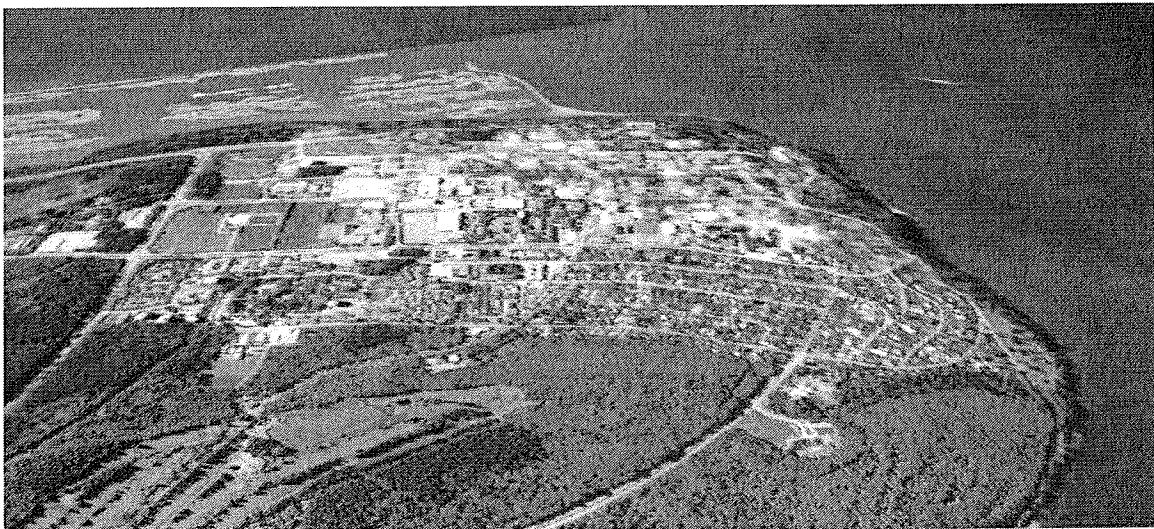


APPENDIX 1

A Call for Campus-Wide Input:

*Complementing Disciplinarity and Serving Society:
Options for Academic Growth*



UBC Office of the Vice President Academic & Provost
June 2005

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Office of the VP Academic & Provost
6328 Memorial Road
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z2

June 13, 2005

Dear Colleagues:

A REQUEST FOR CAMPUS-WIDE INPUT

In recent years UBC has become a world leader in studies that transcend ordinary organizational barriers. The Michael Smith Laboratories, the Peter Wall Institute, ICORD and HELP are a few leading examples of the many successful interdisciplinary centres and institutes at UBC. Those who have pioneered the growth in such areas are to be congratulated and honoured.

No matter how beneficial it may be, substantial growth can often lead to potential difficulties, which simply means there is a need for planning. Recently there has been a widespread call for more planning around interdisciplinarity, and in turn this has led to this solicitation for input from you.

The attached paper, "Complementing Disciplinarity and Serving Society: Options for Academic Growth" is one step in this process. It addresses successes and challenges related to the growth of interdisciplinary activity at UBC and invites input into the planning process from the academic community. In particular, we hope to hear from you about the four basic options presented in this paper. Guidelines for written statements are described on page 19 of the paper. Please submit your written statements as soon as possible, preferably before July 15, 2005.

We will hold a public meeting on this topic in early September, and will announce the date and place later in the summer. On that occasion, time permitting, we may invite some respondents to this paper to give a brief presentation of their ideas.

In the context of our commitment to academic excellence and the Goals of Trek 2010, I can assure you that the Office of the Vice President Academic and Provost considers these organizational issues to be of great importance. We sincerely hope you will share your ideas with us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lorne Whitehead'.

Lorne Whitehead
VP Academic & Provost

Complementing Disciplinarity and Serving Society: Options for Academic Growth at UBC

CONTENTS

1. The Purpose of this Document	4
2. Successes and Challenges with Interdisciplinary Activities at UBC	6
2.1 Transcending Organizational Boundaries	6
2.2 What are Faculties For?	6
2.3 Models that have Generated Success	8
2.4 Challenges Arising from our Successes	9
2.5 Previous Consultation on Possible New Approaches	10
3. Four Basic Options:	12
3.1 Option 1 - Enlarge a Distinct Home for Interdisciplinary Units	13
3.2 Option 2 - Distribute Independent Interdisciplinary Units	14
3.3 Option 3 - Accept Interdisciplinary Units into Disciplinary Faculties	16
3.4 Option 4 - Central Support for Independent Interdisciplinary Units	17
4. Factors for Assessing these Options	19
5. You are Invited to Participate	20
5.1 Guidelines for Written Statements	20
5.2 Deadline	21
5.3 Public Meeting	21
6. Acknowledgement	22
Appendix A – Membership of Interdisciplinarity Committee	22
Appendix B – Possible Details for Option 4	23
Appendix C – Academic Leadership Council – Preliminary Concept	25
Appendix D – Table for Assessing Options Using Listed Criteria	27

Complementing Disciplinarity and Serving Society: Options for Academic Growth

UBC Office of VP Academic & Provost, May 2005

1. The Purpose of this Document

As the title suggests, the purpose of this document is to solicit input from the UBC academic community on an important emerging topic. We are committed to facilitating the integration of teaching and research across disciplines in a manner which honours disciplinarity, creates the best possible learning environment for our students, empowers our professors and serves society. The vision and priorities described in Trek 2010 emphasize the importance of innovative research and teaching consistent with such integration. In this regard, the key problem we hope to address is that in a large organization like UBC it remains challenging to cross Faculty and Departmental boundaries for all UBC citizens - whether it be the student attempting to take a course in another Faculty on a topic outside of their "degree stream", or the faculty member who is interested in building an interdisciplinary research program or teaching outside their discipline, or an external partner who is interested in having a problem solved but cannot find the right portal into UBC in order to bring our expertise to bear. We seek your advice on this matter.

Significantly, we are already regarded as a world leader in studies that transcend the ordinary organizational boundaries within a University. We have numerous examples of academic units whose individuals transcend with ease Departmental and Faculty boundaries in their research, teaching, and community outreach. Such units at UBC have been very successful, as determined by societal impact, awards and other forms of scholarly recognition, research funding, and the ability to attract outstanding scholars from around the world. The size and scope of such interdisciplinary activities at UBC has grown steadily and dramatically over the years, and is a tribute to the tremendous efforts and capability of numerous pioneers.

