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Report of the Review Committee of the School of Graduate Studies

Concordia University

Office of the Vice-President,
Research and Graduate Studies

January 2008

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REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Concordia University

INTRODUCTION

Concordia University is poised to become one of Canada's leading universities. The vision for Concordia, as outlined in *Moving Ahead*, is to be a leader in overall excellence in teaching, research and service to society. Although Concordia programs and professors are enjoying national and international reputations for excellence in teaching and research, Concordia must now place greater emphasis on graduate education and the research environment if we are to meet the expectations of new and changing demographics and potential new faculty with far-reaching research and teaching/mentoring profiles. Concordia's move towards an increase in research and graduate activity may necessitate some changes in the way graduate programs and services are administered and legislated. The School of Graduate Studies will play a critical role in the fulfillment of the vision for Concordia. In view of the planned growth and development at the graduate level, Dr. Louise Dandurand, Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, has initiated a University-wide consultative process to inform the strategic development of a School of Graduate Studies that is responsive to the future needs of the Concordia community.

HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The Board of Graduate Studies at Sir George Williams University was created in June 1964, the forerunner of the present SGS that was established in 1992. The academic authority of SGS rests with its Council, which has powers conferred by Senate and approved by the Board of Governors: the Council membership includes representatives from all Faculties and has historically been chaired by a Dean of Graduate Studies (up until May 31, 2007). In its 38 years of existence, graduate studies has only seen five Deans, the past three Deans remaining in office for one term only. From 1997 to 2002, research administration (Research Office and post-doctoral fellows government reporting), was under the supervision of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, but that was changed at the end of the term of the Dean in 2002. In 2002 the mandate of the Dean of Graduate Studies was restored to its original portfolio of Graduate Studies only, and remained as such until May 31st, 2007. In September 2006, the Board of Governors abolished the position of Dean of Graduate Studies, effective May 31, 2007. Since then, the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies has formally assumed all responsibilities formerly allotted to the function of the Dean, including chairing the Council of the School of Graduate Studies.

MISSION AND CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

As stated in the Concordia Graduate Calendar, the current Mission Statement of the School is:

The School of Graduate Studies provides leadership and support to the University community in its quest for the advancement of knowledge and academic achievement. It promotes creative initiatives in scholarly research, artistic expression, teaching and training. The School fosters an inclusive, pluralistic perspective and it upholds high standards across all graduate programs at Concordia. In its pursuit of excellence, the School advocates an open and flexible approach to graduate education.

In the fulfillment of its mission, the School of Graduate Studies has been mandated to undertake responsibilities in a number of academic and administrative areas. Those current responsibilities are listed below.

ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES	FUNCTIONS				
	LEGISLATIVE	ADVISORY	TRAINING	PROCESSING	LIAISON/PROMOTION
	Curriculum	Curriculum	Graduate Programs Directors (GPD's)	Calendar	Recruitment
	New Programs	New programs	GPD Assistants	Awards Directory	Enrolment Services/GSST
	Interdisciplinary programs (SIP)	Admissions	Admissions Representatives	Awards database	Admissions Working Group
	Program suspension	Registration	Student Orientation	Awards (Internal and External)	Student Accounts
	Standards	Tuition		Student requests	Electronic Thesis
	Non-standard admissions	Doctoral defences		Student progress	GPD's
	Academic Code	Graduate Programs Directors (GPD's)		MA thesis	Centre for Teaching and Learning Services (CTLs)
	Student progress	Supervisors		PhD thesis	Ombuds Office
	Fellowships			Publications	Concordia International
	Prizes			Graduation	Communications
	Graduation			Thesis Directory	Advancement
	Appeals			Postdocs	<u>OTHER INTERNAL BODIES</u>
				Website	Faculty Councils - Associate Deans Research and Graduate Studies
				International Student Exchanges (ISEP)	Student Council
				Inter-University (INTU)	Senate
					Senate Research Committee
					SCAPP
					APC
					<u>EXTERNAL BODIES</u>
					ADESAQ, CAGS, CREPUQ/MELS
					Granting Councils

Table 1: Current Roles and Responsibilities of the School of Graduate Studies

MANDATE OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

On June 27, 2007, the newly appointed Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies convened a Committee to review the roles and responsibilities of the School of Graduate Studies. The Committee membership comprised Associate Deans from each of the Faculties and Schools, faculty members from each Faculty/School with experience in the administration of graduate programs, the Executive Director of Enrolment Services, the Executive Provost, the Associate Vice-President International and a graduate student. In the past seven months, the Review Committee assessed the functions and mandate of the School, including but not limited to, academic functions such as new program and curriculum advising, graduate standards, academic community liaison and mentoring, as well as interdisciplinary program development and administration; administrative functions such as recruitment, admissions, thesis submissions and defences, student funding, retention and graduation were also discussed. The membership and meeting schedule of the Review Committee are attached as Appendices A and B.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

These findings are the result of input from the University at large, as well as intensive discussions by the Committee. A “Call for Comments” was disseminated University-wide in mid-August 2007 to consult with the various stakeholders of Concordia University. Parties were given one month to respond to the call (see Appendix C). In addition to comments received from the University-wide consultation (see Appendix D for synthesis of comments), the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science held Faculty-based meetings to obtain additional input from faculty members¹. Besides the comments received from the above-mentioned sources, Committee discussions as well as individual Committee member input was examined and considered for the final Committee recommendations.

