

# STRATEGIC ACADEMIC PLAN

## Faculty of Graduate Studies

October 2008

### GRADUATE STUDIES

In supporting graduate education at the Masters and Doctoral levels, the Faculty of Graduate Studies will continue to contribute very centrally to the academic mission of the University. Our goal is to enhance graduate growth and quality in support of the teaching and research missions of the University as well as its commitments to the larger community.

In particular the Faculty of Graduate Studies will work in partnership with the six Academic Faculties, the office of the Vice President Research, and other units in the University to move in a number of specific directions that have been articulated within **BROCK 2014**, the University's strategic plan:

- to develop an institutional culture rooted in pervasive research and creative activity
- to expand graduate and professional programs reflecting the University's research strengths and capacity for innovation, particularly in response to emerging need
- to encourage interdisciplinarity and cross-disciplinary approaches to research and teaching
- to engage with the community to enhance the economic, social, cultural and intellectual lives of the citizens of Niagara and beyond.

In this document we first outline the role and responsibilities of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and then address the particular ways in which the Faculty of Graduate Studies will address specific components of the University's Strategic Academic Plan.

#### **Role and Responsibilities of the Faculty of Graduate Studies**

The Faculty of Graduate Studies encompasses both academic and administrative responsibilities.

##### **Major Areas of Responsibility**

- advocacy with respect to all issues related to the support, growth and sustenance of a strong Graduate Studies sector at Brock University
- management of standard and periodic program appraisals as required by OCGS
- ensuring the quality of existing graduate programs through the implementation of university-wide standards with respect to the delivery of graduate education
- maintenance of graduate student records on the student information system, from application to convocation
- enrolment planning and the management of growth within the graduate sector
- recruitment of prospective students, domestic and international
- development and improvement of university policy (both academic and administrative) relating to graduate studies
- liaison with graduate students and facilitation of their professional development through dedicated programming
- organization of competitions for all internal and external merit-based awards for which graduate students are eligible

- management of student funding from both internal sources (fellowships, bursaries and scholarships) and external scholarship and bursary awards
- resolution of individual and systemic problems in all areas of graduate studies, through work with students, faculty members and graduate programs as needed

### **Current Graduate Studies Programs**

There are currently 33 Masters level programs in place, (four of which are International Student Cost Recovery Programs), as well as one Graduate Diploma, and six PhD programs.

### **Graduate Student Enrolments**

Brock's current graduate student enrolment numbers (2007-8) stand at 8% of the student population. The University's planning document, **BROCK 2014**, indicates that by that date this number shall have risen to 10%.

### **Planning for Graduate Expansion at Brock**

The Faculty of Graduate Studies takes the lead in preparing Brock's plan for graduate growth through consultation with the six Academic Faculties and other Administrative units within the University. The University's Research agenda must be taken into consideration, as Research and Graduate Studies' forward movement need to be aligned. Enrolment planning takes place through consultation with each of the Faculty Deans or designates and each of the graduate program directors, during which graduate flow-through and capacity are examined, as are concomitant resource issues such as staffing, space, and graduate student support.

### **Strategic Plan for Graduate Studies**

#### Governance and Quality Assurance

- to continue to develop common standards, policies and procedures for Graduate Studies across the University, through the development and revision of Faculty Handbook Regulations regarding Graduate Studies
- to streamline processes for the administration of graduate programs, including the production of a guidelines for the use of incoming Graduate Program Directors.

#### Appraisals and Approvals

- to facilitate new program approvals and periodic appraisals for existing programs through processes that will ensure the smooth navigation of the OCGS process

#### Graduate Growth, Recruitment and Retention

- to develop careful plans for expanding to capacity where capacity already exists in current graduate programs, and to develop further capacity through new programming wherever possible
- to develop and to continue to improve the graduate enrolment revenue projection model, developed in conjunction with ACID (Academic Committee on Institutional Data)
- to undertake intensive recruitment initiatives (both domestic and international)
- to continue to develop and carry out our Communications and Development plan for Graduate Studies, in consultation with University Communications.