However, the proliferation of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary activities throughout UBC has also created a support need in a wide range of administrative units, in which there also remains a crucial need for maintained support of single-discipline-based inquiry. Clearly, any success causes change, and change creates new challenges as well as opportunities. The purpose of this document is to summarize discussions that have taken place over the past ten months, with the aim of understanding some of the issues that relate to the future growth of interdisciplinarity at UBC, and to present and request input on several options that have emerged as possible approaches to this important and complex set of issues.

A brief outline of the paper is as follows: It begins by summarizing some of the successes and challenges associated with interdisciplinary activities at UBC. It describes the way that faculties have traditionally functioned with regard to guiding the academic

enterprise and outlines several methods that have helped to support interdisciplinarity so far. The paper then presents some of the challenges that have arisen from our interdisciplinary successes and summarizes the methods that have been used so far in obtaining this information. The paper reviews four basic options for moving forward that have emerged from this discussion process and goes on to describe these options and briefly outline their advantages and disadvantages. The paper then presents factors that have arisen from consultation to date for comparing and assessing these various options and concludes by inviting all interested persons to provide their feedback in writing and possibly in a public presentation on this topic. The paper also contains an appendix that offers additional details on the fourth option, which arose as a new hybrid approach during these preliminary discussions.

2. Successes and Challenges with Interdisciplinary Activities at UBC

2.1 Transcending Organizational Boundaries

In today's complex environment, most large organizations find it necessary to employ some degree of hierarchical organizational structure in order to keep things running efficiently. In such a structure the organization as a whole is separated into divisions (known as Faculties at our university) and these may be further separated into sub-divisions (commonly called Departments or Schools at our university). Later we will discuss some specific functions of Faculties, but at present it is sufficient to say that they satisfy important bureaucratic, management and organizational needs. The difficulty is that for practical purposes we have often attempted to create a correspondence between the organizational structures of Departments within Faculties on the one hand, and the relationships of fields of knowledge, teaching, and research, on the other. This is often problematic. In this section we explore these challenges and the solutions that have been found at UBC so far.

On a different but related note, currently at UBC the Faculty of Graduate Studies carries out several functions that need not be, but presently are, tied together. Only one of these functions will be discussed in any detail in this paper, and that is the manner in which the Faculty of Graduate Studies serves as a Faculty "home" for a number of interdisciplinary centres and institutes. (The other key functions of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, most importantly graduate student matters including recruitment, awards and scholarships, resolving difficulties, and facilitating graduation, are not discussed in this paper; this should not be interpreted in any way as a diminishment of their fundamental importance.)

2.2 What are Faculties For?

As mentioned above, from an organizational point of view it is practical to divide the academic enterprise into discrete pieces, like pieces of a pie, as shown in Figure 1a. This is one way of thinking of the Faculties of UBC, and it potentially could be very accurate as an organizational model. However, as a model for representing human knowledge, teaching, and research, it is fundamentally flawed. No matter what definitions are employed for the "pieces of the pie", such a model will have serious shortcomings if employed to classify human knowledge. There will inevitably be important areas of knowledge and activity that lie outside such categories or fall within two or more. In this regard the sketch shown in Figure 1b may be a more realistic picture:

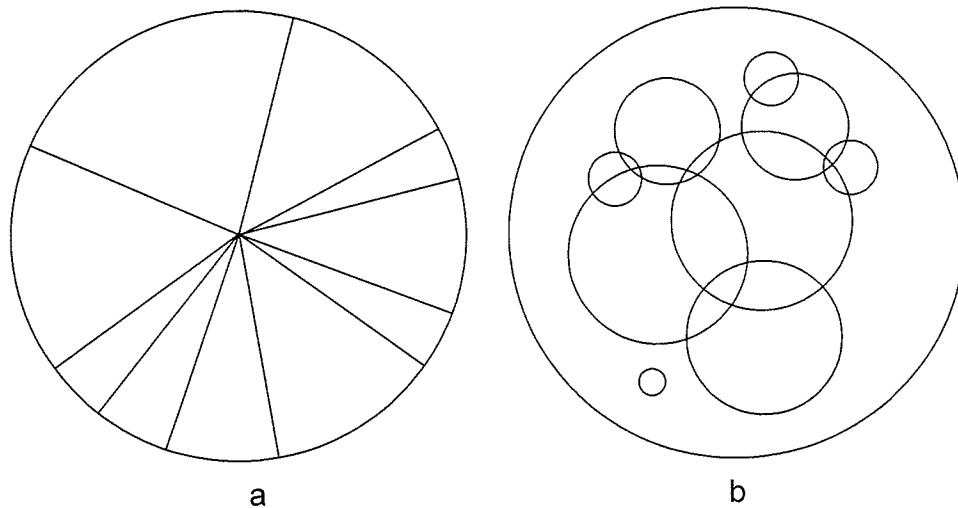


Figure 1 Slicing a Pie vs. Classifying Ideas

One way of describing our goals in this paper is to find a way that Faculties and other academic units on campus can function in their useful hierarchical manner without constraining the relationship to human knowledge itself.

In this regard, it will be helpful to summarize six important roles of Faculties from an organizational point of view; we can then discuss how these roles would apply to interdisciplinary units in various possible models. These six roles are as follows:

- A. **Financial Management:**
Financial and bureaucratic administration.
- B. **Promotion, Tenure, Merit, Awards:**
Faculty committees and the Dean play a key role in promotion and tenure process, bridging between the Department level and the Senior Appointments Committee. Their role in assigning merit and governing awards is also important for encouraging success.
- C. **External Champion:**
The Dean acts as communicator with society, a champion, a promoter, and a fundraiser.
- D. **Unit Head Reporting Relationship:**
The Dean of the Faculty is in charge of the head of each unit with regard to hiring, performance appraisal, general guidance and approval of decisions above a defined level of importance or size, including capital projects and space allocation.
- E. **Strategic Planning:**
Coordination, visioning and benchmarking of research and teaching initiatives at the graduate and undergraduate level.
- F. **Resource Allocation:**
Recommendation, to the Office of the Provost, on the allocation of faculty positions and other resources among the various units in the Faculty.