While the Committee read and heard different views about the governance, roles and responsibilities of the School, there were also some recurrent themes. The persistent theme was that a strong School of Graduate Studies is essential if Concordia University is to become one of the leading universities in Canada or in North America. Most Committee members agreed that the administration and management of graduate studies must be highly visible and that the School should have the increased authority necessary to advance graduate education at Concordia. Predominant themes included governance, standards and practices, policy development and adherence, program development, recruitment, international initiatives, admissions, interdisciplinary studies, graduate student funding, liaison and collaboration, training, and monitoring.

¹ Original reports from the respective Faculties available upon request

Governance

Most comments on the subject of governance highlighted the need for a Dean of Graduate Studies (or equivalent), with a strong academic background which includes a proven track-record in research and graduate education. Although it was alluded that the Dean should report to the Provost (as has been the tradition at Concordia), the Committee agreed that the Dean should report to the newly created position of Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, now with its own distinct portfolio. Participants also felt that the structure of the Office of the Dean and Associate Vice-President should be comparable with that in existence in the Faculties, namely comprising Associate Deans responsible for different aspects of the mandate of the School of Graduate Studies. The office of the Dean should be staffed in such a way as to support the School's academic mandate and to minimize its administrative overhead. It was reiterated that the Council of the School of Graduate Studies is the appropriate forum for faculty members and students to review, discuss and approve the policies and actions pertaining to graduate studies. Although a review of the Council membership was also suggested, discussions regarding the Council of the School of Graduate Studies concluded that the Council should remain as currently structured, with minor editorial changes to its *Powers of Council* (current Powers attached as Appendix E).

Standards and Practices

It was suggested that a major responsibility of the School should continue to be the development of appropriately high standards and good practices in graduate education. Furthermore, it was agreed that the School should be given the authority and support necessary to ensure that graduate academic rules and regulations are streamlined in the departments and faculties, and that the academic standards of the University are maintained and applied.

Policy Development and Adherence

In addition to ensuring that University-wide policies regarding graduate studies at Concordia are adhered to, some participants added that the School should be responsible for developing standard policies governing the University's relationships with postdoctoral fellows. Furthermore, policies and procedures to ensure quality of graduate supervision, quality of teaching in graduate courses, and the overall quality of the experience of graduate students are also essential.

Program Development

The theme of program development was discussed at length by the Committee as it was an area of focus among many respondents to the "Call for Comments". The Committee meeting held on November 6, 2007 was, to a large extent, dedicated to the examination of "program issues" whereby a special subcommittee broke out to discuss and analyze the different comments received from the University-wide consultation, with the intent of formulating practical recommendations pertaining to program development. In general, the view is that the School has a role to play with regards to the development of new graduate programs, which includes program appraisals. While some felt that the School had a major role to play with regards to creation and development of new graduate programs including subsequent program reviews and follow-up, many felt that the School's role should be limited to that of advisor and facilitator, with emphasis at the initial stages of program development. It was also stated

that the School take on the responsible role (in collaboration with the Office of Research) of identifying significant niches of expertise possessing an inherent capacity for growth and development, and that could serve as justification for the potentiality of new graduate program development.

Recruitment

Comments received also included recommendations with regards to recruitment activities. Some members felt that the School of Graduate Studies should assist programs with recruitment. Imaginative recruitment strategies developed in concert with the departments and faculty members could be facilitated by the School of Graduate Studies and in cooperation with Enrolment Services. Furthermore, it was suggested that SGS work with Enrolment Services and Faculties to develop a functional, high impact policy on recruitment funding for incoming students.

International Initiatives

There was a consensus that the School should play an important role in the internationalization of graduate studies. For example, the School could help with the design/development of international graduate programs, while responsibility for academic content would continue to reside within the Faculties. Also, as Concordia admits an increasing number of international students, review of documentation is a serious concern that requires a high level of expertise, which the School of Graduate Studies already possesses. The School should also be participating actively in provincial, national and international debates/policy discussions and reporting back to the University community about wider trends in international graduate education, and administrative practices. Promotion of international graduate student exchanges was also deemed appropriate as a function for the School of Graduate Studies, in cooperation with Concordia International and the Faculties, especially with the increase in international research funding opportunities.

Admissions

According to many members and contributors, the decision to decentralize the admission process was made hastily and without proper consultation or study of the implications of this decision. Concordia is one of the very few institutions in the country without a centralized unit to review admission decisions. While there were pros and cons associated with the decentralization, it was generally agreed that further development of the Student Information Management System (SIMS) is necessary in order to address issues related specifically to the graduate admissions process. The VPRGS informed the Committee that an external consultant had been retained to study the complete graduate admissions process, and that a final report had been submitted.

Interdisciplinary Studies

Participants felt that the School should be responsible for the promotion and regulation of existing and new interdisciplinary graduate programs, and should continue in its current administrative role with the Special Individualized Programs (SIP). There was a general appreciation that SGS had a role to play in interdisciplinary and inter-faculty programs. The School could identify for Faculties areas of common research interests which could lead to collaborative graduate programs. However, while the vast majority felt that it would be

important for a number of interdisciplinary graduate programs (particularly those which include more than one faculty) to remain the responsibility of the School, some felt that some interdepartmental graduate programs would be best housed within a Faculty.

Graduate Student Funding

The goal of providing adequate guaranteed funding to all doctoral students is essential to establishing Concordia as among the leading universities and remaining competitive with Universities in other provinces and countries. It was expressed by several Committee members and in written comments, that the current level of funding is not competitive and that the adjudication system for internal awards falls short of serving the recruitment needs of departments and programs. There was concern expressed that the programs' inability to make funding offers at the time of admissions hinders the programs' competitive edge with those institutions that make funding offers at the time of admission. There was support for the idea of transferring a pool of internal fellowship funds to the departments for them to use on their schedule. There was recognition and general acceptance that mechanisms must be in place to ensure that the limited number of available internal awards be competitive in nature on an excellence basis across the University.