#### Funding and Student Support

- to develop a revised funding model for graduate students support (fellowships, scholarships and bursaries) commencing 2009-10
- to improve liaison with graduate students and the facilitation of their professional development

through dedicated programming

#### Partnerships Across the University

- to forge strong links and exploit productive synergies between Research Services and Graduate Studies
- to continue to establish strong partnerships with other sectors across the University (Faculty Deans, Administrative support units) to meet the needs of graduate students and graduate growth
- to continue to advocate for improved administrative assistance for the support of graduate programs across campus and improved workload recognition for the delivery of graduate programming in the Academic Faculties

#### Operations

- to continue to strengthen the Office of Graduate Studies through improved IT infrastructure, through prioritization by the University's Instructional Technologies sector
- to improve resourcing within the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, through the addition of an Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
- to continue to improve process and services offered through the Office of Graduate Studies

### **Achieving the Goals of BROCK 2014 for the Graduate Sector:**

- I. to expand graduate programming commensurate with the University's areas of research strength, particularly at the PhD level.

*Graduate Studies will work with the appropriate Faculty Deans to move forward on a number of PhD proposals that have been identified to date. These include new Faculty-based programs in the Faculty of Humanities [2010] and the Faculty of Business [2012], the possibility of a new stand-alone PhD in Education in the Faculty of Education, and several potential PhD programs in the Faculty of Social Science (Political Science, Child and Youth Studies, Communications/ Popular Culture/Film), as well as a new Doctoral program in Physics in the Faculty of Mathematics and Science.*

*At the Masters level new program initiatives likely to come forward include a course-based M.Sc. program in Mathematics, a research-based M.Sc. program in Neuroscience; and a new Masters program in Tourism and the Environment.*

- II. to expand the number of applied programs at the graduate level in response to University research strengths and demonstrated social need.

*Graduate Studies will work with the appropriate Faculty Deans to move forward a number of applied program initiatives that have been identified to date, including several Masters programs in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences (in areas of professional education such as Adventure Therapy, Hygiene Science, Nursing, Public Health, Sport Management and Therapeutic Recreation) and in the Faculty of Humanities. The Faculty of Social Sciences anticipates a new PhD program in Applied Disability Studies.*

*The FGS will continue to support the development of such program proposals in the Academic Faculties and facilitate the review process for them through external provincial approval processes (currently OCGS).*

- III. to increase the proportion of graduate students to 10 per cent of the full-time equivalent (FTE) student population by 2014.

*Graduate Studies will continue to expand its graduate recruitment activities through the development of appropriate recruitment materials (both hard copy and, increasingly, web-based initiatives), attendance at graduate recruitment fairs, ongoing work with University Communications, the development (with Research Services) of a researcher database searchable by prospective graduate students, and work with graduate programs to develop their most appropriate recruitment materials and strategies.*

- IV. to diversify international recruitment and increase the proportion of international students to 30 per cent of the FTE graduate population by 2014.

*The Faculty of Graduate Studies will continue to work with the University's International Recruitment Office to promote Brock's graduate programs world-wide. In addition, because international students most frequently seek information from the web, we will continue to work with graduate programs and with Research Services to ensure that our websites make clear the graduate program and supervisory strengths available to students seeking excellent graduate degree programs in Canada.*

- V. to increase graduate endowments to support both entrance fellowships and "top-up" scholarships, in order to attract and retain excellent graduate students.

*The Dean of Graduate Studies will continue to work with University Development to increase Graduate scholarships, fellowships and bursaries, including availability to work with prospective donors on potential gifts as opportunities arise.*

- VI. to extend minimum guaranteed graduate funding to full-time graduate students in all Faculties at competitive levels.

*In its new budgeting model, currently under development, the Faculty will consider the funding of all research-stream students (students writing Theses and Major Research Papers) across all Faculties.*

- VII. to expand professional development opportunities for graduate students through professional training, internships and related community engagement activities

*This is an area under development by Graduate Studies at Brock, with our partners across the University. Some of these initiatives are already in place, in areas such as Grant and Scholarship Applications, Teaching Certificates, CV Development, and Preparation for Job Interviews. There is a further need for development in such areas as Professional Communications and Project Management. Our own annual interdisciplinary conference (Mapping the New Knowledges) offers students professional presentation experience in a vetted academic environment.*

*Via our support for the Teaching Certificate programs offered by the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Educational Technologies, we address one of the University's Teaching and Learning goals, as articulated in **BROCK 2014**, that of "assisting new faculty and graduate students to develop strong instructional skills through innovative and diversified teaching*

*approaches.” In addition, through the encouragement of many kinds of experiential learning for graduate students – from co-op placements to internships and volunteer placements – we will continue to address very directly one of the University’s designated Community Outreach Goals, that of “encouraging student leadership in local, national and global activities through research, development and social advocacy.”*

Detailed Graduate Studies objectives appear in the strategic plans of the seven Faculties, at [www.brocku.ca/carp/academicplan.php](http://www.brocku.ca/carp/academicplan.php).