2.3 Models that have Generated Success

Let us now consider three different ways in which interdisciplinary activities at UBC have been able to flourish while transcending organizational boundaries.

2.3.1 The Independent Researcher Model

There are numerous examples at UBC of researchers and teachers within disciplinary units who would generally be considered to be carrying out interdisciplinary activities. As described later, they may have faced numerous disincentives to pursuing their interdisciplinary activities, but have had a sufficient level of persistence, and excellence, to be able to succeed and make great things happen. Generally, the level of success they have been able to demonstrate to society has resulted in the independent verification of the value of their activities, and the existing structures within the university have, sometimes perhaps reluctantly, allowed their pursuits to flourish.

An excellent example is the success of Dr. John Steeves in building the multi-disciplinary ICORD (International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries), a spinal cord injury repair research group at UBC, which has taken a full spectrum (cell to society) approach to improving the prospects for victims of spinal cord injury. There are numerous such examples and they all have one thing in common: they required a performance level exceeding the level of excellence of most of our top faculty members and they also required help from one or more influential and sympathetic supporters outside UBC. Most of the pioneers with whom we have had contact agree that while this model works on occasion, it is not a model naturally conducive to success – researchers need university support to pursue activities that do not fall neatly within Faculty boundaries. The independent researcher model does not provide such support in a consistent, predictable, or coordinated fashion.

2.3.2 The Extra-Faculty Unit Model

This model brings together faculty members who retain their Faculty affiliations but who come together to pursue collaborative initiatives, with dedicated support from upper administration. A good example is provided by the Michael Smith Laboratories (previously known as the Biotech Laboratory) which was created in recognition of the fact that numerous critical important discoveries in technology required intense collaboration of interested experts in electrical and mechanical engineering, microbiology, chemistry, and several other fields. Dedicated continuing university resources were assigned to the Biotech Laboratory with the various faculty members retaining partial appointments in the various administrative units mentioned above, but having a common purpose within the Biotech Lab, as well as a common location. This required a specific “top down” initiative by the Provost Office and it required allocation of significant dedicated resources.

Support by the Provost in a situation such as the creation of the Michael Smith Laboratories can thus be highly effective. It should also be noted that similar initiatives have occurred and can be expected to occur even without direct support by the Provost. For example, a group of Deans could potentially come together, recognize an important collaborative initiative, provide resources to fund such an initiative from within their Faculties, and design an approach to managing such an initiative, without any involvement by the senior administration. Currently, an early example of this approach is UBC's Proteomics initiative.

It needs to be emphasized, however, that a significant factor in the success of this model lies in new funding, which almost always implies a reallocation of equally significant resources from other university priorities.

Section 3.2.2 will elaborate on management approaches for such extra-Faculty units and the ways in which the six administrative roles of Faculties are fulfilled in these contexts.

2.3.3 The Faculty of Graduate Studies Model

A successful approach to nourishing interdisciplinary activity at UBC is found within the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Years ago, it was decided that even "extra Faculty" units can benefit from a Faculty home, and since the Faculty of Graduate Studies has no particular allegiance to any one field, it seemed like a natural place to house interdisciplinary units. At present, approximately sixteen interdisciplinary institutes, centres or schools, two colleges and eleven graduate programs are housed within the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This approach creates an effective way of providing such units with the administrative benefits of a Faculty, without the disciplinary constraints.

It should be noted here that the activities within the Faculty of Graduate Studies go well beyond a narrow definition of interdisciplinarity. Many of the Centres and Institutes within the Faculty of Graduate Studies would prefer to view themselves as "issue based units" rather than "interdisciplinary units" because their reason for existence is primarily to address profound social needs from an academic perspective. The optimal academic pursuit of such issues naturally leads to a wide range of different disciplinary approaches that must be coordinated and blended synergistically, but such interdisciplinarity is a by-product, rather than a starting point, for a more important endeavour. Clearly it would be unwise to pursue a path at UBC that might degrade the positive impact of the Faculty of Graduate Studies in such areas. We wish to build on this success.

Compared to other faculties, the Faculty of Graduate Studies has a smaller role in the strategic planning of teaching and research, relative to discipline-based activities at UBC, simply because there is no strategic planning body bridging the divide. We will return to this question later.

2.4 Challenges Arising from our Successes

As a result of the success of the pioneering efforts described above, interdisciplinarity is now pervasive across many units at UBC. It would be tempting to assume that this is entirely a good thing, but it is only natural to find certain challenges associated with any

growth. One such challenge, as will be described later, is associated with the need to better plan, coordinate and integrate undergraduate and graduate disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs (within and across schools and departments) and such coordination has proven difficult with the current models.

Perhaps more significantly, there is a growing problem with the magnitude of the interdisciplinary enterprise. When it was small, certain minor difficulties could simply be ignored for the benefit of the greater good. However, as interdisciplinarity has grown this has become more difficult. For example, the Faculty of Graduate Studies currently has about eighty interdisciplinary faculty members under its auspices, as a result of a sustained high growth rate over the past two decades, which shows no sign of slowing. There has been a corresponding impact on fundraising, program development, graduate student recruitment, attraction of excellent faculty, competition for research grants, etc. Given that the activities within the Faculty of Graduate Studies often overlap, at least to some extent, with other activities within disciplinary Faculties, it is not surprising that these developments have spawned some serious concerns, as further described in section 3.1.4.

It is therefore appropriate to consider whether new, modified organizational structures could continue to nurture interdisciplinarity while providing better coordination with the disciplinary Faculties.

2.5 Previous consultation on possible new approaches

In September 2004, discussion with the President, the Vice President Research and the Dean of FoGS led the Provost to establish a committee to consider long term planning for interdisciplinarity at UBC. The preliminary mandate of the committee was to consider possible changes to the structure of FoGS such that excellence in all aspects of graduate education would be maintained and enhanced, and multi-and inter-disciplinary research nurtured and appropriately promoted. Membership comprised senior researchers, senior administrators and members of the GSS (please see Appendix A for committee membership.)