Liaison and Collaboration

Members felt strongly about the importance of finding a mechanism for strengthening liaison among the graduate programs, particularly among the departments, the interdisciplinary programs, and the SGS. Furthermore, it was expressed that liaison with the different University stakeholders, constituents, and non-academic units involved in planning and operations is equally important. Liaison and relationship issues were discussed at length by Committee members as graduate studies activities span numerous units and departments in the University. One example is the administrative interface between SGS and Enrolment services which calls for collaboration on the one hand, and delineation of roles and responsibilities on the other hand. Members felt that the relationship between the Faculties and the School also requires clarification, a process that would be aided by a clearer mandate for the responsibilities and vision of SGS. Equally important is the building of consensus between departments and between Faculties on the role, standards, and policies concerning graduate students and the variety of graduate programs offered. Participants also mentioned that creating stronger links with the Graduate Program Directors and program assistants would be invaluable in helping graduate programs to function more effectively. Some even suggested that the Office of Research and School of Graduate Studies be reintegrated so that they can support one another. The argument was that as Concordia is moving towards becoming a more research intensive university, the promotion and support for research for both faculty and graduate students is one of the major challenges of the next five years, which calls for a convergent and a collaborative approach among the different units in defining institutional goals and strategies.

Training

Most participants agreed that the School should provide leadership, facilitation, consultation, education, and training on general aspects of graduate studies. In addition to GPD training, student orientation events, and other workshops currently offered by the School, participants suggested that the School be involved in the organization of high-profile

lectures/workshops/seminars that would address issues in graduate education. Furthermore, the School should also be providing graduating students with advice on making the transition to the job market. Some participants mentioned that more training for graduate supervisors would also be beneficial.

Analysis

Finally, a consistent theme throughout the Review Committee's discussions was the expressed need for a developed monitoring role for the School. It was agreed that the School should be responsible for continually monitoring the graduate landscape within and outside Canada, to ensure that Concordia's development builds upon and outranks the trends from on-going initiatives and practices in other institutions and in other countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Committee of the School of Graduate Studies looked at the Mission, Mandate, and issues pertaining to Governance, as well as roles and responsibilities. Recommendations pertaining to the Mission and the Mandate are accompanied by proposed texts, while the Committee's views on Governance, roles and responsibilities unfold in a set of overarching and specific recommendations.

MISSION, MANDATE, AND GOVERNANCE

MISSION STATEMENT

Given that the Mission Statement should reflect the goals and values of the Unit:

<i>The Committee recommends that the Mission Statement of the School of Graduate Studies be updated in order to better affirm the School's values and leadership role.</i>	Recommendation 1
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The new proposed Mission Statement for the School is as follows:

The School of Graduate Studies provides academic leadership and administrative support in fulfillment of Concordia University's commitment to deliver high-quality education to graduate students. Working closely with departments in and across all Faculties, the School fosters the continued success of existing programs and promotes the development of new programs that will attract top students both nationally and internationally.

By valuing the integrity of different forms of knowledge acquisition and production from research and artistic creation to professional training and accreditation, the School serves as a hub for innovative thinking about how best to enrich the quality of graduate students' experiences at all levels. Through its dedication to program excellence, as well as in its responsibility for ensuring the highest standards of teaching, supervision, and research training, the School affirms the vital contribution that graduate studies make to the advancement of knowledge and betterment of society.

MANDATE

Given that there is no printed mandate currently on record for the School of Graduate Studies, and that the general mandate is only found within the mandate of the unit head, who historically has been a Dean:

<i>The Committee recommends that a Mandate of the School of Graduate Studies reflecting the new and/or revised roles and responsibilities of the School be officially placed on record.</i>	Recommendation 1a
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The proposed specifics of the Mandate for the School are:

1. Provides advice on best practices on all matters pertaining to graduate education.
2. Ensures that all admissions criteria and decisions meet University standards;
3. Monitors student performance and completion rates, and determines remedial actions or discontinuance;
4. Establishes graduate student supervision standards;
5. Monitors the thesis defence process and ensures that standards are upheld;
6. Ensures that all Calendar regulations are followed as students progress from admission through their programs to graduation;
7. Organizes and adjudicates competitions for all internal and external merit-based awards; retains records of competitions and results; administers payments; liaises with national and provincial granting agencies;
8. Assists students, faculty members and graduate program directors resolve individual and systemic problems in all areas;
9. Advises on and administers the development and approval of new graduate programs; advises on and approves program and curriculum changes;
10. Administers and supports special arrangements programs (e.g. SIP) and post-doctoral fellows;
11. Convenes regular meetings of its Council, who in turn will deliberate and pronounce on policies related to the mandate;
12. Participates in University governance through membership on Senate and various Senate Committees;
13. Monitors and benchmarks trends and practices in graduate education throughout the Canadian and international landscapes in order to ensure that Concordia positions itself as an innovative and dynamic graduate institution;

GOVERNANCE

There was consensus among Committee members that in order for the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies to fulfil her mandate, it was deemed necessary that the School be headed by a senior academic, with a title reflecting established ties to academia, as well as administrative authority.

