

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Vice President Academic and Provost

6328 Memorial Road

Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z2

Tel: (604) 822-4948

Fax: (604) 822-3134

September 6, 2006

To: Senate
c/o Ms. Lisa Collins, Manager, Senate Secretariat

From: Lorne A. Whitehead
Vice President Academic and Provost

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LAW', written over the printed name of Lorne A. Whitehead.

Re: Future Development of Interdisciplinarity and the Faculty of Graduate Studies at UBC-V

I am pleased to provide to Senate, for discussion, a Report on the Future Development of Interdisciplinarity and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, comprising three documents:

1. Memo dated August 2, 2006 to the UBC-V Academic Community, from Lorne Whitehead, subject: Plans for the Future Development of Interdisciplinarity and the Faculty of Graduate Studies at UBC-V; including Appendix A dated September 6, 2006;
2. Excerpt from Minutes of Senate for 17 October 2001: Report of the Senate Academic Policy Committee on the Status of Institutes and Centres;
3. Excerpt from the Minutes of the April 19, 2006 meeting of Senate, pages 123 – 137, Report from the Vice President, Academic and Provost, Optimizing Interdisciplinarity at UBC.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Vice President Academic and Provost
6328 Memorial Road
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z2

Tel: (604) 822-4948
Fax: (604) 822-3134

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 2, 2006

To: UBC-V Academic Community

From: Lorne Whitehead
Vice President Academic and Provost

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. Whitehead'.

Re: **Plans for the Future Development of Interdisciplinarity and
the Faculty of Graduate Studies at UBC-V**

The purpose of this memorandum is to bring everyone up to date on the consultative planning process concerning the future of interdisciplinary activities at UBC-V and to request further input before finalizing the details in preparation for discussion at meetings of the UBC-V Senate and the Board of Governors.

Background

Over a year ago I initiated a campus-wide discussion inspired by successes and challenges related to the growth of interdisciplinary activity at UBC-V. In June 2005, we issued a discussion paper "Complementing disciplinary and serving society: Options for academic growth" followed by a public forum on this topic. Through these events, many individuals and groups offered creative ideas about organizational models that could allow us to ensure the continued success of UBC's already strong interdisciplinary focus and programs without detracting in any way from our underlying disciplinary excellence. An Ad Hoc Advisory Group that was struck in the early Fall 2005 recommended setting up a non-administrative Committee to carefully review all the received feedback and to propose an appropriate organizational framework based on this information. This Committee, chaired by Professor John Gosline, filed its report in March, 2006. The report was subsequently shared with the UBC community.

In April, 2006 UBC-V Senate discussed the principles of the Gosline report and the proposed division of the two existing functions of the Faculty of Graduate Studies into an organizational structure that would allow its two primary, and very different, roles to be advanced in separate realms. Under this proposal, the Faculty of Graduate Studies would continue to offer support and the existing range of services to graduate students and programs under the leadership of a Dean of that Faculty. The report also called for the

creation of a different form of governance unit for the interdisciplinary units within the current Faculty of Graduate Studies. Importantly, the report emphasized this new governance unit should *not be a Faculty in name or function*, but rather should be a “nurturer” of interdisciplinary activities, with important ties, and checks and balances, across campus. The unit would be led by a respected academic whose primary responsibility would be the championing of interdisciplinarity campus-wide. It was also emphasized that our existing disciplinary excellence is fundamental to the academic community and that it must not, and need not, be compromised in any way. The Senate discussion was positive on these points as well as the proposition that this leader would report directly to the Provost and be a member of the Committee of Deans. (This latter point was a departure from the Gosline committee recommendation that the interdisciplinary unit’s leader should report to the President.)

At the time I informed Senate that, based on the positive reception of these ideas and in order to develop a complete plan, I would carry on further consultation regarding (1) the name of the new unit; (2) the details of its functioning from an administrative point of view (considering, in particular, the relationship to the *University Act* and current UBC policies and practices); and (3) the title and responsibilities of the leader for championing interdisciplinarity campus-wide.

Following the Senate discussion, I struck an Ad Hoc Committee to join me in developing the plan. The Committee membership is as follows:

Mary Anne Bobinski
John Gilbert
Paul G. Harrison
Anna Kindler
Douw Steyn

As the first step in consultation, the committee met individually with representatives of the Graduate Student Society and with all the Directors in the Faculty of Graduate Studies. We also consulted with Deans of other UBC-V Faculties and received helpful unsolicited advice from a variety of other sources. The committee was pleased to find that as discussions proceeded, a significant level of agreement emerged around the approach discussed at the April meeting of Senate.

As the final step in consultation prior to completing its recommendation, the committee is now providing another opportunity for input from the entire academic community. You are being asked to comment, if you wish, on the following draft recommendations:

New Administrative Structure

1. UBC-V will establish a College for Interdisciplinary Studies, led by a Principal.
2. The mandate of the College will be to facilitate and support interdisciplinarity campus-wide, and as a part of that mandate, to serve as a place for the creation, development and dissemination of new and important scholarly activities which advance the interests of UBC as a whole according to its *Trek 2010* strategic vision.