The committee met in September, October and January, and discussed existing models for nurturing interdisciplinarity alongside disciplinary efforts within UBC and at other universities. At its last meeting in April, the committee reviewed feedback from other parties (listed below) and supported the recommendation to develop this position paper to launch a more extensive consultation process.

In addition to participation on this committee by the Deans of Arts, Science and Graduate Studies, the full Committee of Deans has been involved in discussions throughout 2004-2005 concerning various possibilities for moving forward. At the beginning of March 2005, the Committee of Deans devoted a mini retreat, facilitated by the Dean of the Sauder School of Business, to considering alternative approaches to the strengthening of interdisciplinarity. There was a strong consensus for change and a variety of views, some along the lines of a possible new approach described later in this paper as “Option Four.” Such discussions have in no way precluded the consideration of other options during the next consultation stage.

In April, at the invitation of the Dean of FoGS, the Associate Vice President Academic Programs attended the morning session of the FoGS Annual Retreat, and shared with the participants the ideas for change that had come from the above consultations. In response, participants at the Retreat emphasized the need to maintain the values and benefits to interdisciplinarity made possible by the FoGS structure, and asked for more clarity on the rationale for change, closer examination of alternative options, and a greater participation by the community in the process.

One form of such consultation prior to the completion of this paper was a meeting in May with Directors of Schools and Heads of Departments, and a significant number of cross-appointed faculty members, to seek advice on the desirability of change and ways in which change could be of optimal benefit to these constituents. The feedback received during the meeting and through some follow-up e-mail provided clear support for the need to reconsider the current structures and to improve planning of disciplinary and interdisciplinary activities across campus. Strong support was also expressed for the idea of creating inclusive mechanisms to advise the Provost on the issues of resource allocation for both interdisciplinary and disciplinary endeavours in synergistic rather than polarizing ways.

3. Four Basic Options:

The initial consultation process as described above has resulted in the development and preliminary consideration of four possible organizational models that are not mutually exclusive, but are decidedly different from one another. It should be noted that some combination of these options could be warranted and additional options may still be devised.

3.1 Option One: Enlarge a Distinct Home for Interdisciplinary Units

The interdisciplinary activities currently housed in the Faculty of Graduate Studies have been growing in scale and number. For this reason the status quo (that is, the current size of the activity within the Faculty of Graduate Studies) is not really a viable option. If we want to continue with “business as usual” we must anticipate considerable growth of the current interdisciplinary mandate of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This option has substantial merit, as it builds on success, but it also has certain disadvantages.

3.1.1 How does this option work?

The Faculty of Graduate Studies, which is not aligned with any specific discipline, nevertheless provides the administrative functions of a more typical disciplinary Faculty. It has faculty members appointed (or cross-appointed) and it offers some interdisciplinary programs.

Apart from a few details, the operational model is very straightforward, and so would be its anticipated growth.

A version of this option could involve separation of the graduate student and interdisciplinary mandates of FoGS by creating a new “Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies” separate from the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This would be a significant organizational change requiring Senate and Board of Governors approval, but would have little effect on day to day operations.

3.1.2 How “Faculty functions” are provided:

Referring to the list of Faculty administrative functions in section 2.2, it is evident that FoGS is able to perform many of the functions performed by the disciplinary faculties. Function “B”, regarding promotion and tenure is shared with disciplinary faculties in the case of joint appointments. The only slightly problematic function is “E” – the strategic planning of teaching and research. The challenge is that much of the relevant teaching (particularly at the undergraduate level), falls under the authority of the disciplinary Faculties, with which FoGS has only a weak administrative connection.

3.1.3 Advantages:

Clearly, the FoGS model has advantages which have greatly benefited the cause of interdisciplinarity. Not only is the model able to provide for the administrative needs of interdisciplinary units; its Dean has been a tremendously effective advocate for

interdisciplinarity, and the result has been sustained, substantial growth. The combination of a “champion Dean” and a strong sense of community within FoGS has helped to attract excellent world class researchers into FoGS units, which in turn has helped to support productive fundraising to build further success.

A crucial benefit of the FoGS model is that it has been able to provide powerful methods for nurturing young interdisciplinary faculty members, especially with regard to a fair and appropriate set of procedures concerning promotion and tenure, as well as the allocation of merit and PSA awards. Within FoGS, it is common to find faculty members who felt insufficiently recognized within their previously disciplinary homes, and who now feel very positive about the level of understanding, respect, and support offered to them within FoGS.

Based on these outcomes, it is imperative that any future models for further improving interdisciplinarity at UBC should maintain and build on the strengths that are abundantly evident within the Faculty of Graduate Studies. One possible means of doing so is to establish a separate Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies that would maintain and enhance all the advantages listed above. Such a step could occur with only limited changes to existing staff positions, beyond some individuals having a dual report, as required.

3.1.4 Disadvantages:

At a deep level, one of the concerns is the separation between interdisciplinary units and their associated disciplinary counterparts. There is a need at UBC for a fully inclusive, comprehensive, and coordinated strategic planning process of both discipline based and interdisciplinary activity, and this should relate to both teaching and research programs, university wide. There are critical resource allocation issues associated with such strategic planning, but the separation of disciplinary from interdisciplinary activities promoted by the current FoGS model means that at present there is no fair and effective mechanism to carry out analysis of such issues. Interestingly, the current FoGS model already incorporates one portion of a solution – the high rate of cross appointments often minimizes barriers for individual faculty members. It is the administrative Faculty barrier (which of course is not unique to FoGS) that is a primary challenge for interdisciplinarity.

Another concern is that the FoGS model may create the false impression that interdisciplinarity is “owned” by one Faculty. Other Deans feel very strongly that they are fully able to nurture interdisciplinary activity within their faculties as well as the more “issue-based” activities characteristic of those within FoGS, and there are numerous examples of this being the case.

A further challenge with FoGS is that faculty members within this Faculty are, to a large extent, much less involved with undergraduate teaching than their colleagues outside FoGS. Of course, there are also highly research-oriented faculty members outside FoGS who do little undergraduate teaching - it is just the overall average that is different in FoGS. This difference, as well as the very name “Graduate Studies” itself, creates a perceived asymmetry which some feel is detrimental to the overall sense of fairness at UBC. While this issue does not directly relate to interdisciplinarity itself, it is nonetheless of significant concern regarding the current FoGS model.