In keeping with the practice of almost every Canadian university surveyed, where the School or Faculty of Graduate Studies is headed by a Dean or equivalent and given the fact that the decision to abolish the previous position of Dean of Graduate Studies was made before the commencement of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies' term on November 1, 2006:

<i>The Committee recommends the establishment of the position of Dean and Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies, reporting to the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies.</i>	Recommendation 2
<i>The Committee further recommends that the position of Dean and Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies be a searched position following the rules and procedures for the appointment of senior administrators as established by the Board of Governors.</i>	Recommendation 2a

Each of the Faculties/Schools has a Council which links the academic units and the University Senate. It is at Councils that all major academic and strategic decisions are discussed for eventual approval and implementation. Given that the School of Graduate Studies has a Council which acts according to its Board of Governors approved Powers of Council (attached as appendix E):

<i>The Committee recommends that the current Powers of Council of the Council of the School of Graduate Studies be retained.</i>	Recommendation 3
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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The review and examination of the roles and responsibilities of the School of Graduate Studies resulted in a set of overarching recommendations (Recommendations 4, 5, and 5a), followed by more specific recommendations (Recommendations 6 – 13) linked to the functions of the School (as presented in Table 1).

OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee examined in detail the existing functions of the School and its administrative units. Discussions focused on the enhancements and strengthening of the School's current activities, as well as additional responsibilities and new initiatives that should be undertaken to foster excellence and achievement of full potential of the School of Graduate Studies. In light of the discussions that ensued:

<i>The Committee recommends that the School's current roles and responsibilities in the legislative, advisory, training, processing, and liaison/promotion functions be maintained or enhanced.</i>	Recommendation 4
<i>The Committee recommends that the School undertake the added strategic function of "monitoring and analysis" of the internal and the external graduate studies landscape.</i>	Recommendation 5
<i>The Committee recommends that the School be provided with the necessary resources (whether financial or personnel) for building and maintaining high-level analysis and liaison capabilities.</i>	Recommendation 5a

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Legislative Function

Concerning graduate admissions, the Vice President, Research and Graduate Studies, and Chair of the Review Committee of the School of Graduate Studies informed the Committee that an external consultant had been retained to study the complete graduate admissions process, and that a report² had been submitted in this regard. The report highlighted several strengths and weaknesses of Concordia's graduate admissions process, and concluded that the graduate admissions process at Concordia lacks "ownership", which can hinder operational

² Report available upon request

efficiencies and prevent University-wide coherence in processes, standards, and strategies. Given that there was consensus among Committee members not to consider re-centralization:

<i>The Committee recommends that the School be designated as having overall responsibility for graduate admissions, defining the process, the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, setting and monitoring performance targets, and developing and implementing improvement plans.</i>	Recommendation 6
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<i>The Committee further recommends that the School be responsible for the establishment, enforcement, and monitoring of graduate admissions standards.</i>	Recommendation 6a
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Given the experience of the School in student affairs and given the importance of keeping a neutral unit mandated to work collaboratively with programs to develop and implement norms, strategies and processes, facilitating the student trajectory from admission to graduation:

<i>The Committee recommends that the School be given the full authority for the development of appropriate strategies, policies and procedures to ensure the monitoring and improvement of academic standing, the quality of students' experience, the timely and equitable administration of students' requests.</i>	Recommendation 7
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<i>The Committee recommends that the School continue to administer the Academic Code of Conduct for all graduate students and that the School be fully responsible for maintaining standards of academic integrity at the graduate level.</i>	Recommendation 7a
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Advisory

Given the importance of keeping the graduate programs in line with market needs, disciplinary paradigm shifts, national and international trends in graduate education, and the necessity to seize opportunities to occupy specific niches, graduate program development and appraisal is a challenge in a growing university. Given that the School has the expertise to help the faculty with the process of creating new programs and vetting them through the internal and external approval stages:

<i>The Committee recommends that the School play an enlarged advisory role in the initial stages of Program Development and in its liaison role with the external review bodies.</i>	Recommendation 8
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<i>The Committee recommends that the School play a more proactive role and be fully involved in the ongoing appraisals of existing graduate programs and their follow-up.</i>	Recommendation 8a
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Given the competition to attract top-level graduate students, and given the specificity of graduate students' expectations with respect to curriculum and to the research training possibilities:

<i>The Committee recommends that the School play a key role in the development and implementation of graduate student recruitment planning and strategies.</i>	Recommendation 9
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Processing

Establishing Concordia as a leading comprehensive university and remaining competitive with Universities in other provinces and countries is of utmost importance. Given the current limited envelope to centrally support graduate students and given the imperative to ensure the maximum impact on student recruitment, retention, and time to completion:

<i>The Committee recommends that the School continue to develop and implement funding strategies for the allocation of internal fellowships, and that processes of adjudication should be further examined in the light of the different internal and external funding opportunities.</i>	Recommendation 10
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Given that postdoctoral scholars are a crucial asset to educational institutions and given that more emphasis needs to be placed on attracting and mentoring young researchers who will on the one hand contribute to our research endeavours and on the other hand serve as future Concordia ambassadors:

<i>The Committee recommends that the School be responsible for the development and implementation of a University-wide postdoctoral recruitment and administrative service.</i>	Recommendation 11
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Liaison/Promotion

Given the growing emphasis on the inter-disciplinary approach to learning and research, and given the School's experience with the unique Special Individualized Program (SIP):

<i>The Committee recommends that the School promote and regulate inter-disciplinary and cross-Faculty graduate programs.</i>	Recommendation 12
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Given the growth of the graduate cohort and the increasingly complex nature of research training, and given the need for a convergent and collaborative institutional approach to sustain the quality of the graduate environment, from recruitment to graduation:

