



Response to External Reviewers' Report August 2018

Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research we wish to thank the University of Regina (U of R) Vice President Research, the Provost and Vice President Academic, the Office of Resource Planning (U of R), and Information Technology for their support and guidance throughout the process. We are deeply appreciative of the thoughtful and valuable feedback provided by the external review team composed of Dr. Paula Wood-Adams, Professor and Dean of Graduate Studies, Concordia University and Dr. Lisa Young, Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Calgary). The advice and insight in the External Review Report will further enhance the long term success of the students, staff and our relationship with the University community.

Introduction

The FGSR External Reviewers' Report received on March 20, 2018 provides 15 recommendations across five themes including graduate education at the UofR, organizational issues, operational issues, student experience and mandate. Over the next 12 months FGSR will be responding to the recommendations with a number of strategic actions that are student-centric and responsive to institution's needs and priorities. Through a collaborative process featuring engagement, co-design, effective and efficient implementation, and on-going process improvements FGSR will aspire to become an innovative leader in graduate education administration.

Responses to Reviewers

1. Graduate Education at the University of Regina

Recommendation A: FGSR should be encouraged to engage in campus-wide consultations in order to develop an institutional plan for graduate education that articulates clear objectives and strategies for achieving those objectives.

Response A: In fall of 2018 the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research will launch a campus-wide consultation with faculty, students, staff and communities. The consultation will include several instruments to collect input including town halls, stakeholder meetings, focus groups, a



survey, and an online comment system. The stakeholder engagement strategies adopted will be based the principles of transparency, responsiveness and will be designed to enhance inclusive governance and reinforce FGSR's accountability by ensuring policies and regulations are designed and implemented in the best interests of students. Terms of Reference can be found in Appendix A.

The objectives of the consultation are threefold:

1. Engage stakeholders in developing the vision for FGSR over the next five years
2. Address the recommendation from the External Reviewer's report to "develop an institutional plan for graduate education that articulates clear objectives and strategies for achieving those objectives"
3. Ensure FGSR is responsive to student, faculty and community needs.

2. Organizational Issues

Recommendation B. Maintain the current organizational model, but decentralize authority within the context of that model. Two specific items, to be discussed below, are critical in this regard. First, FGSR should no longer play any role in approving grades for graduate students. Approval of grades should be done in the Faculty offering the course. Second, FGSR should consider delegating authority for admissions to some or all graduate programs. This can be phased in as a pilot project, starting with units that are appropriately resourced to undertake this role.

Response B: FGSR is in the process of engaging Nursing, the Levene Graduate School of Businesses Administration, Social Work and Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. Meetings are set for the fall with these faculties.

Recommendation C. Regardless of the organizational model adopted, it is imperative that there be clear communication with students, faculty members and other units on campus with respect to the role of FGSR relative to the role of graduate programs and line Faculties.

Response C: Under the leadership of the new Associate Dean Strategy a full communications plan will be implemented. Website upgrades are on-going and FGSR will launch Twitter and Facebook Accounts in the fall. As part of the strategic engagement initiative FGSR will be



seeking input on preferred communication methods and approaches with units on campus.

3. Operational Issues

Recommendation D. Rather than ceding FGSR's role in admissions, the Dean of FGSR undertake a pilot project delegating authority to admit to a limited number of graduate programs. Normally, delegated authority to admit allows graduate programs to make offers of admission on behalf of the Dean of Graduate Studies to any applicant who meets the graduate school's admissions criteria. Applicants who do not meet graduate studies minimum for GPA or language proficiency require approval from the graduate school. Typically, the graduate school audits admissions at the program level in order to provide feedback to the academic to whom authority has been delegated, and the staff supporting that individual. Where delegated authority has been implemented, it has reduced turnaround times and duplication of effort.

Response D: See Responses B

4. Approval of Grades

Recommendation: E. Authority for approval of grades in graduate-level courses and for graduate students be given to the Dean of the line faculty offering the course.

Response E: Action has been taken and DOME will be updated to delegate all grade approval to the Deans of the line faculties to be completed by fall 2018.

