the needs of post-doctoral fellows.
 7. The School's internal organizational, financial and governance structures.

APPENDIX B: COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Advisory Committee for the Appointment of a Dean, School of Graduate Studies

From PDAD&C#20, 2013-14, available at:

http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/public/pdadc/2013_to_2014/20.htm

As announced in PDAD&C #71 on June 28, 2013, Professor Brian Corman will complete his first term as Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Vice-Provost, Graduate Education on June 30, 2014. Professor Corman has indicated he will not be seeking reappointment.

In accordance with Section 61 of the Policy on Appointment of Academic Administrators, President David Naylor appointed an advisory committee to recommend the appointment of a Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and conduct an internal review of the School. The composition of the committee is as follows:

- Professor Cheryl Regehr, Vice-President and Provost (Chair)
- Mr. Larry Alford, Chief Librarian
- Ms. Alexis Archbold, Assistant Dean Students, Faculty of Law
- Professor Katherine Berg, Chair, Department of Physical Therapy and Executive Chair, Rehabilitation Sciences, Faculty of Medicine
- Professor Markus Bussmann, Vice-Dean Graduate Studies, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
- Professor Sven Dickinson, Chair, Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Mr. Christopher Fraser, Graduate Student, Dalla Lana School of Public Health
- Professor Roberta Fulthorpe, Graduate Chair, Department of Physical & Environmental Sciences, UTSC
- Professor Kelly Hannah-Moffat, Vice Dean, Undergraduate UTM and Director of the Centre of Criminology and Sociolegal Studies, Faculty of Arts and Science
- Professor Alison Keith, Department of Classics, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Professor Don McLean, Dean, Faculty of Music
- Ms. Lara Popic, Graduate Student, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Mr. Chirag Variawa, Graduate Student, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
- Professor Sandy Welsh, Vice-Dean, Graduate Education & Program Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science

As part of its work, the Committee will be reviewing the School of Graduate Studies. The Committee welcomes comments and suggestions, which should be sent to sgs.review@utoronto.ca, or to the attention of Assistant Provost Archana Sridhar at Simcoe Hall, Room 225, 27 King's College Circle.