

# Tri Campus Review: Graduate Units Working Group

February 2020

## I. Introduction

The Tri-Campus Review was launched in March 2018 to review the relationships among the University of Toronto's three campuses, under the theme of "One University, Three Campuses." The Tri-Campus Review is guided by a steering committee and built on five pillars, each with its own working group.

Chaired by Professor Joshua Barker, Vice-Provost, Graduate Research & Education and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Units Working Group was mandated to consider questions related to graduate faculty memberships, faculty searches, the appointment of graduate chairs, and graduate units.

The Graduate Units Working Group drew its membership from among senior academic administrators responsible for graduate education across the three campuses.

- Joshua Barker, Vice-Provost, Graduate Research & Education and Dean, School of Graduate Studies (Chair)
- Dwayne Benjamin, Vice-Dean, Graduate Education, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Heather Boon, Vice-Provost, Faculty & Academic Life
- Kenneth Corts, Vice-Dean, Faculty & Research, Rotman School of Management
- Wendy Duff, Dean, Faculty of Information
- Michael Escobar, Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs, Dalla Lana School of Public Health
- Ryan McClelland, Associate Dean, Academic & Student Affairs, Faculty of Music
- Jeremy Packer, Associate Dean, Graduate, University of Toronto Mississauga
- Mary Silcox, Vice-Dean, Graduate, University of Toronto Scarborough

The Working Group aimed primarily to provide guidelines and tools to help define relationships within tri-campus graduate units and between faculty, staff, and students on all campuses. During bi-weekly meetings from January to June 2019, the Working Group took as its primary themes for discussion both existing policy documents as well as a substantial base of data gathered through surveys and consultation meetings conducted in fall 2018. Faculty members, including chairs and graduate chairs, were surveyed and a total of 104 responses were received. In addition, 14 consultation meetings were held with deans, 16 meetings were held with graduate chairs, and 4 meetings were held with graduate students across the three campuses.

This document contains overarching principles, relevant themes and definitions, and specific recommendations related to the Working Group's mandate. The principles outline objectives to be emphasized in a tri-campus environment, the themes and definitions provide context, and the recommendations identify practices and structures recommended by the Working Group.

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## II. Principles

The following principles informed the activities and recommendations of the Graduate Units Working Group:

- Graduate education and, in turn, the activities of research-stream graduate students, are essential components of the University's research strength and enrich the educational experience of the University's undergraduate population.
- Cultivating synergy and collaboration at the graduate level among the three campuses while promoting unique local identities and areas of strength will build the University's capacity as an internationally significant research institution and training ground for the next generation of scholars, innovators, and leaders.
- The tri-campus context provides extraordinary breadth—a breadth in research-stream and professional course offerings and programs, in lab infrastructure, and in learning and teaching environments. For both graduate students and faculty members, it also creates a wealth of opportunities to collaborate across campuses and disciplines, building knowledge and skills that are essential to navigating the complexities of our 21<sup>st</sup>-century world.
- At its best, the tri-campus structure can cultivate a sense of community among faculty members and graduate students that is doubly strong, combining a gratifying experience of belonging to a close-knit campus community with pride in contributing to Canada's largest research university.
- Graduate units across the three campuses operate and function best when they have a voice in the creation and application of relevant local and University-wide policies, processes, and procedures.
- At the University of Toronto, success can and does take many forms. Flexibility is key to building collaborative tri-campus graduate units, and the temptation to impose one-size-fits-all solutions should be resisted. At the same time, collegial consultation and frequent communication between colleagues on the three campuses are clear hallmarks of the best-functioning tri-campus graduate units.

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### III. Themes

Several general observations emerged from the Graduate Units Working Group's discussions that are helpful in framing the recommendations:

- **Graduate matters are becoming increasingly complex** as the number and size of graduate programs and units grow. While all campuses are facing these issues, it is important to recognize that graduate matters gain complexity in the tri-campus context.
- Certain graduate structures and terms, processes, and roles and responsibilities are **not well-defined or well-documented**. As a result, decisions are often made within units based on historical precedent or unspoken assumptions rather than firm practices. Providing enhanced clarity through the development of definitions, best practice documents, templates and clarifying memoranda will help inform decision-making and planning within units and promote consistency while still enabling flexibility.
- While **collaboration and interdisciplinarity** can always pose challenges for graduate units, this is especially true for graduate units working across campuses. In this context, effective collaboration and interdisciplinarity can require additional energy and intentionality.
- **Communication** is an ongoing challenge for graduate units, especially when information must also flow across campuses. When used properly and with the appropriate resources in place, technology can play a key role in improving communications across distance.
- When change is coming rapidly, graduate units can evolve without an intentional strategy or discussion of long- and short-term goals. As tri-campus units grow in size and develop, it is important for them to consider their potential **tri-campus identity** and its implications.
- Tri-campus graduate units should consider a representative range of perspectives and opinions with an eye to **tri-campus representation** when making decisions and constituting decision-making bodies.