3. Upon initiation of the College, as a first step, the interdisciplinary units currently located within the Faculty of Graduate Studies will transfer to the new College. Without precluding possible future changes, each will continue to operate with the guidance of its existing Advisory Committee (such as Deans' Advisory Committees) and under the leadership of a Director reporting to the Principal who, in turn, will report to the Provost. Thus the creation of the College does not *force* specific changes in these units but, as described below, this new arrangement has important differences which are designed to *enable* developments that will provide opportunities for improving teaching and research. Consideration of such improvements will commence immediately upon the establishment of the College.
4. The Faculty of Graduate Studies will continue to exist with its mandate now focused on the support of graduate student programs.
5. Administrative support currently within the Faculty of Graduate Studies will be distributed according to the needs of the remaining Faculty of Graduate Studies and the new College. The current Acting Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the current Associate Dean responsible for the Interdisciplinary Units, will develop a plan for the resource distribution in consultation with the staff and unit Directors.
6. The Principal will serve as the academic and administrative leader for the units located within the College and will also actively support interdisciplinary research and programs situated administratively outside of the College. In this capacity, the Principal will be charged with creating a structure that will support interdisciplinarity in *all* University units. That is, the Principal will champion Centres/Institutes and Schools within the College as well as interdisciplinary Centres/Institutes and programs residing within Faculties. The Principal will offer academic leadership by supporting interdisciplinary faculty members in their research and teaching and will help nurture their academic careers at UBC. This will include facilitation of collaborative interdisciplinary initiatives, including interdisciplinary programs across UBC-V Faculties and the College. The Principal will be responsible for working with UBC-V Deans and others for the advancement of development efforts to benefit interdisciplinary activity within the College and campus-wide.
7. The Principal will be a member of the Committee of Deans.
8. All faculty members with their current appointments in the Faculty of Graduate Studies will continue to have access to the existing tenure/promotion mechanism which specifically recognizes interdisciplinary accomplishment. With the support of the Committee for Interdisciplinarity (please see below) and in collaboration with the Faculties, the Principal will champion efforts to similarly improve the recognition of the value of interdisciplinarity in the tenure/promotion process for faculty members who do not have appointments in the College.

Committee for Interdisciplinarity

9. To increase the synergy of interdisciplinary academic activities across UBC-V, the Principal will chair a new university committee, tentatively called the Committee for Interdisciplinarity, comprised of Deans or designated Associate Deans of all UBC-V Faculties, one representative from the Centres/Institutes/Schools in the College, one representative from interdisciplinary units outside of the College (which may be within a Faculty) and students, as appropriate. The Committee will have a broad mandate including making recommendations on all key issues, such as allocation of resources, fundraising, and creation and dissolution of interdisciplinary Institutes and Centres campus-wide to the Principal, the Provost and others. It will advise on the evolution of interdisciplinarity at UBC-V within and outside of the College. The guidance of the committee will be available to all Faculties, but there will be no requirement for persons organizing interdisciplinary activities lying outside the College to seek such guidance. Nevertheless, it is hoped that such a relationship would often be found to be attractive and helpful.

Future Opportunities

10. Over time, new Centres and Institutes may be created within the College while others may cease their operation. Organizational, budgetary, fundraising and management changes will be guided by the advice of the Committee for Interdisciplinarity and the Principal and will follow the usual relevant UBC administrative and governance approval processes.
11. The new organizational structure is designed to encourage interdisciplinarity to evolve over time, recognizing that the optimal arrangements will likely be different for different units. For example, units may remain within the College in their current form; they could split and/or merge with other units within the College; and/or leave the College and join other administrative units within UBC-V. Similarly, in the longer term interdisciplinary teams currently located within Faculties other than the Faculty of Graduate Studies or those currently without a Faculty home may join the College, as appropriate, in the future.
12. Units currently residing in the Faculty of Graduate Studies will retain at the time of transfer all their current faculty positions and budget allocations. Future decisions regarding faculty positions in the College will be subject to the standard university allocation practice for all faculty positions, in which positions vacated by retirements or resignations are returned to the Office of the Provost for optimal allocation. The Committee for Interdisciplinarity will provide advice to the Provost in this regard.
13. The new organizational structure will be reviewed two years after implementation of the plan.

I welcome any thoughts you may have on the above plan. As it already has a significant level of support, it would be particularly helpful to hear from you regarding specific details which have yet to be worked out, or to consider detailed questions that may not have been addressed in the above summary. As mentioned earlier, our aim is to have the new structure in place by December 31, 2006. For this reason, we request that if you wish to provide comments, you do so as soon as possible and no later than August 31, 2006 in order to enable their consideration before a more detailed plan is presented in open sessions of the UBC-V Senate and the Board of Governors, a process which will commence in September.

Appendix A, to public consultation memo dated August 2, 2006 to the UBC V Academic Community from Vice President Lorne Whitehead

September 6, 2006

The following list of questions and corresponding brief answers was prepared in response to questions and observations in the feedback that has been received from university members:

1. Q: Why is interdisciplinarity considered to be sufficiently important to warrant such a large amount of attention?

A: It may be helpful first to re-emphasize that successful interdisciplinarity must build upon disciplinary strength, so valuing interdisciplinarity means also valuing disciplinary excellence. Interdisciplinarity itself can take many forms, with two areas being particularly noteworthy. The first, which characterizes many interdisciplinary activities campus-wide, involves exploring important areas that happen to lie between established disciplines. The second, which has been more typical of interdisciplinarity within the units in the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FoGS), is more “issue-based” in that the focus of study is a large challenge which, in order to be properly addressed, requires the intense involvement of a diverse range of disciplinary experts. These and other variations of interdisciplinarity are important because they are achieving very significant results – as measured by positive societal impact, publications, awards, and research funding. Yet, despite these successes, certain characteristics of the traditional university environment are impediments to such success; this is a strategic issue that therefore warrants careful attention.

2. Q: In FoGS, at present, the Centres and Institutes are effectively in a Faculty of Interdisciplinarity led by a Dean – would it be a “downgrade” for them instead to be housed in a College that is led by a Principal?

A: It would not be. In the new arrangement the Centres and Institutes will be led by an academic leader with resources and connections both within and beyond UBC who will be able to focus on the promotion of interdisciplinarity and leave the development of graduate students and their programs to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. In addition, there will be a new advantage, in that the campus-wide role of the Principal and the assistance of the Committee for Interdisciplinarity will help eliminate conflicts and build positive connections with the rest of the academic community.