<i>The Committee recommends that the School revisit its liaison function to include the University stakeholders responsible for planning and research services (Office of Research, Institutional Planning Office, and Libraries) as well as other Universities, in particular those in Montreal.</i>	Recommendation 13
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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

<i>The Committee recommends that the Mission Statement of the School of Graduate Studies be updated in order to better affirm the School's values and leadership role.</i>	Recommendation 1
<i>The Committee recommends that a Mandate of the School of Graduate Studies reflecting the new and/or revised roles and responsibilities of the School be officially placed on record.</i>	Recommendation 1a
<i>The Committee recommends the establishment of the position of Dean and Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies, reporting to the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies.</i>	Recommendation 2
<i>The Committee further recommends that the position of Dean and Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies be a searched position following the rules and procedures for the appointment of senior administrators as established by the Board of Governors.</i>	Recommendation 2a
<i>The Committee recommends that the current Powers of Council of the Council of the School of Graduate Studies be retained.</i>	Recommendation 3
<i>The Committee recommends that the School's current roles and responsibilities in the legislative, advisory, training, processing, and liaison/promotion functions be maintained or enhanced.</i>	Recommendation 4
<i>The Committee recommends that the School undertake the added strategic function of "monitoring and analysis" of the internal and the external graduate studies landscape.</i>	Recommendation 5
<i>The Committee recommends that the School be provided with the necessary resources (whether financial or personnel) for building and maintaining high-level analysis and liaison capabilities.</i>	Recommendation 5a
<i>The Committee recommends that the School be designated as having overall responsibility for graduate admissions, defining the process, the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, setting and monitoring performance targets, and developing and implementing improvement plans.</i>	Recommendation 6
<i>The Committee further recommends that the School be responsible for the establishment, enforcement, and monitoring of graduate admissions standards.</i>	Recommendation 6a
<i>The Committee recommends that the School be given the full authority for the development of appropriate strategies, policies and procedures to ensure the monitoring and improvement of academic standing, the quality of students' experience, the timely and equitable administration of students' requests.</i>	Recommendation 7

<i>The Committee recommends that the School continue to administer the Academic Code of Conduct for all graduate students and that the School be fully responsible for maintaining standards of academic integrity at the graduate level.</i>	Recommendation 7a
<i>The Committee recommends that the School play an enlarged advisory role in the initial stages of Program Development and in its liaison role with the external review bodies.</i>	Recommendation 8
<i>The Committee recommends that the School play a more proactive role and be fully involved in the ongoing appraisals of existing graduate programs and their follow-up.</i>	Recommendation 8a
<i>The Committee recommends that the School play a key role in the development and implementation of graduate student recruitment planning and strategies.</i>	Recommendation 9
<i>The Committee recommends that the School continue to develop and implement funding strategies for the allocation of internal fellowships, and that processes of adjudication should be further examined in the light of the different internal and external funding opportunities.</i>	Recommendation 10
<i>The Committee recommends that the School be responsible for the development and implementation of a University-wide postdoctoral recruitment and administrative service.</i>	Recommendation 11
<i>The Committee recommends that the School promote and regulate inter-disciplinary and cross-Faculty graduate programs.</i>	Recommendation 12
<i>The Committee recommends that the School revisit its liaison function to include the University stakeholders responsible for planning and research services (Office of Research, Institutional Planning Office, and Libraries) as well as other Universities, in particular those in Montreal.</i>	Recommendation 13

APPENDIX A:

Membership of the Review Committee of the School of Graduate Studies

Dr. Louise Dandurand, Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (Chair)
Prof. Liselyn Adams, Associate Vice-President, International, Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies
Ms. Veronique Allard, Graduate Student, Anthropology
Ms. Joanne Beaudoin, Administrative Director, School of Graduate Studies
Dr. Harjeet Bhabra, Associate Professor and Former Graduate Program Director, Department of Finance, JMSB
Dr. Rama Bhat, Professor and Associate Dean, ENCS
Dr. Carole Brabant, Director, Research and Innovation, Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies
Dr. Graham Carr, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts and Science
Mr. Roger Côté, Associate Vice-President, Enrolment and Student Services
Dr. Ann English, Professor and Former Graduate Program Director, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Faculty of Arts and Science
Dr. Brian Foss, Associate Dean, Academic & Student Affairs, Faculty of Fine Arts
Dr. Bakr Ibrahim, Associate Dean, Research, John Molson School of Business³
Dr. Lorne Switzer, Associate Dean, Research, John Molson School of Business⁴
Dr. Shannon McSheffrey, Professor and Chair, Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Science
Prof. François Morelli, Professor and Director, Graduate Programs, Faculty of Fine Arts
Dr. Robert Roy, Executive Vice-Provost, Office of the Provost and Vice-President
Dr. Reza Soleymani, Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science
Dr. Ted Stathopoulos, Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies
Dr. Paula Wood-Adams, Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director, Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science
Ms. Cinzia Miscio, Executive Assistant to the Associate Vice-President Research, Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (Secretary)

³ Until Sept 1, 2007

⁴ As of Sept 1, 2007

APPENDIX B:

Meeting Schedule of the Review Committee of the School of Graduate Studies

Review Committee of the School of Graduate Studies

Schedule of Meetings

Wednesday, June 27, 2007 – (9am – 11am)

Tuesday, September 25, 2007 - (12:00pm – 2pm)

Tuesday, October 16, 2007 - (12:00pm – 2pm)

Tuesday, November 6, 2007 - (12:00pm – 2pm)

Tuesday, November 27, 2007 - (12:00pm – 2pm)

Tuesday, December 18, 2007 - (12:00pm – 2pm)

Meetings are held in Room **GM801-4**, on the SGW campus.