5. Staffing and Internal Organization

Recommendation F. Review the staffing model to

- (a) Ensure adequate resources are devoted to admissions and registration (both in the short and long term) and the staff has sufficient systems expertise
- (b) Align reporting relationships to allow the Dean to focus on academic leadership and enable the Faculty Administrator to deliver on operational accountabilities

Response (fa): We have contracted a process improvements expert to work with the staff and leadership to develop process improvement for admissions, registration, scholarships, and graduation. Furthermore, we have entered into partnership with URI to provide services to all International graduate students and visiting graduate students.



Response (fb): The organizational structure of FGSR has been changed with all CUPE staff (with the exception of the Executive Assistant to the Dean) and APT staff reporting to the Faculty Administrator and the Associate Deans, Executive Assistant to the Dean and the Faculty Administrator reporting to the Dean. In addition, the 2 admissions specialists are now reporting to Graduate Admissions Coordinator and the Scholarships Assistant is reporting to the Manager Scholarships and Award.

In addition, two new Associate Deans have been hired with one focused on operational issues and one focused on strategic issues. The position descriptions can be found in Appendix B. There was an internal search for the two positions with the membership for the Search Advisory Committee consisting of Dr. Supriya Bhat Post Doctorate, Biology, Dr. Tanya Dahms, Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Dr. Nicholas Jones, Associate Dean of Arts (Research and Graduate), Xiangnan Liu, Masters Student of Applied Science, Petroleum Systems Engineering, and Mandy Kiel, Faculty Administrator, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

Recommendation G. Be attentive to staff morale and engagement as changes are made.

Response G: This will be on-going with leadership committed to a collaborative environment in which staff are empowered, mentored and coached. Current human resources management at FGSR does not include employee motivation and recognition practices. The Dean has created a schedule of staff engagement that includes a number of team-building activities (escape room, blanket exercise, pot-luck lunches, and so forth) and development activities (national conferences, retreats, UR Leading, project management and so forth). APT staff supervising CUPE staff will receive training in smart practices on organizational development and human capital management.

6. Special Case PhD Program

Recommendation H: We recommend an internal review of outcomes for and governance of the Special Case PhD program.

Response H: FGSR will in collaboration with an external program evaluation professional and the Office of Resource planning undertake a summative evaluation of the Special Case PhD. A scoping document for the evaluation can be found in Appendix C.



7. Student Experience

Comment: We noted that no data from the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey were included in the self-study document, and understand that the University of Regina did not participate in the 2016 survey, which occurs once every three years (http://www.cags.ca/cgpss_home.php). This survey is a useful tool for identifying issues with the graduate student experience. If resources permit, we suggest participating in the 2019 survey.

Response: This is incorrect as FGSR did participate in and reviewed the data from the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey.

8. Mandate

1. *Leadership in graduate education:* Graduate education is evolving relatively rapidly, with national and international conversations relating to the form and structure of the thesis, the rise of course-based Master's programs, and career trajectories of graduate students, among other issue. A critical function of the academic leader is to monitor and participate in these conversations, and ensure that they inform local decisions.

- Action 1 – The Dean, Associate Deans and several staff members will attend the annual Canadian Association for Graduate Studies.
- Action 2 - The Dean and Associate Deans will attend the Western Canadian Deans of Graduate Studies Annual Conference.
- Action 3 - The Dean and Associate Deans are committed to their own on-going professional development and will be committed to not only participating in conversations but also leading innovative graduate education administration.

2. *Communications:* An important role for a faculty or school of graduate studies is to ensure dissemination of information to graduate students. The information to be disseminated includes both routine administrative information (upcoming registration and scholarship deadlines, for example) as well as messaging about professional development and other opportunities, as well as carefully crafted messages designed to increase student success. The communications function is accomplished through maintenance of the website, as well as regular communications out to students (such as a weekly electronic newsletter aggregating all relevant information). A social media presence can also help to broaden the reach of the messaging.



- Action 1 – FGSR will be developing a holist communication plan, including social media engagement, under the leadership of the new Associate Dean Strategy.

3. *Indigenization*: Understanding that the University of Regina is committed to indigenization of the institution, FGSR has a particular role to play in providing culturally appropriate supports for students in graduate programs, ensuring that rules governing thesis examinations are compatible with cultural norms, and leading a conversation about indigenization of the graduate student experience.