3. Q: In the new arrangement, at least at first, there will still be three kinds of Centres and Institutes, those within the College, those within Faculties, and those “between” Faculties. Does the new arrangement preferentially support one or more of these categories?

A: All three kinds of Centres and Institutes will continue to be well supported. The new plan does not cause a shift in this regard. Both the Principal and the Committee for

Interdisciplinarity will play a role in ensuring fair allocation of support.

4. Q: How does this plan help advance the goals of *Trek 2010*?

A: *Trek 2010* contains the themes of UBC being a great university *of* the world and also, *for* the world. This means that our teaching must be first rate, our research must be first rate, and we must place an appropriate emphasis on helping to solve important world problems. The Institutes and Centres currently in FoGS are exemplars in this respect as their research is centered on problems of global importance. At the same time, there are other leading edge interdisciplinary initiatives and research within other Faculties with no effective mechanisms to bring the two together. The new plan removes the barrier around FoGS in order to better disseminate what has been learned there to set up a process for interdisciplinarity campus-wide to grow in greater synergy in the pursuit of the *Trek 2010* goals.

5. Q: Why does this plan refer only to UBCV?

A: This is due to recognition of and respect for the academic autonomy of UBCO, which is also a leading force in interdisciplinarity, in its own way.

6. Q: The resources within the current FoGS must be divided to carry out this plan – how will this division be carried out in a fair and appropriate manner?

A: The resource division plan will be developed jointly by personnel from the future College and the remaining portions of FoGS and will then be carefully and independently reviewed by the Office of the Provost with assistance, as appropriate, from the Budget Office.

7. Q: Will the new arrangement cost more money?

A: This question has been addressed both by FoGS personnel and the Senate Budget Committee. The conclusion is that it need not cost more money, and the plan does not call for new additional resources to be provided.

8. Q: This plan has the potential to impact graduate students, as both aspects of FoGS significantly relate to graduate students. How have the rights and interests of graduate students been taken into account in developing this plan?

A: There has been considerable discussion with the GSS including representation on committees that have helped develop this plan. Our belief is that this plan will be beneficial to graduate students because it will enable FoGS to focus on its role in attracting and supporting graduate students and ensuring the quality of their programming, and it will also ensure that graduate students in the units currently within FoGS can carry out their research in a supportive environment having excellent connections to the rest of campus.

9. Q: After the division of the current FoGS, does it make sense for the graduate student portion to remain a Faculty?

A: This is an important question and a complex matter. This question has not been a subject of study at this point, and such a change is not a part of the current plan. The current plan does not preclude, nor does it encourage, a future change. This matter can be considered later, independently of the current proposal, if there is sufficient interest in doing so.

10. Q: Will the Senate representation change as a result of this plan?

A: The current Senate representation of FoGS will be unchanged, i.e., faculty who are members of FoGS, (including but not limited to those with appointments in FoGS), will continue to be represented through their elected members and the Dean is a member as with other Faculties. As in the case of the College of Health Disciplines, Senate will be asked to appoint the Principal of the College for Interdisciplinary Studies to the Senate.

- 11 Q: Shouldn't every detail be completely worked out before proceeding with this important change?

A: Such a requirement would make any substantial change at UBC impossible. The intention is that even though we are making a significant administrative change, it will have minimal initial impact on the activities of the faculty members most closely involved but it will enable the possibility of positive changes, where desired, to take place. All such changes will be subject to the usual checks and balances of academic governance, which have worked so well at UBC over the years. Therefore, even though we cannot know at this time what all the eventual changes will be, we can nevertheless feel confident they will take us in a positive direction. In contrast the status quo will not lead to improvement. From this perspective, it is clear that it is now time to proceed, even though there will be more matters to work out in the years ahead.

12. Q: Wouldn't it be preferable to first carry out a thorough review of each Centre and Institute within FoGS before any changes take place?

A: This would introduce needless delay. The plan calls for such reviews in a fair and inclusive manner and on a timetable that would minimize disruption to the operation of the units. It also allows for a review of the Policy on Centres and Institutes through the works of the Committee for Interdisciplinarity and a relevant discussion in the Senate that could support and enhance the review process.

13. Q: What's the rush?

A: There has never been a "rush"; it has always been the intention to move prudently and carefully on this important matter. Extensive consultation has been underway now for over two years, and since the discussion in last April's Senate meeting there has been widespread expectation that change is going to take place soon. As a result, the people

affected have placed a number of important things “on hold” pending the implementation of the plan. Further urgency arises from the need to appoint a new Dean for the Faculty of Graduate Studies, which is of key importance at a time when recruitment and retention of excellent graduate students is so critical to our research mission. Overall, the academic community has a legitimate expectation that there should be no further delay and that we should get on with this, recognizing that we may not have everything perfect at first, but that the proposed arrangement provides a mechanism for further improvement.

14. Q: How does the present plan differ from that presented to Senate in the *Gosline* report?

A: The main difference, as promised by the Provost during discussions in the April 2006 Senate meeting, is the addition of a greater level of detail in order to enable full consideration by Senate. Additionally, as mentioned in that Senate meeting, and endorsed by numerous speakers at that time, it has been decided that the leader of the interdisciplinary Centres and Institutes currently within FoGS not be named a Vice President. There were concerns that the establishment of such a position outside the VP Academic and Provost’s office would contribute to further fragmentation and disconnect between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. The same rationale argued against a separate AVP position. In contrast, the appointment of a College Principal reconciles the need for a senior, influential leader of interdisciplinarity with the need to seek a synergistic rather than polarizing (or competitive) administrative arrangement with respect to the entire academic activity at UBCV. And given precedents at Oxford and elsewhere, we have reason to believe that the title “Principal of a College” can garner considerable respect at the international level.