The same issue contributes to discontinuity between undergraduate and graduate programs at UBC. It is highly desirable for us to explore interdisciplinarity with regards to programs at all levels, and this is currently impeded by the present arrangement wherein interdisciplinary undergraduate programs reside within Faculties other than FoGS and interdisciplinary graduate programs are primarily associated with FoGS. Furthermore, given current Faculty boundaries, it is very difficult to coordinate discipline-focused undergraduate programs with interdisciplinary graduate offerings.

At a more mundane level, as mentioned earlier, it is important to recognize that FoGS overlaps in its jurisdiction with many other Faculties in a way that is normally avoided between Faculties, leading to competition for donors, advisory board members, research grants, etc. Establishment of a separate Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies would not address such concerns; indeed, it might exacerbate the problem by adding another level of competition for the same resources.

3.2 Option Two: Distribute Independent Interdisciplinary Units

This option relates to existing examples where units exist independently and lie outside any Faculty. Such “extra-Faculty units” function well without the framework of a Faculty of Graduate Studies. An example is the Michael Smith Laboratories. Some have speculated that at this stage in UBC’s history it may now be workable to move all the inter-disciplinary units out of the Faculty of Graduate Studies in a model along the lines of the Michael Smith Laboratories.

3.2.1 How does this option work?

This approach shares a common characteristic with the FoGS model, where faculty members are often jointly appointed with existing disciplinary units. However, it is important to note that most of the units within the Faculty of Graduate Studies are considerably less well endowed than the Michael Smith Laboratories, so that particular example may not be directly applicable. It should be noted that there are a number of different schemes along these lines which are currently in place at UBC and elsewhere, with various different detailed management schemes.

3.2.2 How “Faculty functions ” are provided

Referring to section 2.2, let us consider how the six listed administrative roles of a Faculty can be fulfilled in this model in a specific example. For the Michael Smith Laboratories, Function “A”, bureaucratic administration and approval, is provided by a specified Faculty (in this case the Faculty of Science). Function “B”, support of the promotion and tenure process, is provided in part by the Deans Committee and in part by the home Faculty for each of the joint appointments. Function “C”, communication with society and fundraising, is performed partly by the leader of the Michael Smith Laboratory, partly by the Dean of Science and Chair of the Dean’s Committee, and partly by the Provost. Should this model be directly duplicated on a large scale, this level of complexity would probably not be sustainable.

Function “D”, unit head reporting relationship, is somewhat ambiguous – the director reports in some ways to three places - the Chair of the Deans Committee that oversees the unit, the Dean of the Faculty which provides the above referenced administrative support, and the Provost. (At present the Dean of Science is in both of the first two positions, but this situation changes from time to time.) Theoretically the Deans Committee for the Michael Smith Laboratories fulfills Function “E”, strategic planning, and its connection with the rest of the university, but such advice has been rather limited.

Finally, Function “F”, resource allocation, is largely unaddressed, but there is an ongoing assumption that the Provost’s Office, which supported the original creation of the Michael Smith Laboratories, would be sympathetic to consideration of further essential resource needs. Again, while this proves to be a workable model in a fairly isolated case, this level of reporting complexity could be very problematic, and possibly unmanageable, with multiple units operating on the same basis, each requiring its own Committee.

3.2.3 Advantages

Although there are some complexities with this model, there are also substantial advantages. For example, the perceived disadvantages intrinsic to the FoGS model would be reduced. Another advantage is that the creation of extra-Faculty units is able to occur from a bottom up approach, which is highly favoured at UBC and seems to have considerable merit. In other words, senior administration would have primarily an approval role for initiatives developed by the Deans and/or Heads or Directors.

3.2.4 Disadvantages

There are serious disadvantages with this model, most of which stem from the fact that most interdisciplinary units, especially at their inception, are small and modestly funded. It is highly unlikely that a small, minimally funded, interdisciplinary unit would have the level of resources required to ensure success along the lines of the Michael Smith Laboratories.

Many units currently housed within FoGS fear that the Faculty support and leadership functions currently provided by FoGS would not be effectively replicated in the extra-Faculty model described in this second option. Even if each unit were provided with a Deans Committee to help it function, in analogy to the Michael Smith Laboratories, there is doubt about the effectiveness of such committees. At present every interdisciplinary unit within FoGS has such a committee to help with strategic planning, but these committees are largely ineffective, providing little meaningful input or guidance, primarily because the Deans do not have time to become deeply involved with every small unit. Furthermore, there is no positive interdependence between the Deans’ responsibilities within their home Faculties and their roles on the Committees supporting extra-Faculty units.

Thus, the likely outcome of this option would be the substantial loss, of Functions A through F currently provided by FoGS. In addition, this option would likely be somewhat disruptive to the nature of existing jobs and would require serious reconfiguration of support functions.

3.3 Option Three: Accept Interdisciplinary Units into Disciplinary Faculties

A number of challenges described above associated with the current structure of the Faculty of Graduate Studies could be addressed by Option Three. In this model, the FoGS function would be limited to the graduate students mandate and each of the interdisciplinary units currently within FoGS would be absorbed into a disciplinary Faculty which best suits the individual character of each particular unit.

3.3.1 How would this option work?

In this option, the interdisciplinary FoGS units would be invited to join one of the existing Faculties and share the benefits of administrative support residing with the Faculties. This would not change the nature of the joint appointments of individual faculty who are affiliated with more than one unit. Additional cross-appointments could be made in the future and the existing arrangements could be maintained, intact, indefinitely.

3.3.2 How “Faculty functions” are provided

The need for Faculty functions is very simply solved in this model, as each unit that was previously within FoGS is now housed within Faculties that are automatically able to provide all the functions listed in section 2.2.

3.3.3 Advantages

Because of the provision of functions through the disciplinary Faculties, this alternate model avoids most of the disadvantages of options 1 and 2. Additionally, it has the advantage of organizational simplicity and cost effectiveness. However, these advantages could possibly be diminished by the mechanisms needed to ameliorate the disadvantages described in the next section.