APPENDIX C:

University-wide Consultation – Call for Comments

REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Call for Comments

Context

Concordia University is poised to become one of Canada's leading universities. The vision for Concordia, as outlined in *Moving Ahead*, is to be a leader in overall excellence in teaching, research and service to society. However, to be a leading university, Concordia must place greater emphasis on graduate education and research. Concordia's move towards an increase in research and graduate activity may necessitate some changes in the way graduate programs and services are administered and legislated. The School of Graduate Studies, established by the University Senate and the Board of Governors in November 1991, will play a critical role in the fulfillment of the vision for Concordia. In view of the planned growth and development at the graduate level, Dr. Louise Dandurand, Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, has initiated a University-wide consultative process to inform the strategic development of a School of Graduate Studies that is responsive to the future needs of the Concordia community.

Mandate of the School of Graduate Studies Review Committee

On June 27, 2007, the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies convened a Committee to review the School of Graduate Studies. The Review Committee will assess the functions and mandate of the School, including but not limited to, academic functions such as new program and curriculum advising, graduate standards, academic community liaison and mentoring, as well as interdisciplinary program development and administration; and administrative functions such as recruitment, admissions, thesis submissions and defences, student funding, retention and graduation.

The Committee's report will comment on, but not be limited to:

- the functional liaison between the School of Graduate Studies and the other academic/administrative units within the University;
- the desirable roles and responsibilities for the School to fulfill its academic and service mission;
- the appropriate administrative infrastructure to ensure the delivery of the academic and service mission of the School;
- the challenges facing the School and graduate programs in the next five years; and
- the appropriate executive structure to ensure the delivery of the academic mission of the School.

Invitation

The Committee invites comments and suggestions from interested members from all sectors of the University community. In your comments/suggestions, please consider the following, and any other additional topics you would like to address:

- In an ideal scenario, how would you define the academic role and responsibilities of a School of Graduate Studies? What administrative structure do you think would best serve those responsibilities?
- What challenges do you envisage the School and graduate studies in general, facing in the next five years?
- What role could the School of Graduate Studies play in addressing those challenges?
- How do you view the relationship between the School and the Faculties? Between the School and Enrolment Services?

Interested parties can submit their comments either electronically to VPRGS@alcor.concordia.ca, or by hard copy addressed to the **Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, Room S-GM806-19**, no later than **September 20, 2007**.

APPENDIX D:

Synthesis of Comments Received from University-wide Consultation

REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES <u>Synthesis of Comments Received</u>

Academic Role and Responsibilities of a School of Graduate Studies

- In order for Concordia University to become one of the leading graduate schools in the country or North America, it will require a very strong School of Graduate Studies. SGS needs to take a more prominent role in the academic vision of the university.
- A major responsibility of the School of Graduate Studies should be the development of appropriately high standards and good practices in graduate training, including the recruitment and admissions processes and appropriate funding of graduate students (also coordinating student awards offered by different units within the University). In the past, SGS provided a strong leadership in ensuring more uniform admission standards and policies. This is no longer the case.
- The School should ensure that graduate academic rules and regulations by departments and faculties are standardized, as well as ensuring that the academic standards of the university are maintained and applied
- The School should have the responsibility of monitoring adherence to such standards, in collaboration with the Faculties. In the past, SGS served as the final supervisory body to oversee all the policy changes and curricula changes put forth by individual faculties. At the present, these are being done very differently by individual faculties. The example being the course credits that were very consistent in the past but not the case now.
- With the almost dismantling of the School of Graduate Studies and the removal of the admissions responsibility and resources from that department, there is no "gate-keeper" in place to ensure that everyone is following the same rules and regulations. There seems to be a huge void with the decentralization of the graduate admissions process and it has had a negative impact, especially in the service provided to the students.
- The decision to decentralize the admissions process and hand responsibility to the Faculties was made hastily, without proper consultation or study of the implications of this decision. Concordia was the only institution in the country that did not have a centralized unit to review admissions decisions. As Concordia admits increasing numbers of international students, a review of the documentation is a serious problem and requires a high level of expertise. To have four different units across the university doing the same job seems to be a complete waste of resources.
- The School should also be responsible for the creation and development of new graduate programs including subsequent program reviews and follow-up.
- The School should be responsible for ensuring that needed services are provided to those involved in graduate studies, although the School itself might not actually provide such services but rather rely on other services, as in the case of centralized applications, Enrolment Services, or as in the case of funding, rely on the Faculties.