15. Q: How is the new arrangement superior to the current one?

A: The current arrangement did not have a mechanism for coordinating interdisciplinary activities campus wide, it did not have a leader with such a responsibility, it had an inbuilt conflict of interest in its role as the quality control agent for all graduate programs, there was a disconnect between undergraduate teaching in the Faculties and the people and activities in FoGS and a sense of unhealthy competition regarding various forms of resource allocation. The new plan offers a clear opportunity for improvement in all these areas.

16. Q: What alternative arrangements were considered and why were they viewed as inferior to the one currently being proposed?

A: As described in an earlier document, we considered numerous alternatives and each had very serious disadvantages. 1) The status quo would maintain the current disconnect between interdisciplinary Centres and Institutes within FoGS and the rest of campus, would continue to promote unhealthy competition for resources, and would maintain a serious conflict of interest inherent in monitoring the quality of and simultaneously running, graduate programs. 2) Moving the Centres and Institutes currently in FoGS to various other faculties would eliminate the problems with the status quo, but would also

eliminate the conditions in FoGS which have led to very important and significant research success in areas that are central to our *Trek 2010* strategy. It would also be unfair to faculty members who had been recruited to UBC on the basis of the FoGS model. 3) Creating a new Faculty of Interdisciplinarity with a Dean would remove the conflict of interest problem, but otherwise it would maintain, or perhaps even exacerbate the other problems associated with the status quo.

4) Creating an Office of Interdisciplinarity run by a Vice President or and Associate Vice President could achieve many of the advantages of the current plan, but could still be divisive by its implication that another Vice President or Associate Vice President is in charge of “disciplinarity” and such divisiveness is inconsistent with the synergistic attitude that virtually everyone involved highly values.

17. Q: Is the current plan compatible with the current *University Act*?

A: Yes. In part this was proven by the successful creation of the College of Health Disciplines some time ago at UBC. Furthermore, UBC Legal Counsel has carefully reviewed this new matter in this specific context and provided the clear unequivocal view that this plan is consistent with the *University Act* and that it is, therefore, within the power of Senate and the Board of Governors to approve it.

18. Q: What if unanticipated problems are encountered?

A: The College for Interdisciplinary Studies will be reviewed after two years and corrective actions will be taken if problems are encountered. All along, the Committee for Interdisciplinarity will be monitoring the success and evolution of these plans and may recommend modification for consideration even before the review.

19. Q: How will the review of the College be carried out?

A: The review would proceed in the standard UBC manner employed for unit reviews. The review team would comprise a diverse set of external, independent, highly regarded academic reviewers with appropriate backgrounds for this task.

20 Q: Will the College effectively be a new Faculty with a slightly different name?

A: No, it differs from a Faculty in several important ways. Its leader has a university wide mandate and responsibility, it has a university-wide governance committee and it has no permanent academic departments but instead has Centres and Institutes that are, by definition, intended to evolve substantially over time.

21. Q: Does the “Will Report” of Senate on new Faculty creation have a bearing in this case?

A: This plan does not involve the creation of a new Faculty. The most relevant Senate background is the current Senate Policy on Centres and Institutes and the Senate process that led to the creation of the College of Health Disciplines.

22. Q: How will the new College provide meaningful benefits to the Centres and Institutes?

A: The Principal will ensure that the Centres and Institutes receive first rate governance advice both from their advisory committees and from the Committee for Interdisciplinarity. Further, the Principal will help to ensure that there are meaningful cooperative relations with the Faculties, and that such connections lead to substantial collaborative benefits.

23. Q: How will the new College provide meaningful benefits to the rest of campus?

A: By eliminating unhealthy competition and enhancing synergistic, seamless interaction with the rest of campus, day to day activities will be substantially enhanced. Furthermore, we can expect that the agility of our overall research enterprise will be improved because of the new potential for the substantially enhanced flow of ideas, people and projects into and out of the College for Interdisciplinarity.

24. Q: Does the creation of the College threaten interdisciplinarity, or disciplinarity, outside the College?

A: No, the College is a resource which can help with matters occurring elsewhere on campus, but only if invited and desired.

25. Q: The College will have a method of helping with promotion and tenure of interdisciplinary faculty members within the College – will that arrangement depend on what fraction of a full time appointment a member has in the College, and is any help available for those outside the College?

A: The arrangements for management of promotion and tenure currently present in FoGS will be maintained in the College and, as is the case now, will be available for all faculty members regardless of their percentage involvement in the old FoGS or new College. For interdisciplinary researchers who do not have appointments in the old FoGS/the new College, the Committee for Interdisciplinarity will work with Faculties to develop appropriate support mechanisms.

26. Q: What if there were conflicts between fundraising for the College and fundraising for the Faculties – how would these be resolved?

A: In the new plan, such conflicts will be much less likely to occur, because of the cooperation-encouraging activities of the Principal and the Committee for Interdisciplinarity. Nevertheless, if conflicts occasionally arise, the UBC Development Office, which has considerable expertise in helping to avoid fundraising conflicts, could help to resolve them. The Principal's mandate will include the avoidance and satisfactory resolution of potential fundraising conflicts. Additionally, the Committee of Interdisciplinarity would be available to identify and reduce these conflicts.

27. Q: What happens if the Principal and the Committee for Interdisciplinarity disagree?

A: The Provost would make a decision based on the merits of the arguments. The opinions of the Principal and the Committee would also be presented should the matter subsequently be forwarded to the Senate and/or Board of Governors for approval.

28. Q: How similar will this College be to the College of Health Disciplines?

A: From a legal, structural point of view there is substantial similarity. Another similarity is that the Principal has an important, respected campus-wide role, and serves on the Committee of Deans. A key difference is that the College of Health Disciplines focuses on optimizing Interprofessional Health Education, primarily an educational matter, whereas the College for Interdisciplinarity will focus on interdisciplinarity, which has a much larger research component.