- Action 1: FGSR in collaboration with the Indigenization Lead we will create a cohort program designed to provide students will peer-to-peer supports.
- Action 2: Develop a strategy that addresses the Universities Canada principles on Indigenous education.
- Action 3: Establish an entrance scholarship program for Indigenous students.
- Action 4: Design a professional development workshop for faculty supervising Indigenous graduate students.

4. *Professional Development and Student Support*: We understand that FGSR has recently started to provide some community-building and professional development programming, but we heard that there is demand for more extensive offerings, whether provided or coordinated by FGSR.

- Action 1: FGSR is collaborating with the Student Success Centre, URI, and the Library to designing programming that address the various writing support the range of needs of graduate students.
- Action 2: FGSR will be hosting a Graduate Student conference in the fall.
- Action 3: In partnership with the research office and the Library FGSR will be leading a two-day research boot-camp to help students and post-doc navigate the UofR research enterprise.
- Action 4: FGSR will engage students on what their academic and professional development preference are during the large consultation process.

5. *Student advising*: At many institutions, Faculties/Schools of Graduate Studies play an active role in providing advice for graduate students, particularly in thesis-based programs, and in resolving student-supervisor conflict. Given the complexities of the student-supervisor relationship, it is important that graduate students have access to advice and support from a party outside the Faculty where their supervisor holds an appointment. This role is typically taken on by one or more Associate Deans,



sometimes supported by a staff member with expertise in student advising. The availability of such advising is particularly important for graduate students who may be intimidated by the university system; indigenous and international students are more likely to fall into this category.

- Action 1 – FGSR will be developing a student advising plan under the leadership of the new Associate Dean Operational.

6. *Supervisory development* – During our visit, we heard that the new process for accrediting supervisors has been welcomed by the university community. To build on this success, there is scope for FGSR to cooperate with the unit on campus that provides development opportunities for faculty members relating to teaching to also provide development around graduate supervision. Programming aimed at graduate supervisors can ensure both that supervisors are familiar with institutional expectations around supervision, and also support them in working productively with students within the supervisory relationship

- Action 1: FGSR will design and deliver supervisory professional development sessions that will be offered twice in the 2018-2019 academic year. The program will be developed in collaboration with the Associate Deans of the line faculties.

External Reviewer Recommendation Implementation Plan			
Recommendation	Actions	Development	Completion
Graduate Education at the University of Regina			
FGSR should be encouraged to engage in campus-wide consultations in order to develop an institutional plan for graduate education that articulates clear objectives and strategies for achieving those objectives.	Design an engagement strategy	September 2018	April 2019
Organizational Issues			
Maintain the current organizational model, but decentralize authority within the context of that model. FGSR should consider delegating authority for admissions to some or all graduate	Partner with Business, Social Work, Nursing, and JSGS	4 pilot projects with authority delegated to the Dean of the faculty	January 2019



<p>programs. This can be phased in as a pilot project, starting with units that are appropriately resourced to undertake this role.</p>	<p>Provide line faculty training</p> <p>Develop an audit process</p>	<p>Taskforce established to ensure the decentralization process do not negatively impact student experience and the quality of graduate education</p>	
<p>It is imperative that there be clear communication with students, faculty members and other units on campus with respect to the role of FGSR relative to the role of graduate programs and line Faculties.</p>	<p>Associate Dean's portfolio</p>	<p>January 2019</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Operational Issues</p>			
<p>Authority for approval of grades in graduate-level courses and for graduate students be given to the Dean of the line Faculty offering the course.</p>	<p>Request registrar change DOME to eliminate the Dean of FGSR role from the grade approval process</p>	<p>Changes to DOME</p> <p>Notify Deans July 15th</p>	<p>September 2019</p>
<p>Align reporting relationships to allow the Dean to focus on academic leadership and enable the Faculty Administrator to deliver on operational accountabilities.</p>	<p>Staff reorganization</p>	<p>July 2018</p>	<p>August 2018</p>
<p>Be attentive to staff morale and engagement as changes are made.</p>	<p>Team-building activities</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>On-going</p>



