

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



December 3, 2007

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To: Senate
c/o Lisa Collins, Assistant Registrar, Senate and Curriculum Services

From: David H. Farrar
Provost and Vice President Academic

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'DA', followed by a horizontal line.

Re: **Report to Senate on Initiatives in Graduate Education**

I recommend that Senate receive for information the following Report to Senate on Initiatives in Graduate Education. During the past year, a number of very promising developments in support of graduate education and research at UBC have come to fruition. This report will summarize the highlights.

1. New Leadership. UBC welcomes its new Dean of the Faculty Graduate Studies, Dr. Barbara Evans who arrived in Vancouver last month. Dr. Evans brings a wealth of experience to this position, including a strong background in identifying and adopting the best practices in graduate education in order to assure the best outcomes for our students.

2. New graduate spaces. Graduate enrollment in the four major universities in BC has steadily increased during the past decade. The University Presidents, among others, have persistently advocated for an increase in the number of funded graduate places (or FTEs) to meet this obvious demand. Nonetheless, apart from several very specific initiatives, the focus of the Ministry of Advanced Education has been creating new undergraduate seats and on expanding education in the health professions. To its credit, the Ministry has now addressed the need to create more opportunities for graduate education and has funded 2500 new seats over a four year period starting on July 1, 2007. UBC's share will be 1250 seats, most of which are valued at \$20,000 per seat. The major share of the new revenue will be transferred to the Faculties and is expected to be used in support of graduate students and graduate programs.

The new seats are targeted towards provincial priorities including: Life Sciences, Technology, Clean Technology, Natural Resources, Aboriginal students, Asia-Pacific Studies, and Science & Engineering in Business. Nonetheless, all the Faculties at UBC will be able to participate in and benefit from this initiative. The actual allocation of seats by Faculty will be developed by the Graduate Task Force in consultation with the Faculties in light of data about enrollment, the performance and outcomes of graduate programs as demonstrated through the measures suggested in the draft Academic Planning Template.

3. The Pacific Century Graduate Scholarships. These *new* awards are \$10,000 Scholarships funded by the Province of British Columbia for the period from 2007 to 2011. The total value to UBC over the first four years of this program will be \$5.7 million. These merit-based graduate scholarships will be awarded through the annual university-wide adjudicated competition for University Graduate Fellowships and tri-agency scholarships. They may be renewed for a second year if the student retains good academic standing. Winners of this award also receive a partial University Graduate Fellowship for a combined total value of \$17,000. The net effect of this valuable program is to increase the number of scholarships funded from the UGF competition by about 80 per year.

4. The MITACS Graduate Internship Program. In June, the Ministry of Advanced Education announced \$10 million for a major expansion of the MITACS Internship Program. This funding launched *ACCELERATE BC – BC's Graduate Research Internship Program*, expanding it to include all university Faculties and disciplines in the province. Because of this new funding, 650 internships will be offered in BC from 2007 to 2011. ACCELERATE BC connects BC companies with the research expertise within the province's universities. Graduate student interns, under the supervision of a university faculty supervisor, undertake a four or eight month project which investigates a research challenge experienced by a partner company. Half of the intern's time is spent on site with the partner company, interacting with staff, collecting data and furthering their understanding of the challenge. The remainder of the intern's time is spent at his/her home university, developing a new tool, technique, methodology or solution to the partner company's research challenge. Companies benefit from accessing the vast intellectual capital within the province's universities while connecting with potential future employees. Graduate interns benefit from the opportunity to apply their research skills to real-world challenges.

5. The Graduate Support Initiative (GSI). The GSI is a new system for funding graduate students that adheres to six principles summarized in the accompanying report "Principles and Guidelines." It maintains the current level of support as a minimum, but offers greater flexibility and wider eligibility while supporting excellence. The GSI will gradually replace the current Ph.D. Tuition Award program and will be worth a minimum of \$10.8 million when it is fully implemented in 2012.

Faculties will enjoy considerable flexibility to suit the needs of their programs. At least four types of programs will be eligible to qualify for GSI funds: entrance awards, multi-year awards, tuition awards, and top-ups of competitive external scholarships.

6. The Ph.D. Tuition Award. The current system of providing a Ph.D. tuition award is being phased out over a five year period ending on August 31, 2012. During this period, all students registered in a graduate program by September 30, 2007 will retain their eligibility for the existing tuition award. As students complete their eligibility, the funds so released will be transferred to the GSI program.

Graduate Support Initiative (GSI) Awards

Principles and Guidelines

Underlying principles

In response to campus discussions about the replacement of the PhD tuition fee award program, a task force on graduate student strategy considered this issue in some detail. It agreed with the general consensus that the PhD Tuition Awards should be phased out and replaced with a more viable and sustainable means of graduate student support.

The Graduate Student Strategy Task Force developed a set of six principles to guide the development of the new graduate awards.