3.3.4 Disadvantages

Although interdisciplinarity is now significantly more accepted and has become a part of the mainstream practice within many Faculty-based units, there is still enough misunderstanding and even scepticism about its value to have a negative impact upon interdisciplinary research. As a consequence, we could expect many faculty members to be profoundly disturbed at the notion of being returned to disciplinary homes from which they so happily departed when joining FoGS. It also needs to be recognized that some of the faculty members recruited to FoGS joined UBC to benefit from placement within a “designated” interdisciplinary space and would feel constrained by the traditional Faculty boundaries. Furthermore, from the perspective of existing employment opportunities in FoGS, this model would require some re-adjustment and re-allocation of positions. In short, this approach is troubling, and to many, prohibitively so.

3.4 Option Four: Central Support for Independent Interdisciplinary Units

The following fourth option was not explicitly under consideration at the start of the information gathering process that led to this paper. This is a hybrid approach that attempts to combine the advantages of the previous three options in a manner that increases the potential to satisfy most of the needs of most of those concerned, while avoiding most of their disadvantages.

3.4.1 How does this option work?

The basic idea is to consider the six Faculty roles listed in section 2.2 and to group these into two sets: a first set, (A,B and C) that will be primarily provided in a central unit, possibly called the **Office of Multi-Faculty Studies, reporting to the Provost**, and a second set (D,E and F) are provided through a distributed arrangement of **Academic Leadership Councils**.

The Academic Leadership Councils provide strategic guidance for interdisciplinary units in analogy to existing Deans Committees for interdisciplinary units, but with a key difference: in this model, councils would be constructed to include representatives from areas of campus not directly related to the subject matter at hand, and would also include acknowledged leaders in interdisciplinarity. The plan would be to have a small number of such Academic Leadership Councils (perhaps five) in place of the many relatively ineffective Deans' Committees currently in place for interdisciplinary units.

Because this hybrid option is new, it is essential to review the fuller description in Appendices B and C in order to formulate an opinion regarding its possible merits.

3.4.2 How "Faculty functions" are provided

The central Office of Multi-Faculty Studies would continue to provide the key central role for Financial Management, Promotion & Tenure, and Championship (items A, B, and C in the list in section 2.2 above). The other activities - Unit Head Reporting, Resource Allocation, and Strategic Planning (items D, E, and F in the list in section 2.2 above) - would be provided by the Academic Leadership Councils. Importantly, there would be significant communication and likely some personal overlap between the Academic Leadership Councils and the Office of Multi-Faculty Studies, to allow synergy in all of these areas, especially Strategic Planning and Championship.

3.4.3 Advantages

The basic advantage of this option is that it enables greater synergy between interdisciplinary units and disciplinary units that have research and teaching interests that overlap or have other natural connections. This allows for greater cooperation, and helps to reduce barriers to the creation and movement of units both within and outside of what is currently FoGS. At the same time, the critical nurturing characteristics of what is currently FoGS could be maintained and made available to all units or even individual faculty members for whom this is appropriate, reducing existing resentment and providing fair treatment for all.

This model addresses most of the challenges associated with the current FoGS structure with the added advantage of creating opportunities for other units on campus to benefit from the new organizational arrangement. For example, small Faculties that are seeking administrative and academic synergies, could find an Academic Leadership Council to be very helpful in this regard.

Very importantly, the Academic Leadership Councils could also provide important strategic advisory capacity to the Provost's Office in a manner sensitive to both disciplinary and interdisciplinary interests, and create incentives for Deans, Directors and Heads of interdisciplinary units to see their respective roles and functions in a more synergistic fashion. The Councils would have an additional advantage of being able to nurture and strategically support efforts that cut across Faculties, Schools, and Centres and Institutes and address specific research and programmatic needs, such as inter-professional education, or the needs of new, emerging meta-disciplines.

With regard to employment opportunities, individuals currently associated with interdisciplinary activities within FoGS could likely carry on within an Office of Multi-Faculty Studies, possibly with a dual report to FoGS in some cases.

3.4.4 Disadvantages

One disadvantage of this plan is that it is unproven at UBC – at present we have no units that are managed in this particular manner (although there is quite a diversity of arrangements), and consequently there is a degree of risk that despite the best planning it may not work well, especially at first. However, other universities (notable Duke) have employed models including an Office of Interdisciplinary Studies reporting to the Provost; at least there is some degree of precedent for such an approach.

A related potential concern is that the hybrid nature of the structure proposed in Option Four may be difficult at first to understand, giving rise to confusion, or even suspicion about the Administration's intent. This is a significant communication challenge. Appendices B and C are provided to give more detail on possible specific arrangements.

This option would also generate the need to amend selected university policies and procedures to enable effective functioning of the new model. For example, the guidelines regulating submission of cases for promotion and tenure to the Senior Appointments Committee would need to be revised to allow for the Chair of a promotion and tenure committee under the Office of the Multi-Faculty Studies to bring the cases forward. Similarly amendments would be required regarding the pre-Senate approval of programs and curriculum changes proposed by the extra-Faculty units. Likely several other changes along these lines would also be necessary. Such changes would require care and effort, but are unlikely to be insurmountable obstacles.

Considering the four options described above, it is very important to re-emphasize that all of these options may evolve further as discussions take place, and in fact one or more new possibilities may arise in the upcoming public involvement process. No decision has been made at this point.

4. Factors for Assessing these Options

As an aid to making progress in this area, our initial consultation has included the identification of possible criteria for assessing options consistent with the mandate and focus of this exercise. It is not suggested that the list below is fully exhaustive nor that the suggested criteria are of equal weight. However, we believe that the following may provide a helpful framework for consideration of the options.

The selected option should:

- 1 enhance academic freedom, mutual respect and cooperation in an open, civil academic society, consistent with the goals of Trek 2010;
- 2 demonstrate appreciation and respect for the successes in interdisciplinarity at UBC;
- 3 create an inclusive and open environment for future development of interdisciplinarity in a context that maintains the current respect, throughout UBC, for our disciplinary research and teaching;
- 4 reduce barriers between Faculties and interdisciplinary units across campus and improve collaboration and integration across organizational boundaries;
- 5 effectively nurture and encourage interdisciplinarity, in particular with respect to promotion and tenure;
- 6 ensure continuing effective “championing” of interdisciplinarity across campus, including sustaining and expanding development activities related to interdisciplinary research;
- 7 provide for a stronger connection between interdisciplinary research and interdisciplinary teaching across campus;
- 8 create conditions for continuous planning and implementation of interdisciplinary academic programs at undergraduate and graduate level;
- 9 create an effective collaborative mechanism for providing strategic advice to the Office of the Provost on allocation of resources within the academic enterprise;
- 10 avoid disruption to the everyday functions of faculty/staff members, units and programs;
- 11 be simple, practical and economical to implement at this time at UBC.