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## IV. DEFINITIONS

At the beginning of its deliberation, the Graduate Units Working Group came to a shared understanding of a number of key concepts and terms. These will be invaluable in:

- filling a gap where existing policy does not provide clear definitions;
- providing a common language for all those dealing with graduate matters across the three campuses; and
- providing a firm foundation on which to develop best practices based on the recommendations below.

**Budgetary academic unit:** A formal budgetary unit created through governance and headed by a person appointed under the *Policy on the Appointment of Academic Administrators* (PAAA), such as (but not necessarily limited to) a Faculty, department, or extra-departmental unit (EDU), that has formal (budgetary) faculty appointment rights, and offers for-credit courses and often academic programs to students (excludes EDU:Cs and Ds). A budgetary academic unit may hold primary or majority (budgetary) faculty appointments or minority (budgetary) faculty cross-appointments.

**Graduate unit:** An administrative entity headed by a graduate chair who has been appointed under the PAAA and housing graduate programs that:

- provides the central structure to house and support graduate programs; and
- includes graduate faculty members, who may be drawn from multiple academic units, as well as graduate students, and administrative staff.

Every graduate unit is assigned a specific budgetary academic unit (“budgetary home”) to act as its administrative and governance home.

**Tri-campus graduate unit:** A graduate unit that has significant faculty engagement in and membership from multiple budgetary academic units across more than one campus. For the sake of simplicity, the definition thus also includes strictly bi-campus graduate units.

**Graduate chair:** “The Chief Executive Officer of the graduate department,” as defined in the PAAA, Section 1.a. There are two models for chairs of graduate units:

- The **integrated chair model**, under which the graduate chair also serves as the academic head of a participating budgetary academic unit (i.e., department or single-department Faculty) on one of the three campuses.
- The **separate chair<sup>1</sup> model**, under which the person appointed to be the graduate chair does not also serve as the academic head of a participating budgetary academic unit.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Faculty of Arts & Science, the separate chair is known as the “fourth chair.”

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- The 2003 revision of the PAAA had envisioned that the role of the graduate chair could in future be separated from that of the St. George campus department chair. The 2008 “Guidelines” that followed the revised PAAA had recommended how that might best work. In 2018-19, three units had a separate graduate chair.

(Source: *Guidelines on the Graduate Chair in Arts & Science Graduate Units: The Role, Responsibilities and Appointment Procedures*, 2008).

**Graduate appointment:** According to the *Policy and Procedures on Academic Appointments* (PPAA; Section III, 18.iii), “All faculty appointed to a tenure-stream position shall hold a non-budgetary cross-appointment to an appropriate graduate department. Decisions regarding such cross-appointments shall be made jointly by the appointing unit and the graduate department.”

**Graduate faculty membership (GFM):** “Membership in the graduate faculty is a condition of employment for tenured/tenure stream and full-time clinical faculty at the University of Toronto. Membership in the graduate faculty is granted by the graduate chairs and directors of Graduate Units with the approval of the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. All faculty appointed to a tenure-stream position will hold a non-budgetary cross-appointment to an appropriate graduate unit” (Source: *SGS Graduate Faculty Membership Eligibility Guidelines*. SGS Website).<sup>2</sup> There are four different types of membership:

- Full membership
- Associate membership
- Associate membership with restricted duties
- Emeritus membership

**Campus affiliation:** Students enrolled in a graduate program offered by a tri-campus graduate unit are always affiliated with one of the three campuses. Upon registration, a graduate student is assigned a campus affiliation based on the administrative home of their program of study. A student may change their campus affiliation through the School of Graduate Studies if they are supervised by a graduate faculty member whose primary budgetary appointment is to the campus to which they wish to transfer their affiliation. Campus affiliation describes the primary location of a graduate student’s campus-based academic activities and determines the incidental fees charged to that student.

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<sup>2</sup> Many other faculty will also hold graduate faculty memberships including teaching stream faculty; part-time and contractually limited term non-tenure stream and teaching stream faculty; and status-only faculty.