	Professional development activities		
An internal review of outcomes for and governance of the Special Case PhD program.	Evaluation design and scope	September 2018	February 2019
Mandate			
Leadership in graduate education	Attendance and participation at global, national and regional graduate education conferences	On-going	On-going
Communications	Associate Dean Strategy will design communication plan	September 2018	On-going
Indigenization	<p>Indigenous cohort program</p> <p>Indigenization strategy that addresses the Universities Canada principles on Indigenous education.</p> <p>Entrance scholarship for Indigenous students</p> <p>Supervisory development</p>	September 2018	September 2019 (launch)



Professional Development and Student Support	Develop partnerships Design programs Deliver Programs	July 2018	On-going
Student advising	Associate Dean Operational will develop plan	On-going	On-going
Supervisory development	Consultation with Associate Deans research and graduate studies Development of workshop	January 2019	On-going



Appendix A

FGSR CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Background: Responding to the FGSR External Reviewer's Recommendation

The University of Regina's Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) External Reviewers' Report received on March 20, 2018 provides 15 recommendations across five themes including graduate education at the University of Regina (UofR), organizational issues, operational Issues, student experience and mandate. The first recommendation made was:

FGSR should be encouraged to engage in campus-wide consultations in order to develop an institutional plan for graduate education that articulates clear objectives and strategies for achieving those objectives.

During their site visit the reviewers found "uncertainty about the ways in which graduate education fit into the University of Regina's strategic direction as an institution". The aspiration of graduate education at the University of Regina is clear in *peyak aski kikawinaw*, the UofR Strategic Plan 2015-2020, which has a number of goals related to graduate education including student success objectives, research impacts and commitment to our communities.

During the fall 2018 semester FGSR will conduct a campus and community engagement strategy designed to advance FGSR's support of graduate students and faculty, collaborate with key stakeholders on charting the future of the unit, and to assess current policy and practices to ensure alignment across the university.

Campus and Community Engagement Strategy

In fall of 2018 the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research will launch a campus-wide consultation with faculty, students, staff and communities. The consultation will include several instruments to collect input including town halls, stakeholder meetings, focus groups, a survey, and an online comment system. The stakeholder engagement strategies adopted will be based the principles of transparency, responsiveness and will be designed to enhance inclusive governance and reinforce FGSR's



accountability by ensuring policies and regulations are designed and implemented in the best interests of students.

The objectives of the consultation are threefold:

- 1) Engage stakeholders in developing the vision for FGSR over the next five years
- 2) Address the recommendation from the External Reviewer's report to "develop an institutional plan for graduate education that articulates clear objectives and strategies for achieving those objectives"
- 3) Ensure FGSR is responsive to student, faculty and community needs

Phase One: Establishing the Consultation Strategy

July – Sept 2018

Phase one of the process will be planning the consultation strategy including:

- Preparing relevant and timely information regarding FGSR, the External Reviewer's recommendations
- Developing the survey (in compliance with GOV-070-025), online comments system, town hall meetings and focus groups
- Organizing logistics
- Meetings with FGSR Committees
 - FGSR Council Committee
 - FGSR PhD Committee
 - FGSR Scholarship and Awards Committee

Phase Two: Conducting Engagement

Sept – May 15 2019

Cross campus notices will be sent out in September, October and November to inform students, faculty and staff of various engagement opportunities. The survey will be live from September 4 - December 14, as will the online comment section. Over the three month duration of the consultation various meetings will be held with students, post-docs, the campus community, and external stakeholders. A draft



schedule of engagement activities is provided below.