- It would be important for a very limited number of truly interdisciplinary graduate programs, particularly those which include more than one faculty, to remain the responsibility of the School. Interdepartmental graduate programs would be best housed within a Faculty, and are best within departments.
- The School could also encourage collaboration between departments in offering interdepartmental graduate programs.
- The role and responsibilities of the School of Graduate Studies in the admission process to non-research graduate programs of JMSB (John Molson MBA, Executive MBA, etc.) should be redefined. These programs target a different market than research-based programs. The School of Graduate Studies should only play a consultative role and provide advice when a second opinion about specific candidates is required by JMSB. A decentralized admission process to non-research graduate programs would allow the University to operate in a more efficient and much leaner way.
- As the university expands in the number of graduate programs, SGS should take a leadership role in helping to identify strong research units who could offer high quality programs. The staff at SGS has the expertise to guide programs through the process of creating new programs and vetting them through the university and MELS process.
- The School should provide an alternative forum for graduate students to seek advice and consultation, especially if they encounter difficulty within their department.
- The School should be involved in
 - helping programs distribute award information in coordinated and helpful ways
 - helping programs develop awards and funding structures
 - posting lists of University-wide graduate seminars offered in different departments
 - assist programs with job placement services for graduates
 - assist programs with recruitment
 - working more closely with the Graduate Student Association to provide students with more student-oriented activities and resources
- Every large academic institution in North America has a SGS, which actively promotes the university research strengths and graduate studies. There have been various university (SGS) presentations in Mexico, South America and China for recruitment of graduate students, but never one from Concordia during the past many years, since this has become the role of individual faculties who cannot put a common front on behalf of the entire institution. We therefore need a strong SGS to actively recruit high caliber (international) students.
- In the past, SGS also promoted Concordia and its recruitment activities through its scholarship programs, even though we had limited resources. These resources have become even more limited as the individual faculties are trying to offer other scholarships. A stronger and centralized scholarship program is needed to not only promote ourselves but also to recruit strong candidates for graduate programs.
- The School should provide leadership, facilitation, consultation, education, and training on general aspects of graduate studies, whereas the Faculties could carry out many day-to-day administrative functions concerning graduate students and graduate studies. However, leadership for specific graduate programs best comes from the departments and faculty members concerned.

- Creating stronger links with the GPDs and program assistants would also be invaluable in helping graduate programs to function more effectively. Other areas that SGS should be taking a leadership role would be in student retention, time to graduation, helping to ensure that more graduate students are funded via scholarships, awards, TA and RA monies, dealing with the adjustment and success of international students, etc. In sum, at present the units of SGS function at a skeletal level and are not able to be proactive in a number of areas, but frequently are only able to respond at times of crisis.
- The Office of Research and School of Graduate Studies should be reintegrated so that they can support one another. As Concordia is moving towards becoming a more research intensive university, the promotion and support for research for both faculty and graduate students is one of the major challenges of the next five years.
- The SGS might also take a much more active role in recruiting both national and international graduate students (including the admission processes).

Administrative Structure for Graduate Studies

- The School should be headed by the Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies, a central member of the Senior Administration, who must be responsible for and consulted on all matters pertaining to graduate studies, including the allocation of funds to the Faculties for graduate training, and the allocation of resources and priorities for graduate studies to Registration and Enrolment Services. Given that graduate students are much smaller in number than undergraduate students, and that line authority for budget is in the Faculties, it is essential that responsibility for research and graduate studies be at this level. Moreover, given the importance of research and graduate studies to the future of Concordia, it is possible that an Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies, and an Associate Vice-President, Research might be needed to assist the Vice-President R&GS.
- The Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, with the support of the Vice-President Academic, should work closely and directly with the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies and Research in the Faculties as a group.
- Policy-oriented support staff would also be essential at a variety of levels in the School to provide the research, monitoring and reporting needed. Expert staff who are not overburdened with the clerical aspects of graduate studies are essential to fulfilling this leadership mandate.
- Much of the clerical work could be carried out in the faculties, if collaboration on high standards, careful monitoring and documentation could be attained. Such decentralization would permit the tailoring of procedures to fit.
- The VP, R&GS, should also be assisted by a Council of the School of Graduate Studies. This Council is important to retain, as a dedicated forum of faculty members to review, discuss and approve the policies and actions pertaining to graduate studies, before these go to Senate.
 - It is most appropriate, although cumbersome, to have policies passed both by the Faculty Councils and the CSGS. In some cases the CSGS would have higher authority, e.g. graduation lists, because of their responsibility to monitor graduate standards across the university. In other cases, such as policy formation, approval could be in

- parallel.
- Another important aspect of the CSGS would be to harness the potential of the Council members to do much more than approve curriculum and graduation lists. In fact, the process of graduate curriculum approval at Council needs to be radically revamped.
- Active subcommittees reporting back to the Council and the VP, R&GS, could study policy, consult the Faculties and departments, recommend and monitor concerning the issues raised above.
- More “associate deans” with fewer portfolios each is suggested
- The school should remain outside of faculty divisions to promote interdisciplinary and interfaculty programs
- It seems that the old SGS structure was far more vigilant on the quality of graduate students’ works and far more humane than the current structure.

Challenges facing the School of Graduate Studies and graduate studies in the next few years

- To increase graduate enrolments where appropriate with appropriate resources, in a planned way, while simultaneously enhancing excellence and maintaining accessibility. This goal necessitates novel recruitment strategies, which should fit the discipline or group of disciplines concerned, and thus necessitate departmental leadership as well.
- To carefully assess, department by department, the research resources for supporting graduate thesis research as well as for the development of specialized course-based graduate programs.
- The building of consensus between departments and between faculties, and even within some departments, on the role, standards and policies concerning graduate students and the variety of graduate programs offered. The Vice-President of Graduate Studies has a major role to play in leading, educating, and fostering collaboration on common policies, standards and practices to be followed in departments, while allowing for appropriate diversity.
- Funding graduate students. Funding of thesis research should continue to be from a variety of sources, including external fellowships, faculty members’ research grants, teaching assistantships and university fellowships. The goal of providing adequate guaranteed funding to all doctoral students is essential to establishing Concordia as among the leading universities and remaining competitive with Universities in other provinces and countries. Assisting graduate students in other programs, i.e. certificates, diplomas, and course-based masters programs, to devise ways to fund their studies is also important.
- Another major challenge, related to funding and mentoring, is fostering students’ timely completion of their graduate programs. It is a great detriment to the university’s reputation and revenue, to facilities for new graduate students, to faculty productivity, and to the material and moral well-being of the graduate students themselves to have students fail to progress through their graduate studies in a timely fashion.
- The School of Graduate Studies will have to identify the information and services needed for excellence, collaboration and consensus-building in graduate studies, and to devise the

resources and interfaces needed to obtain such information/provide such services, especially if such information and services are decentralized and/or centred in other services in the University.