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## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. GRADUATE UNITS

#### GENERAL:

1. Create a clear set of principles and processes outlining when and how a new graduate unit needs to be created and when and how an existing graduate unit needs to be modified or disestablished.
2. When a new graduate program is developed, ensure that clear and explicit discussions take place about whether the program will be offered through an existing graduate unit or whether the creation of a new graduate unit is warranted. If the program will be offered through an existing graduate unit, discuss and determine whether the new graduate program will be offered through a single-campus or tri-campus graduate unit.
3. All graduate units should clearly outline in writing the privileges and responsibilities of graduate faculty members in that graduate unit, and identify specific expectations of individual members, as appropriate (e.g. through an individual letter that describes terms of membership). All faculty members with a graduate appointment should be aware of the expectations (e.g., teaching, supervision, contributions to graduate student funding) that come with that membership.
4. While conducting their business and activities, academic units should always consider the impact of their decisions on associated graduate units. It is important for the heads of academic units to consult and engage the relevant graduate chair(s) and associated graduate units early in the decision-making process regarding such matters as:
  - a. the hiring and recruitment of new faculty;
  - b. graduate teaching expectations in unit workload policies;
  - c. defining reasonable expectations for graduate teaching and supervision; and
  - d. PTR, tenure and promotion.
5. Establish a process for formally identifying and recognizing tri-campus graduate units, and for allowing graduate units to self-identify formally as tri-campus graduate units. This process should:
  - a. Consider the wishes of members of the graduate unit as expressed through recognized governance processes at the unit level;
  - b. Be built on a range of flexible criteria such as an annual review of the tri-campus distribution of graduate faculty memberships within a graduate unit, the tri-campus distribution of teaching within a graduate unit, the location of graduate research, the campus affiliation of students, etc.; and
  - c. Allow for the self-identification of tri-campus units to be reviewed periodically and include provisions for transition to and from tri-campus graduate unit status.

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A final determination of a graduate unit's tri-campus status should rest with the Tri-Campus Deans Group and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

### TRI-CAMPUS GRADUATE UNITS:

6. Using an SGS template and with assistance from SGS, as needed, tri-campus graduate units should create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with their contributing academic units across the three campuses in order to clarify:
  - a. the resources each academic unit will contribute to the graduate unit;
  - b. how the needs and interests of the graduate unit will be incorporated into decision-making within each academic unit;
  - c. the privileges and responsibilities of graduate faculty members in the graduate unit; and
  - d. the resources (e.g., space, materials) that the graduate unit will provide to all graduate faculty members and to all graduate students.

This MOU should be reviewed periodically and might also include sections on topics such as: graduate teaching workloads, faculty hiring processes, graduate admissions processes, graduate supervision assignments, PTR/tenure/promotion, provisions for faculty and student office space, TA/RA assignment coordination, budgetary arrangements, and how administrative secondments will be managed and paid for.

7. The University's administration should provide appropriate support to tri-campus graduate units in recognition of the challenges associated with running a robust and inclusive tri-campus operation. This support might include, for example, support for creating MOUs, and advice/guidance on tri-campus relations based on an understanding of best practices.
8. Tri-campus graduate units should host regular and collegial discussions about the location of course offerings and endeavour, where appropriate, to offer courses on all three campuses. In determining the location of course offerings, tri-campus graduate units should consider the impact such offerings might have on both the graduate and undergraduate student experience.
9. Tri-campus graduate units should ensure that participating academic unit heads meet at least annually. This periodic meeting is particularly important (and might occur more often) in cases where the graduate chair is a separate chair.
10. Where applicable, tri-campus graduate units should encourage admissions procedures that enable faculty members to have equitable access to graduate students (e.g., tri-campus membership in admissions committees).

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11. Tri-campus graduate units should actively include graduate faculty on all campuses in the recruitment of graduate students, including providing opportunities for visits to these campuses, where appropriate.
12. Tri-campus graduate units should ensure that the allocation of student work spaces on all three campuses reflects the needs of students and the time they spend on each campus, whether as students or as TAs/RAs.
13. For clarity and transparency, where possible, participating budgetary units should identify specific funds dedicated to supporting graduate activities.