29. Q: Why not just combine the two colleges?

A: This is a possibility, but it is a separate question that could be considered in due course if there is interest in the academic community in doing so. It is not part of the current plan, but the current plan in no way precludes such a future possibility and the Committee for Interdisciplinarity could play a useful role in facilitating such discussions.

30. Q: Where will the two schools currently in FoGS reside?

A: In the College for Interdisciplinary Studies, where they will operate in the same manner as before.

31. Q: Where will St. Johns and Green residential colleges reside?

A: In the Faculty of Graduate Studies, where they will operate in the same manner as before.

32. Q: Under the new plan, will the Institutes and Centres in the College still operate under the guidance of steering committees?

A: Yes, and one of the responsibilities of the Principal will be to ensure that these committees operate both efficiently and effectively to the benefit of the Centres and Institutes and the rest of the university.

33. Q: If we intend to foster interdisciplinarity campus-wide, why do we even need a College for Interdisciplinary Studies?

A: Perhaps one day we will not need a designated unit to support and nurture interdisciplinarity, and indeed it seems likely that we are moving in that general direction. But we are not nearly there yet. In the meantime, the College can help with the success of the units within it, and with more general appropriate support for interdisciplinarity

and the disciplinary strength that makes it possible.

34. Q: What are the powers of the Committee for Interdisciplinarity?

A: The Committee for Interdisciplinarity provides advice to the College (via the Principal) and to the Provost and will provide to the Office of the Provost recommendations regarding relevant policies for consideration by the Senate and Board of Governors, as appropriate.

35. Q: What types of issues will fall within the mandate of the Committee for Interdisciplinarity?

A: The committee will consider a wide range of interdisciplinary issues such as:

- development of goals and clear associated methods of assessment for the College and its programs, units and external interactions
- plans for tenure-track and other types of positions after future retirements/resignations
- funding mechanisms for interdisciplinary graduate students campus-wide in ways that are synergistic with disciplinary activity
- consideration, from the perspective of interdisciplinarity, of policies and procedures related to the enhancement of tenure/promotion practices
- design and implementation of fundraising models for interdisciplinary activity that optimize benefits to the university as a whole
- review, in a consultative, inclusive fashion, the existing practice for initiating interdisciplinary graduate and undergraduate programs and recommend in this regard appropriate policy/policy changes for Senate's consideration

As indicated in the proposal, the plan is for the College for Interdisciplinary Studies to be a flexible, evolving body governed by policies that support change, at an appropriate rate, over time. Any such changes would be made according to the normal UBC academic governance procedures.

36. Q: Will the role of the Committee for Interdisciplinarity interfere in any way with the role of Senate?

A: No. The Committee for Interdisciplinarity will be an advisory body delivering recommendations, not decisions. The Committee's recommendations will be presented for consideration to the Provost, and/or the relevant Senate Committees, Senate at large, and the Board of Governors, as appropriate.

37. Q: Will the Committee for Interdisciplinarity have any power over interdisciplinarity units lying outside the College for Interdisciplinary Studies?

A: Only indirectly through its advisory role to the Provost.

38. Q: What safeguards ensure that the Committee for Interdisciplinarity will act in the best interest of UBC?

A: The Committee will be composed of highly respected academic leaders who are known for their appropriate and careful decision making. And since the Committee is an advisory committee, its recommendations are subject to all the usual safeguards of our academic governance system.

39. Q: Why is there only one representative for Centres and Institutes within FoGS on the Committee for Interdisciplinarity?

A: The Committee membership is not assigned on a proportional representation basis, rather, much as in hiring selection committees, the goal is to have a representative for each stakeholder group. One such stakeholder group is the Institutes and Centres within FoGS and that is the reason that one member representing this group will be on the Committee.

40. Q: How will the representative from the Centres/Institutes/Schools in the College be selected to the Committee for Interdisciplinarity?

A: Appointments to the Committee will be made by the Provost on a term basis and over time appropriate successive appointments will be selected in a balanced, non-repetitive manner.

41. Q: If a group of faculty members wished to join, or leave, the College, how would this be considered?

A: This question would be considered by the Committee for Interdisciplinarity, which would assess the net benefit to UBC as a whole. The Committee and the Principal could present their findings to the Provost, and if appropriate, the Senate and Board of Governors.

42. Q: Is the Principal of the College more like an Associate Vice President or a Dean?

A: The Principal is different from both. Unlike a Dean, the Principal has a campus-wide academic responsibility as described in the proposal. Unlike an AVP, the Principal is directly responsible for the academic leadership of certain units. The similarity to both these roles is that the Principal will attend the Committee of Deans meetings and will be a highly respected and influential member of the academic community.

43. Q: What are the powers of the Principal of the College for Interdisciplinary Studies?

A: The Directors of the units in the College report to the Principal. The Principal in turn reports to the Provost and makes recommendations for resource allocation within the College and other administrative matters, based in part on recommendations from the Committee for Interdisciplinarity. The Provost will consider such recommendations and

if appropriate may take them forward for consideration by the Senate and/or Board of Governors.

44. Q: The Principal has a lot to achieve – how will this be done and with what resources?

A: The College will have its appropriate share of the current FoGS financial resources to fund activities within the College. The Principal's role outside the college primarily involves communication and persuasion, which will be augmented by the support of the influential Committee for Interdisciplinarity.

45. Q: How will the Principal be selected?

A: There will be a selection committee appointed according to UBC Policy. The search will be open to internal and external applicants. The search committee will ensure that there is a well formulated job description that articulates the important principles of this plan.