- Articulating the relations between the School of Graduate Studies/Council of the SGS and the Faculty Councils is an important challenge to be met.
- Upgrading library resources to meet increasing graduate enrolment
- Keeping graduate seminar class sizes small
- Maintaining high standards of language requirements
- Examine how faculty research resources are best diverted to students in disciplines that don't have strong traditions of collaborative research
- Ensuring that graduate academic standards are maintained university-wide (especially with regards to interdisciplinary studies and international students), while taking into account the rich cultural diversity that Concordia is blessed with and attracts.
- Ensure that faculty members are provided with appropriate technical support (when needed), especially with projects involved in the training of graduate students.
- School of Graduate Studies must make itself fully visible – whether through advertisement, or through the web. A well thought-out and more detailed website should be developed in order to intensely publicize the School.

Role of Graduate Studies in Meeting these Challenges and in Relation to the Faculties and Enrolment Services

- The School of Graduate Studies should provide leadership, co-ordination, education, communication and facilitation of mentioned goals with the direct support of the Provost through the Vice-President Academic and Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies.
- Centred in the School would be responsibility for all matters, from policy to services, pertaining to graduate studies and graduate students, even if the services were provided by other university units.
- For increased graduate enrolment, departmental enrolment plans are necessary, as well as resources for adequate guaranteed funding of students enrolled in doctoral programs, and thesis-based masters programs where feasible.
- With respect to enrolment planning, coherence between departmental faculty strengths in research and the particular nature and size of the graduate programs is essential, a goal which necessitates first the assessment of departmental resources under the leadership of the VP R&G with the support of some School staff as well as of the Associate Deans, R&GS. That is, graduate training requires a commensurate breadth and depth of research base in the host department.
- Imaginative recruitment strategies developed in concert with the departments and faculty members themselves could be facilitated by personnel from the School of Graduate Studies.
- With respect to consensus-building regarding graduate studies at Concordia, mentoring and funding of graduate students is uneven from department to department even within faculties.

Education and leadership from the School of Graduate Studies under the VP R&GS is essential to meet this challenge, through outreach, forums, data and debate.

- Graduate Program Directors vary greatly from department to department in the leadership they provide for graduate training in their departments, but are a huge potential resource for leadership in recruitment, course work, thesis standards, monitoring and funding policies, a resource on which the School could draw.
- The members of the SGS and CSGS, as well as past members, could assist the VP, R&GS, in working out and implementing the structural changes necessary to ensure that graduate studies at Concordia interfaces smoothly with the undergraduate and research goals of the University to lead in enhancing its excellence, which would be of benefit to all.
- Working more closely with faculty and administrators in proactive ways, not simply troubleshooting all the time

Relationship between the School and the Faculties; between the School and Enrolment Services

- The relationship between the Faculties and SGS needs to be clarified, a process that would be aided by a clearer mandate for the responsibilities and vision of SGS. The position of Dean of SGS historically appears to have been rather weak compared to the other four Deans, perhaps because it has always been an under-funded unit. SGS should have an important role vis-à-vis the four Faculties, especially since the vision is to increase the number of graduate students.
- It is important to find a mechanism for better liaison among the graduate programs, particularly between the departments and the interdisciplinary programs and the SGS.
- The school should collaborate with the faculties and identify their specific challenges
- The School should maintain an active record of the various areas in which graduate degrees are being provided within the university, including the research fields in which theses are being written, and provide helpful support for high quality graduate programs and individuals.

APPENDIX E:

POWERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The Council of the School of Graduate Studies shall have the power to:

1. establish committees, and delegate any of its responsibilities to committees; receive, consider and act upon the report of its committees;
2. consider, approve and recommend to Senate:
 - i. the establishment and implementation of any program of graduate studies by any academic unit;
 - ii. the modification or discontinuance of any program of graduate studies by any academic unit;
 - iii. the awarding of graduate degrees;
3. establish university-wide standards and procedures for admission to graduate programs;
4. establish university-wide standards and procedures for graduation from graduate programs;
5. establish university-wide standards and procedures for the evaluation of all graduate work, including theses, reports, projects and comprehensive examinations;
6. establish university-wide standards and policies which ensure that graduate program directors, graduate supervisors, instructors and tutors for graduate courses have the requisite qualifications and experience;
7. establish any other university-wide standards for graduate programs that the Council deems appropriate;
8. establish policies, procedures and mechanisms for:
 - i. promoting interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or inter-university graduate programs; and
 - ii. managing those graduate programs of an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or inter-university dimension, which are under the supervision of the School of Graduate Studies;
9. establish rules and procedures governing requests for exemption from academic regulations. Such rules and procedures take precedence, with respect to graduate students, over similar rules and procedures established by Faculty Councils. The Council and the School shall submit an annual report to Senate on the disposition of exemption requests;
10. establish procedures for the conduct of its own affairs;
11. make recommendations to Senate concerning the following matters:
 - the composition of the Council of the School of Graduate Studies;
 - the establishment of graduate fellowships and bursaries;
 - the establishment of post-doctoral programs;
 - the conduct of periodic academic appraisals of all graduate programs;
 - priorities and directions for the development of graduate studies at Concordia University.

As approved by the Board of Governors on 6 September 1973.
and amended by the Board of Governors on 20 November 1991 and 16 June 1999.