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**B. GRADUATE CHAIRS**

14. The University should ensure that where a dean or chair is appointed both as the academic unit head and graduate chair, they are clear that they have been appointed to the graduate chair role as well as the budgetary role. If they are not appointed as graduate chair, it must be clear to them and others, who has been appointed as graduate chair. In particular, all single-department Faculties will follow an integrated chair model (e.g., the dean will serve as dean and graduate chair, regardless of their level of tri-campus activity).
15. A single academic unit head may be the chair of more than one associated graduate unit.
16. For tri-campus graduate units in multi-department Faculties, a decision about the appropriate graduate chair model to follow (i.e., integrated or separate) should be made before the search process for a new academic chair begins and should be disarticulated from the academic chair search process.
17. In cases where a tri-campus graduate unit has adopted the separate chair model and is searching for a graduate chair, it should continue to follow the process outlined in the PAAA and have SGS oversee the search for a “separate” graduate chair.
18. Where a tri-campus graduate unit in a multi-department Faculty has adopted the integrated chair model and a search is being conducted for both a graduate chair and the chair of one of its constituent academic units:
  - a. The search should be conducted concurrently as part of a single search process. SGS should no longer run a separate search to appoint a graduate chair;
  - b. The search process should include consideration of concerns specific to the tri-campus context and graduate faculty, students, and staff;
  - c. In addition to conforming to the requirements of the PAAA, each search committee should include tri-campus representation; and
  - d. The graduate chair search should be tri-campus in scope, and graduate unit faculty members from all three campuses should be eligible to serve as chair.
19. When appointing a graduate program director or other similar positions to whom authority over graduate matters is to be delegated, the graduate chair should consult with participating academic units before the appointment is made.
20. SGS and/or VPFAL should ensure that new graduate chairs and Vice/Associate Deans Graduate are on-boarded and given information that includes education about:
  - a. The various structures and governance models of graduate units, including tri-campus graduate units;

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- b. The structure and composition of their specific unit(s), including, for example, data about the tri-campus distribution of graduate activity and of graduate faculty memberships within their unit; and
- c. The roles and responsibilities of academic administrators with respect to graduate matters, including a clear distinction between which responsibilities may be delegated and which may not.

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**COMMUNICATIONS, SPACE, AND TRANSIT**

21. SGS should develop a pathway to ensure appropriate tri-campus involvement in appeals processes for issues arising in supervisory relationships (e.g., clarifying jurisdictional issues; points of contact for students and faculty).
22. Tri-campus graduate units should work collaboratively to share information with faculty members and students across campuses, and develop appropriate methods of communication to do so (e.g., via memos, regular newsletters).
23. Tri-campus graduate units should work collaboratively to develop schedules of curricular and extra-curricular activities that prioritize and allow for the participation of all members of their graduate units. For example, some units have found it helpful to designate a specific day or half-day for tri-campus graduate unit activities, during which time no graduate seminars/courses are scheduled on any of the campuses.
24. SGS should create a resource that identifies current campus space policies and lists an inventory of rooms/spaces, to enable graduate chairs to find spaces that can accommodate meetings and activities that include members from all three campuses (e.g., departmental meetings, speakers).
25. The University should ensure that all constituent units in a tri-campus graduate unit have access to reliable videoconferencing services for meetings, seminars, and other activities. The Chief Information Officer should consider this when drafting his IT Strategic Plan.
26. The University should study further how transportation and mobility between the campuses might be improved and facilitated.

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**POLICY AND DATA**

27. When an EDU:A or EDU:B is also a graduate unit and offers graduate programs and when the director is acting as the *de facto* graduate chair, SGS should have representation on the search committee for the director. When the PAAA is next open for consideration, it is recommended that revisions be made to formally recognize that the Directors of EDU:As and EDU:Bs should also be appointed as graduate chairs.
28. The University should identify senior academic administrators to support unit heads who are facing challenges navigating the tri-campus structure. The identity of these academic administrators should be communicated widely.
29. SGS should consider creating a new Special Advisor or Vice-Dean, Interdivisional Affairs role to oversee governance, create policy, and promote best practices as they relate to tri-campus graduate units.
30. The SGS Constitution should be amended to include a more fulsome description of the graduate chair's role.
31. SGS should enhance and refine its data collection capabilities in areas related to tri-campus activity. These data should be updated regularly and should be made available to members of the University community.
32. Insofar as metrics are used to assess levels of tri-campus engagement, these metrics must be applied thoughtfully and efforts made to assist their interpretation by internal and external audiences.
33. SGS should maintain an accurate and current list of graduate units and work collaboratively to make it consistent with records/lists maintained throughout the University.
34. SGS should study the nature of graduate faculty memberships in further detail outside this Working Group to clarify the meaning of primary and secondary graduate faculty memberships and how these relate to academic appointments and workload policies.