- 1) Support level. The total amount of annual University support for graduate students should be maintained, at a minimum, at the 2007/08 level.
- 2) Elimination of negative incentive. Faculty contributions to the PhD Tuition Fee Award, was perceived as a disincentive to graduate student admission and should be eliminated.
- 3) Flexibility. Considerations of effectiveness, timeliness, and efficiency argue in favour of Faculty-by-Faculty determination of the optimal arrangements with respect to graduate student support.
- 4) Recruitment and Excellence. Graduate student support programs should focus on recruiting excellent students and ensuring the conditions for their success.
- 5) Simplicity. UBC's programs of graduate student support should be simple to administer and the number of distinct funding programs should be minimized.
- 6) Grandparenting. The current Ph.D. Tuition Award program will be phased out over the next four years. All students currently eligible for that award will be "grandparented" for the duration of their eligibility. Complete details regarding eligibility for the PhD Tuition Fee Award may be found at the following link.
<http://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/index.asp?menu=005.000.000.000>

The Graduate Support Initiative (GSI) Award Guidelines

The Graduate Support Initiative is a new system for funding graduate students that adheres to the guiding principles. It allows for a flexible and recurring source of funding that each Faculty can use to support their graduate students in ways that meet their individual needs.

Requests to allocate GSI awards outside these general parameters should be referred to the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. GSI cannot be used as payment for employment; nor to replace funding for TA-ships. Students enrolled in professional, full-cost recovery Master's programs are not eligible.

***Caveat:** Given the short time frame to develop these guidelines it is recommended they be reviewed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Senate Student Awards Committee after the first year.*

a) Types of Awards

There are four possible types of GSI Awards that could be established by a Faculty and/or Graduate Program:

1. Entrance awards
2. Multi-year funding awards
3. Tuition awards
4. Scholarship top-up awards

b) Eligibility

All domestic and international students who are registered full-time in the following degree programs could be eligible for the Graduate Support Initiative funding within their Faculty:

- PhD
- DMA
- Research-based Master's (course-based or thesis-based)

With respect to time in program (months of graduate study), eligibility for GSI Awards should follow existing Faculty of Graduate Studies practice, complete details of which may be found at the following link.

<http://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/index.asp?menu=004,003,000,000>

Each Faculty or functional equivalent (and/or their respective Graduate Programs) will establish and publish the particular criteria by which the GSI funds will be allocated after prior endorsement from the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

All eligible graduate students currently within a Graduate Program will be sent written information on the criteria for GSI Awards in their program. Applicants to eligible programs will be alerted to GSI funding opportunities and criteria through websites, publications and in response to formal applications for admission.

c) Roles and Responsibilities

Provost's Office

On an annual basis, beginning in the 2008-09 budget year, the Provost's Office will allocate to each Faculty (or functional equivalent) their portion of the GSI funding available based on a three year rolling average of their weighted Graduate FTE enrolments. The weightings will be: 4 for PhD students, 2 for Research Masters and 1 for course work Masters (excluding full cost-recovery programs). Each Faculty (or

functional equivalent) will be advised of their overall weighted FTE allocation as part of the overall budget allocation process.

Faculties and Graduate Programs

Once allocated their overall share of GSI funding, each Faculty or functional equivalent will determine annual allocations for their graduate programs and inform them as such. It is the responsibility of all Faculties and Graduate Programs to advise and seek approval of the Faculty of Graduate Studies of their published criteria for these awards. This oversight role will help to ensure consistency of practice across UBC.

Faculty of Graduate Studies

The Faculty of Graduate Studies will administer these funds on behalf of the entire UBC community. This will streamline procedures, ensure the funds are paid to the students in the most efficient and timely manner, and allow for streamlined reporting of budget, usage and statistics to the Board of Governors and the Graduate Student Society. The Faculty of Graduate Studies will also play an oversight role to ensure funds are awarded according to the criteria established by the responsible Faculty and/or Graduate Program.

d) Procedures

1. On an annual basis, the Provost's Office will inform each Faculty (or functional equivalent) and the Faculty of Graduate Studies of their GSI allocations.
2. On an annual basis each Faculty Dean's Office or their functional equivalent will inform the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the GSI allocation for each of their Graduate Programs.
3. Graduate Programs select graduate students for nomination and complete a University Award Recommendation Form for each award nomination. This form is available on the Faculty of Graduate Studies' Faculty/Staff Forms page.
4. Recommendation Forms for GSI Awards are forwarded to the Faculty of Graduate Studies – Dean's Office for processing.
5. Faculty of Graduate Studies will assign awards on the Student Information System. Graduate Awards are paid out in September, January and May. Please refer to <http://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/index.asp?menu=004,010,000,000> for detailed information on payment procedures and existing Senate Regulations on Graduate Awards.