Except from Minutes of Senate for 17 October 2001:

Report of the Senate Academic Policy Committee on the Status of Institutes and Centres

Within the university, Institutes or Centres appear to fall, at present, into one of two categories: (1) Institutes or Centres that exist within one disciplinary Faculty, and (2) Institutes or Centres that represent an affiliation of Faculties across traditional Faculty boundaries, most often under the jurisdiction of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

This report sets out common characteristics of Institutes and Centres in Category 2, and recommends principles for their implementation, governance, review and closure. In this report the words Institute and Centre are used interchangeably. This report does not include a discussion of other frameworks such as "Laboratories" e.g. AMPEL and BIOTECH, or "Collaborations" e.g. CORD. Institutes or Centres at a graduate level may have the following characteristics:

- a. they foster ongoing graduate programs of collaborative research and teaching of an inter-Faculty, interdisciplinary nature, and serve as incubators for nurturing such programs;
- b. they bring together a critical mass of scholars from several disciplines and areas of specialization;
- c. they may exist for an extended period of time;
- d. they offer an institutional platform from which to apply for grant support or for financial support outside of UBC;
- e. they provide a means of fostering cooperation between scholars in the same research area at other universities, institutions, community, private sector, etc.;
- f. they provide a means to sponsor and organize interdisciplinary lectures, conferences, symposia, colloquia and workshops;
- g. they attract post-doctoral fellows, visiting professors, adjunct professors and other scholars wishing to undertake interdisciplinary research at UBC.

The Senate Academic Policy Committee, therefore, recommends:

A. Implementation

1. that proposals for inter-Faculty Institutes or Centres be initiated by a group of faculty and coordinated by the Deans of the proposing Faculties;
2. that an Implementation Committee to develop a new Institute or Centre include those faculty members expressing interest in an affiliation to develop an inter-Faculty Institute or Centre (the proposing Faculties), and other appropriate persons recommended by the Deans of the proposing Faculties;
3. that the Implementation Committee be chaired by a Dean of a proposing Faculty and determine an appropriate host faculty for the Institute or Centre, in many instances the Faculty of Graduate Studies;
4. that a proposal for a new inter-Faculty Institute or Centre developed by an Implementation Committee be reviewed by all Faculties, and the University Librarian, for overlap with existing initiatives, and consideration of complementary versus competitive or duplicative efforts in research, teaching and community linkages;
5. that a proposal for a new inter-Faculty Institute or Centre be approved by the Committee of Deans prior to submission to Senate;
6. that once approved by the Committee of Deans, a proposal for a new Centre or Institute go forward to Senate for academic approval.

B. Governance

1. that the governance of an inter-Faculty Institute or Centre be provided by a Steering-Advisory Committee of representatives from proposing Faculties, the Chair to be the Dean (or designate) of the host faculty (in many cases the Dean of Graduate Studies), and include the Director and other participants as deemed appropriate;
2. that the Steering-Advisory Committee have the following specific responsibilities: to recommend the appointment of a Director of the Institute or Centre on the advice of an appropriately constituted search committee; to provide the Dean of the host faculty and the Director with advice on the strategic direction and management of the Institute or Centre; to approve an annual report including a rolling three-year unit-based academic plan; to approve an annual budget; to consult with, and obtain the approval of, affiliated faculties on all matters pertaining to proposed teaching and/or degree programs;
3. that for most inter-faculty Institutes or Centres at the graduate level, the Director report to the Chair of the Steering Committee, in most cases the Dean of Graduate Studies;
4. that the regular review of an Institute or Centre conform to common university practice, and provide for the closure of an Institute or Centre, when appropriate;
5. that these recommendations come into force when a new Institute or Centre is proposed, and inform the review of an existing Institute or Centre.

The Senate Academic Policy Committee points out that adoption of the above recommendations would not prevent any Institute or Centre from becoming a Department, School or Faculty if Senate and the Board of Governors so decide.

Ad hoc Committee to Review U21 Global

STATUS REPORT

As Chair of the ad hoc Committee to Review U21 Global, Dr. Helsley delivered an oral status report on Committee activities. He noted that the final report of the ad hoc Committee was due at the May 2006 meeting, but that the Committee would appreciate additional time to conduct research.

<i>Dr. Helsley</i>	}	<i>That Senate extend the reporting deadline for the ad hoc Committee to Review U21 Global to the September 2006 regular meeting of the Senate.</i>
<i>Dr. Dean</i>		

Carried.

Report from the Vice-President, Academic & Provost

OPTIMIZING INTERDISCIPLINARITY AT UBC

Vice-President Whitehead had circulated for information a series of reports, collectively entitled "Optimizing Interdisciplinarity at UBC." The reports also contained recommendations about the future organization and leadership of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FoGS). The Chair recognized Dr. John Gosline to co-present the report. Vice-President Whitehead stated that, although he was presenting the report for information, discussion by the Senate would influence future decisions.

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Vice-President Whitehead noted that the Faculty of Graduate Studies had two different primary functions: (1) supporting graduate students and graduate education, and (2) administering centres and institutes that were interdisciplinary in nature. He noted that Dean Frieda Granot, who was to step down effective June 30, 2006, had done a tremendous job of building the Faculty.

Report from the Vice-President, Academic & Provost, continued

Vice-President Whitehead explained that, when he took office in July 2004, he conducted wide consultation in the academic community. Issues related to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and interdisciplinarity were frequently referenced in both positive and negative lights.

The Vice-President stated that Graduate Studies had been accorded status as a Faculty in 1949 to allow its Dean to serve as a member of Senate and to participate in deans' activities. Over time, however, the Faculty became the administrative home for units that were not easily placed elsewhere. Consultation conducted by the Committee of Deans and others indicated controversy about whether it remained optimal to have the Faculty of Graduate Studies continue to play its dual role, given the current size and scale of the institution.