5. You are Invited to Participate

The purpose of this paper has been to provide a context for seeking input on this topic from the UBC academic community. It is important to stress that no decisions regarding adoption of any of the presented options have been made to date. We want to emphasize the importance of this consultation, and to encourage active community participation in this process. We welcome comments on the presented options as well as suggestions from all stakeholders including Deans, Heads of Departments and Directors of Schools (who are requested to discuss this matter widely within their units); the FoGS Advisory Council; experts on interdisciplinarity within and outside of FoGS; and students through the AMS and GSS representatives. We also welcome direct comments from anyone else within the academic community wishing to contribute their voice to this important discussion.

Once the community feedback is received and considered, a final plan will be put together and presented to the UBC Executive, Senate, and Board of Governors. The timing of these next steps is not certain, but it is hoped that implementation of the final plan will commence in early 2006.

5.1 Guidelines for Written Statements

Statements should focus on the issues raised in this paper. Please make your statements legible and concise, and submit them on 8.5 by 11-inch paper, or as an electronic document configured for printing on paper of that size. All ideas will be considered, but we are especially interested in your thoughts regarding the likelihood of success, the feasibility, and the general appropriateness of the four options outlined.

One suggested format of response is provided in Appendix D. It is hoped that respondents employing such a table would also provide written comments elaborating on their reasoning.

We look forward to your personal observations but we also welcome references that you may wish to make to any organizational models existing elsewhere that you feel have not been considered but should be. Along with your statement it would be helpful if you provided the following background information:

- Name, e-mail address, phone number
- Department or Unit and Faculty
- If you are involved in research, would you consider some of your research to be interdisciplinary?
- If you are involved in teaching, would you consider some of your teaching to be interdisciplinary?

5.2 Deadline

Please mail or e-mail your statement as soon as possible. We would like to conclude the collection of feedback to this paper by July 15, 2005. Please send your comments to:

Kate Carr
Office of the VP Academic & Provost
6328 Memorial Road
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z2
E-mail: kcarr@exchange.ubc.ca

5.3 Public Meeting

The purpose of the public meeting will be to further gather public input and responses to the issues described in this paper. The meeting will take place in early September 2005, with the date and place confirmed later in the summer. First priority for presentation will be given to authors of written responses (as described above) and to guest presenters invited by the Provost's Office. If you wish to participate, please call or e-mail Kate Carr (604-822-1288 or kcarr@exchange.ubc.ca) to schedule a time; unscheduled speakers may also present as time permits. As a courtesy to others who wish to speak, please keep your presentation brief, not exceeding 5 minutes.

6. Acknowledgment and thanks

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all who have already contributed to the initial consultation process and whose vision and advice have aided in the drafting of this paper. The feedback received so far has been diverse and at times contradictory, but it has always been provided with the best in mind for the university and has been instrumental in articulating and revising the options presented in this document. We are indebted to the UBC Executive; all Deans; Directors of Schools; Heads of Departments; members of the Committee on the Long Term Planning for Interdisciplinarity; as well as individual faculty members who have already engaged in this discussion, especially our colleagues in FoGS and other UBC units whose interdisciplinary research and teaching experience have given them an especially clear perspective on the successes and challenges that this paper addresses.

Appendix A Membership of Committee to Consider long term planning for interdisciplinarity at UBC

Max Cynader, Director, Brain Research Centre;

Joshua Caulkins, Vice President GSS;

Bob Evans, Economics and Director Population Health CIAR, CHSPR;

Brett Finlay, Michael Smith Laboratories, Distinguished Professor, PWIAS;

Nancy Gallini, Dean of Arts;

Frieda Granot, Dean of Graduate Studies;

John Hepburn, Dean of Science;

Phil Hieter, Director, Michael Smith Laboratories, CMMT;

Carey Hill, former President GSS;

Anna Kindler, AVP Academic Programs;

George Mackie, AVP Academic Planning,

Pitman Potter, Director, Institute of Asian Research;

Indira Samarasekera, former Vice President Research,

Lorne Whitehead, VP Academic & Provost.

Appendix B Possible Details for Option Four

This Appendix summarizes some possible features for Option Four, as they have been considered to date. It should be understood that specific aspects of this option would be further refined and revised as a function of the received feedback. Consequently, detailed feedback regarding the model described below will be especially appreciated.

Possible features of Option 4:

- a) The interdisciplinary units currently located within the FoGS, as well as other units that would benefit from an extra-Faculty location, would move to an “interstitial space” within the UBC organizational structure or perhaps, in some cases, to an alternative location, as appropriate. It is important to note that they would not be required to align with any single discipline nor any single Faculty, but rather they would gain the freedom of an alternative placement.
- b) FoGS would continue to exist but would no longer house interdisciplinary units. This would allow the Faculty to focus on its key role of supporting the needs of graduate students and programs and improving the services that it provides in this respect.
- c) The roughly 20 existing Deans Committees currently associated with interdisciplinary units would be replaced with about 5 Academic Leadership Councils, which would be selected to consider the academic needs of the institution as a whole and to handle the academic management of the extra-Faculty units. Suggested membership and terms of reference of the Academic Leadership Councils are provided in Appendix C.
- d) Each extra-Faculty unit would be associated with a primary Academic Leadership Council (in analogy with the current use of Deans Committees) and would receive strategic and management support from that Council as elaborated upon below.
- e) For the purposes of enabling strategic planning, it is recommended that each Academic Leadership Council have a designated “vantage point”. (Examples of suggested “vantage points” are listed in Appendix C.) It is understood that many units within UBC, especially interdisciplinary units, could be approached from multiple vantage points and the proposed structure does not preclude consideration of issues relative to each unit from a variety of vantage points. It only suggests selecting one, most relevant Academic Leadership Council for accessing the distributed administrative Functions “D, E and F” described in Section 2.2 (unit head report, strategic planning and resource allocation recommendations to the Office of the Provost.)
- f) The remaining management infrastructure support currently provided by FoGS, Functions “A, B and C” in Section 2.2, would be provided to all extra-Faculty units under the Office of Multi-Faculty Studies. This office would