Consultation Schedule		
Action	Date	Audiences/Notes
Public notice sent	TBD	UofR/key external stakeholders through UofR list serv, social media, UofR discussion forum
Survey opens	TBD	Online
Online comment system goes live	TBD	Students, alumni, faculty, distance graduate students, and stakeholders
Public notice sent – reminder of town hall meeting	TBD	UofR list serv, social media
Town hall meeting 1	TBD	In person - main campus
Community partner meeting (NGOs)	TBD	In person - CAC
Focus group	TBD	FGSR Board Room with Associate Deans
Internal stakeholder meeting	TBD	Library, Research Office, Student Services
Internal stakeholder meeting	TBD	Graduate Student Association
Internal stakeholder meeting	TBD	Co-op Office
Internal stakeholder meeting	TBD	Affiliated Colleges
Community partner meeting (Indigenous Nations and Committees)	TBD	In person - FNUniv
Internal stakeholder meeting	TBD	UR International, Office of Indigenization, Registrar
Sharing Circle	TBD	Indigenous Graduate Students
Public notice sent - reminder	TBD	UofR/key external stakeholders through UofR list serv, social media, UofR discussion forum
Open meeting Masters students	TBD	FGSR Boardroom



Open meeting PhD students	TBD	FGSR Boardroom
Open meeting post-doctoral fellows/research associates	TBD	FGSR Boardroom
Town Hall Meeting 2	TBD	In person - main campus
Internal stakeholder meeting	TBD	Graduate Coordinators
Community partner meeting (Government)	TBD	In person - CAC
Internal stakeholder meeting	TBD	Graduate Student Advisers
Community partner meeting (Industry)	TBD	In person - CAC
Close survey and online comments	TBD	Online

Phase Three: Informing FGSR Policy and Practice

May- August 2019

Phase three of the process will begin by undertaking an analysis of the feedback collected and making it available online. The input will then be synthesized and inform the strategic planning processes at FGSR until the new UofR Strategic Plan is developed in 2021. A draft report will be released and a feedback mechanism developed so participants in the engagement process have an opportunity for further comments.



Appendix B

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Associate Dean Operational

The Associate Dean Operational, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (ADFGSR) reports to the Associate Vice President (Research) and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and is a core member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research leadership team providing day to day direction and coordination for Graduate Studies academic programs, initiatives and policies.

Accountabilities:

- The Associate Dean, Graduate Programs is responsible for tasks and areas identified by the Associate Vice President (Research) and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, specifically related to graduate level academic planning and implementation, and organization and management functions that facilitate successful working relationships with faculty, staff, students (both domestic and international), communities and university administration.
- The Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research serves as the resource for rules, regulations, and procedures related to graduate education and oversees graduate activities including the resolution of any pedagogical, operational and administrative issues that affect the graduate program.
- In collaboration with the faculty and Deans, provides senior-level policy and process recommendations on issues relating to the graduate student enterprise
- Develops innovative ways to recruit and retain a diverse graduate student body, including identifying and developing unique funding opportunities;
- Chairs PhD Dissertations, provides leadership reviews and makes decisions on deferral of term work/final exam requests, reassessment of final grades, requests for reinstatement, thesis forms and defenses, provides annual progress reports for PhD students, grade change forms, requests for program extensions, fast tracking requests and all final reviews and decisions on applications to all graduate programs.



- Administers and oversees student grievances, petitions and appeal cases and student academic discipline. Works with faculty and both undergraduate and graduate student organizations to create awareness and compliance with university policies on intellectual property, plagiarism and academic integrity.
- Facilitates an environment of engaged faculty and staff committed to student service, and who are encouraged to provide input to improve processes, services and collaborative relationships.

Associate Dean Strategic

Reporting to the Associate Vice President (Research) and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, The Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies will work closely with the University of Regina's Associate Deans and department heads to ensure that each academic area/unit has research grant plans with a view to improving the quality of grant applications and increasing funding success. Building upon current successes, this position will further develop capacity in student-centric service delivery, support professional program growth, and advance the strategic direction of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

Accountabilities:

- At the direction of the AVPFGR and Dean, work on high level strategic research projects aimed at increasing the profile of the University of Regina's research and indigenization scholarly work.
- Provide support for faculty and collaborate with the University research enterprise to organize events aimed at further promoting enhanced instruction, research collaborations and external relationships.
- Working closely with the Associate Vice President (Finance) and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, assist with the development of programs, policies and opportunities related to postdoctoral studies.



- Support the AVPRD in all FGSR communication, marketing, recruitment, and engagement plans.
- Assist the research enterprise in continuing to promote a research culture that nurtures diverse forms of inquiry and scholarship with a special focus on the attainment of the indigenization and sustainability overarching themes of University of Regina Strategic Plan.