In response to a June 2005 call for input from the academic community, the Vice-President had received over 100 thoughtful submissions. Respondents suggested some options, but no consensus emerged. The Vice-President proceeded to strike a committee, which was chaired by Dr. Herbert Rosengarten, to consider a suitable process for considering all points of view while moving forward in a fair, effective, and transparent manner. Upon advice of the Rosengarten committee, the Vice-President had held a public forum and asked Dr. John Gosline to chair a committee of interested research faculty members (rather than administrators) to consider whether a consensus could be reached.

Dr. Gosline gave an overview of the Interdisciplinarity Advisory Committee's activities. Following the public forum, the Advisory Committee met approximately twelve times and eventually unanimously approved the recommendations that appeared in the committee's final report. Dr. Gosline presented and commented on each of the Committee's recommendations.

Report from the Vice-President, Academic & Provost, continued

Recommendation 1: The Faculty of Graduate Studies should be dedicated to the development and support of high quality graduate programs at UBC.

Dr. Gosline stated that the separation of the 16 interdisciplinary (ID) units from FoGS would allow the Faculty to focus exclusively on graduate programs and graduate students. Locating the ID units in an administrative home outside FoGS could also enhance interdisciplinarity at the undergraduate level, which was not currently within the mandate of these units. The Advisory Committee had rejected the idea of creating a Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, as this would imply that interdisciplinarity did not exist in other Faculties.

Recommendation 2: An administrative unit, called the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (OIS), should be formed under the direction of a new Vice-President, Interdisciplinarity (VP-I).

Dr. Gosline stated that his committee recognized that the creation of a new vice-presidency might not be possible and explained that nevertheless the committee had proceeded with this recommendation as an indication of their view of the need to raise the profile of interdisciplinarity within the University's administrative hierarchy. The Committee had struggled at first to determine whether their recommendation for the leader would be a Vice-President or at a lower level, such as Associate Vice-President. A recommendation for a Vice-President was ultimately recommended because the Committee wished to place ID as high as possible in the reporting structure, in order to have more influence on resource allocation decisions.

Recommendation 3: With regard to fostering interdisciplinarity across campus, the committee recommends that all existing Faculties appoint an Associate Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies (AD-I), who would coordinate interdisciplinary activities within their Faculty and would also meet regularly with other AD-I's at an Interdisciplinary Council chaired by the VP-I.

Dr. Gosline stated that this recommendation aimed to address a perceived tension between FoGS ID units and disciplinary Faculties and to foster connections between Faculties.

Recommendation 4: The committee recommends that a new committee be struck to study and evaluate policies and procedures for the promotion and tenure of faculty who hold appointments in interdisciplinary units or whose research and teaching have a strong interdisciplinary component.

This would ensure that there is no penalty for or bias against interdisciplinary faculty in promotion and tenure decisions. The report stated that this work was essential, no matter where ID units were ultimately located.

Recommendation 5: The report should be circulated widely across campus before the Provost acts on these recommendations.

The report had been circulated to all faculty. Feedback was welcome either directly to the Advisory Committee or through Deans of Faculty.

Report from the Vice-President, Academic & Provost, continued

Vice-President Whitehead thanked Dr. Gosline and members of the Advisory Committee, as well as a large number of other volunteers. He also thanked Dean Frieda Granot for creating a foundation for a tremendous future. Senators applauded to express their appreciation for Dean Granot's longstanding contributions.

Vice-President Whitehead indicated that, overall, his reaction to the report had been very positive. With respect to separating the ID units from FoGS, the Vice-President noted that it would be important to maintain excellence in both of FoGS current roles. He indicated that this separation would result in little or no day-to-day change for faculty members or graduate students. The name of the proposed new structure and the title and reporting relationship for its leader were not yet clear. Vice-President Whitehead stated that the decision-making process was still very much underway and that his own views were flexible. In the spirit of openness, however, he felt it was appropriate to indicate his current preference, which would be not to create a new vice presidency but rather to have the leader of an office of interdisciplinarity reporting to the Vice President, Academic. He envisioned this leader as influential and respected, and helpful in supporting and coordinating interdisciplinarity across all Faculties.

The Vice-President cited some urgency to begin a search for a new dean for graduate programs and graduate students, considering that Dean Granot was to step down on June 30. The Vice-President stated that he had been reluctant to begin such a search before receiving and discussing the Advisory Committee's report.

The Vice-President stated that it would take more time to determine the appropriate title and reporting relationship for a leadership position in the area of interdisciplinarity and the appropriate home for the ID units. Vice-President Whitehead indicated that the way

Report from the Vice-President, Academic & Provost, continued

forward would become clear over the next two to six months, and that, depending on the decision taken, he would bring the matter to Senate for either discussion or approval.

COMMENTS FROM SENATORS

Academic Policy Committee Chair Dr. Harrison reported that the Committee had discussed the recommendations, and that the Committee had expressed general support for separating the Faculty as described in the report. There remained questions about the optimal academic governance structure and support for faculty members in ID units leaving FoGS, as well as concern about the costs involved in creating a new structure, if it were to include a vice-president, an office, and a council.

Interim Budget Committee Chair Dr. Brander stated that the Committee had met to consider the budgetary implications of the proposal. The Interim Budget Committee had also expressed strong support for the separation of the Faculty. The Committee agreed with the Vice-President that most of the desired changes could be effected on a cost-neutral basis. The Committee had discussed a possible decrease in certain economies of scale, but noted as well that certain coordination costs might be reduced through division of the two FoGS roles. One of the recommendations in the Gosline report, the creation of a vice-presidency, would likely add significant cost and was therefore not recommended. Committee members noted that such extra costs would probably reduce funds available for worthy initiatives elsewhere, and noted that the Committee and the Senate should carefully consider costs and associated trade-offs before proceeding. Dr. Brander expressed support for beginning the search for a new dean as soon as possible. He suggested that, once a plan for the ID units had been identified, Senate be offered the opportunity for further discussion and possible decision.