report to the Provost's Office, just as FoGS does now. It would focus on development and activity support and operation of an interdisciplinary Promotion and Tenure committee to assist with interdisciplinary cases. This committee would provide an alternative for all UBC faculty members regardless of their affiliation should they wish to have their cases move forward partially on the merits of their emphasis on interdisciplinary research and teaching. The Chair of the Committee, appointed by the Provost on a rotating term, would be a non-Dean member of at least one of the Academic Leadership Councils and would serve as a "champion" of interdisciplinary tenure/promotion cases, presenting them to the Senior Appointments Committee. In addition to promotion and tenure, it would probably also be appropriate for the Office of Multi-Faculty Studies to play a role with respect to Merit and PSA. The nature of this role might vary from case to case, depending, for example, on the degree to which a given extra-Faculty unit is aligned with one or more Faculties.

- g) As suggested earlier, this option creates a possibility for some units currently within Faculties (e.g., Schools) to migrate from their home Faculties and become extra-Faculty units, if appropriate, under the auspices of this new Office. It should be emphasized that such a move would be fully optional, and Schools would have the flexibility to remain in their current home Faculties.
- h) Figure 2 below is a rough conceptual view of the relationship of academic leadership councils to Faculties and extra-Faculty units. In the figure, a sample academic leadership council and its members are highlighted, as are the academic units most closely associated with it. The larger circles represent Faculties, and the smaller represent extra-Faculty units. Units closest to the centre have connections to the largest number of disciplines, while those near the rim have a narrower, more focused, disciplinary character.

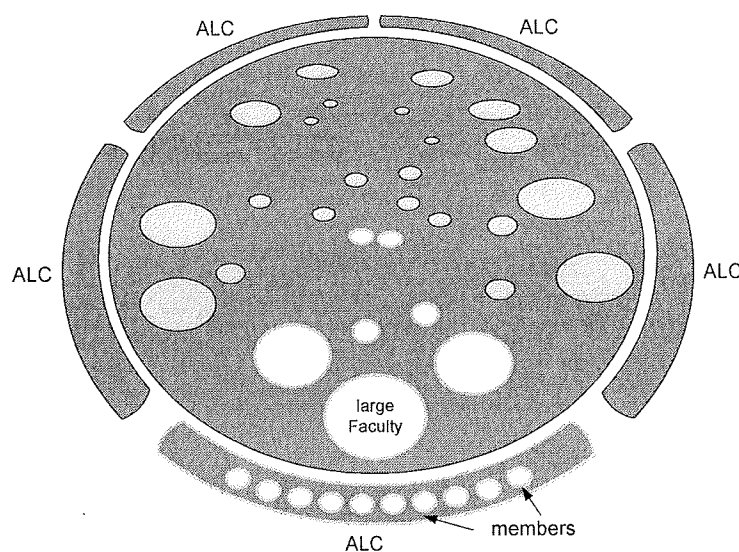


Figure 2 Depiction of the "Vantage Point" of a sample Academic Leadership Council (ALC) with respect to the Academic Community of UBC

Appendix C Academic Leadership Councils – Preliminary Concept

1. Membership of Academic Leadership Councils:

Each of the Academic Leadership Councils would have a defined “vantage point” on the academic enterprise, and would have the following categories of members:

- selected Deans of Faculties aligned with the “vantage point” of the particular Academic Leadership Council in question;
- interdisciplinary “champions”;
- selected appointed Heads/Directors of extra-Faculty units associated with the “vantage point” of the Council;
- selected appointed faculty members at large (with or without other administrative responsibilities) with research and teaching focus consistent with the “vantage point” of the Council;
- selected appointed faculty members at large (with or without other administrative responsibilities) with research and teaching focus peripheral to the “vantage point” of the Council;
- Appointed member of the Office of Multi-Faculty Studies;
- Provost, AVP or a Provost’s designate (Chair).

A co-Chair would be appointed by the Provost from among the non-Dean members of the Council on a rotating basis. (The rationale for the Chair being a non-Dean is two-fold: first it does not place one Dean above another; second, it allows each Dean to maintain an appropriate level of focus on the well-being of their own particular Faculty.) The co-Chair would be the direct contact and point of reporting for the Heads and Directors of units not residing within Faculties. The co-Chair would report directly to the Provost on matters related to all the individual units under the auspices of the Council as well as on matters that cross the boundaries of units and relate to the “vantage point” of the Council.

The Council would operate largely through task forces which would consist of a subset of committee members plus additional members selected for each task force in order to provide the required expertise and community representation for the task at hand.

2. Proposed terms of reference:

- To address the academic strategy of the university as a whole and provide relevant advice to the Office of the Provost;
- To facilitate discussion about strategic priorities with regard to both disciplinary and interdisciplinary activity of the university;
- To provide advice to the Office of the Provost on resource allocation needs, establishment and retention of Centres and Institutes, academic positions, programs, etc. from the respective “vantage points”;
- To provide guidance to the Office of the Provost on UBC’s relationship with professional organizations and the community at large from the respective “vantage points”;
- To provide strategic support to the associated extra-Faculty units;

- To offer guidance to the Office of Multi-Faculty Studies to ensure adequate administrative support for the extra-Faculty units;
- To provide a structure of efficient reporting lines, with Heads and Directors of extra-Faculty units reporting directly to the Councils' Co-Chairs.

3. Suggested “Vantage points” for Academic Leadership Councils:

- Health;
- Science and Technology;
- Arts and Culture;
- Environment;
- Commerce and Law.

Appendix D – Table for Assessing Options Using Section 4 Criteria

5 = very good

4 = good

3 = neutral

2 = poor

1 = very poor

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Criterion 1				
Criterion 2				
Criterion 3				
Criterion 4				
Criterion 5				
Criterion 6				
Criterion 7				
Criterion 8				
Criterion 9				
Criterion 10				
Criterion 11				
Sum				