Report from the Vice-President, Academic & Provost, continued

Dr. Brander expressed personal reservations about the creation of a new vice-president. He cited possible confusion about the role of the Vice-President, Academic and the loss of the role of “referee” between deans that was currently performed by that position. Dr. Brander suggested that the new position be located within the portfolio of the Vice-President, Academic.

Dr. Windsor-Liscombe commended the Advisory Committee for its report. He stated that he had begun his own interdisciplinary work thanks to Dean Granot in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and noted his appreciation. He asked whether some of the issues identified in the report might be addressed through the Individual Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies Program, which had operated to date under a relative “lean” administrative structure. Having just completed a three-year term as chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Interdisciplinary Studies Committee, Dr. Windsor-Liscombe noted that there remained challenges in correctly defining ID work; many ID activities remained bounded within the humanities or within the sciences. He suggested that the University avoid an administratively “top-heavy” ID structure.

Dr. McAfee recalled that she had completed an interdisciplinary Ph.D. thirty years earlier, when ID programs remained unofficial and “below the radar.” She requested additional information about the budgetary impact of next steps, as well as how future plans would affect students.

Vice-President Whitehead stated that one theme from student feedback collected to date was concern that the special character of ID units housed within FoGS and the support provided by FoGS would be lost in the transition. He expressed the hope that the opposite would occur, i.e., that a new leader for ID would serve as a champion for interdisciplinarity across campus.

Report from the Vice-President, Academic & Provost, continued

In response to a question from Mr. Brady, Vice-President Whitehead confirmed that he was aware of models in place at other universities, including McGill University and Duke University. He stated that many other institutions looked to UBC as a leader in the administration of graduate studies.

Dr. Bluman expressed concern about possible problems that could arise related to joint appointment of faculty members.

Dean Isaacson stated that the creation of a vice-president, an office, and the associate dean positions would be very expensive, and urged Senate and the University to consider the budgetary impact of these proposals. He was also uncertain as to whether relocating ID units in another area reporting to the Vice-President Academic would solve current problems or show advantages over the current structure. Dean Isaacson also noted that there was wide variety among the centres and institutes within FoGS and that the same arrangement may not be best for all of them. He added that approval of the Senate would be required to alter the governance structure of these units, and that degree-granting authority would need to be considered. Although he understood the urgency to appoint a new dean, Dean Isaacson expressed concern that moving ahead in this area would imply approval to proceed with the reorganization of the ID units. He asked whether Senate might consider a motion related to governance changes at its May 2006 meeting.

Dr. Arneil agreed that a “one size fits all” model for relocating ID units would not be optimal. She also spoke against the creation of a vice-presidency that would compete with the Vice-President, Academic.

Mr. Jeff Friedrich, Vice-President Academic of the Alma Mater Society, requested and received recognition by the Chair to address the Senate. He had served as a member of the Advisory Committee, and stated that his goal had been to help create recommendations

Report from the Vice-President, Academic & Provost, continued

that embedded interdisciplinarity as a core value. He suggested that the ID leadership position be ranked at least the level of associate vice-president to ensure that students in ID units did not lose their champion and advocate. Mr. Friedrich suggested that degrees could be granted through the Faculty of Graduate Studies, as they had been in the past.

Dean Muzyka spoke in support of separating FoGS while retaining a dean for graduate students. He expressed concern about conceptually locating interdisciplinarity in one administrative unit, and urged the University to consider a more integrated model for change and development. He spoke against the creation of a new vice-president. He recommended that the Vice-President proceed to fill the position of dean as soon as possible, but exercise caution in reorganizing ID units to avoid the proliferation of administrative structures.

Dean Gallini spoke in favour of the separation of FoGS. She noted that Dean Granot had done a remarkable job in securing funding while also performing her many other duties on behalf of the Faculty. Dean Gallini expressed reservations about the new administrative structure for ID units. She spoke against the creation of a vice-presidency, based on concern that splitting the Vice-President, Academic portfolio would create administrative silos rather than foster cooperation. She preferred instead one vice-president, who could continue to push for excellence in all areas of the academic portfolio. She added that the approximately 20 interdisciplinary programs in the Faculty of Arts were under resourced, and that increased emphasis on interdisciplinarity at UBC might ameliorate that situation. Dean Gallini suggested that some of the ID units might merge or organize themselves differently within a broader administrative structure, and urged careful consideration.

Dr. Helsley spoke in favour of decentralization of ID units to encourage ID activity, as opposed to the creation of an administrative superstructure.

Report from the Vice-President, Academic & Provost, continued

Dr. Thorne spoke in support of the proposal, but noted that not all of the units in question held interdisciplinarity as a core value, and urged the Vice-President to consider each of the them individually in planning next steps.

Ms. Friesen drew attention to the fact that the UBC Library provided services to both undergraduate and graduate students in an interdisciplinary manner.

The President thanked Vice-President Whitehead and Dr. Gosline for their report. Vice-President Whitehead stated that he looked forward to reporting back to the Senate as plans moved forward. He thanked Dean Granot for serving as a catalyst for change and for fostering the kind of environment that allowed the University to stimulate interdisciplinarity.

Other Business

ORIENTATION FOR SENATORS

Mr. Brady recalled that the ad hoc Committee for the Review of Senate had proposed the development of an orientation for new Senators. He suggested that organization charts for the University administration be provided as part of the orientation.

Ms. Collins spoke about the status of the development of orientation programming. She noted that Secretariat had compiled and begun circulating a package of orientation materials for new Senators, and that the Secretariat team planned future work with the Agenda Committee to create an orientation session.