

From the Dean's desk

Mapping the New Knowledges

Please put in your schedules/day planners/calendars — right now — the date for the 7th Annual Graduate Student Conference — Mapping the New Knowledges — April 11, 2012, in the Plaza Building. Plans have been underway for several months by a dedicated group of staff, faculty, and graduate students to develop the program. We received 92 abstracts for presentations — 56 oral and 36 poster, which will be presented in two oral sessions (morning: 9:45 to 11:30 and afternoon: 2:15 to 4) and a poster session (afternoon 1 to 2:15).

In addition, we will have an opening address (9 to 9:30 a.m.) by Melanie Pilkington, CRC Tier II Chair in Chemistry, and will be presenting two Graduate Mentorship Awards to faculty supervisors nominated by their graduate students (12:30 to 1 p.m.). The GSA has organized a Mental Health Workshop (11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.), and will host everyone for “refreshments” and food at Isaac’s after the conference (starts 4:15 p.m.). Lastly, through an award donation from Brock’s Youth University, we will be adjudicating the various oral and poster presentations for the awarding of two child and youth research awards.

So, now that you have seen the basics of the overall schedule of events, and if you didn’t enter the day, or part of the day, in your personal schedule — now is the time. Come out and support our graduate students, discuss with them their research, and come to visit and dialogue with colleagues across the University.

Visit the conference website for current and updated information
— <http://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/conferences-events/2011-12-MNK>



Admissions Update

As of the end of last week, we have received 1,779 applications to our various graduate programs (665 domestic full-time, 170 domestic part-time, 944 Visa). Many programs are in the process of examining their applications, but so far, 601 offers have been sent (161 domestic full-time, 22 domestic part-time, 418 Visa), and 244 offers have been accepted (57 domestic full-time, 4 domestic part-time, 183 Visa). Meetings with GPDs over the December-January period provided an intake target of 277 domestic full-time, 121 domestic part-time, 292 Visa). We will continue to update this information as we progress through the “admissions season.”

Professional Skills Development Program

As many of you are likely aware, the Faculty of Graduate Studies has been offering a series of professional skills development workshops over the course of the year. Through the hard work and dedication of Marilyn Rose, we have developed a series of six workshops on topics that will help graduate students develop skills that will make them more marketable. This is seen as the next important step in graduate education and training, and is a growing trend across many Canadian universities at present. Students have been introduced to topics ranging from communication and teamwork to time/project management and entrepreneurship via six two-hour workshops.

The next workshop, titled “Managing Time/Managing Projects: Sane Approaches to a Fast-Forward World,” will be held Wednesday, April 4, 4:30 to 6:45 p.m., in Pond Inlet; the schedule and titles of all the workshops in the series can be found at <http://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/professional-development/2011-12-workshops>

For next year, we are planning to expand the offerings, and to develop a co-curricular transcript for students that will describe their professional skills development activities during their time at Brock. We have developed a GSPD Program Council, with several units across campus agreeing to partner with us to add their expertise and their current offerings into a comprehensive series of workshops and opportunities for graduate students. This Council has been meeting this Spring to discuss opportunities, and to make plans for next year’s GSPD Program.

As part of our GSPD delivery plan, the FGS is exploring the possibility of offering a full-day professional skills workshop for our incoming students in late August or early September. The goal of the day would be to introduce students to strategies for managing — and maximizing — their experience as graduate students preparing for professional lives after graduation. In planning and developing an event of this type, and to avoid overlap, we’d like to hear from GPDs about their program-specific orientation events. We will follow up with you in April with a very short email survey. The information that you provide to us will allow us to design and organize an event that will complement any discipline-based activities.

Graduate Program Reviews

We are nearing the end of the Academic Reviews for this year; by the end of March, 10 reviews will have taken place (3 undergraduate only, 4 graduate only, and 3 integrated UG/G). In the next few weeks, External Reports will be coming in, and ARC will be developing final reports for these programs for action by various academic units. A listing of scheduled reviews through academic year 2018-19 can be found at http://www.brocku.ca/webfm_send/17220. Graduate Programs scheduled for review in 2012-13 include: graduate program only: Applied Health Sciences (MA, MSc, PhD); integrated reviews in History, and Geography; and all graduate programs in Business will be reviewed as part of their scheduled AACSB Accreditation.

Budget and Planning

Like all units on campus, the Faculty of Graduate Studies was requested to develop a 2012-13 budget that included a potential 2.5 per cent cut in expenditures, a potential 2.5 per cent increase in revenue, or a combination leading to 2.5 per cent. Our 2012-13 budget submission was examined by the University Budget Committee on Wednesday, March 21. In the submission, we outlined several potential areas where savings might be realized, and requested support for further improvements of the graduate student Professional Skills Development Program, and to initiate an Integrated Marketing and Recruitment Plan. Recommendations on budget unit proposals are expected in the next few weeks.

At this point, we have not received a date for presenting our Strategic Plan to the joint Senate-Board oversight committee. It is expected that we will be hearing shortly of a date for the presentation.

From the Director’s desk

Electronic Application/Admission Project

We continue to move ahead with the project and have released for your use two new screens to assist you with your admission processing — the Grad Applications Selection screen and the Grad Application GP screen.

- Grad Applications Selection screen:

This is found under GradAdmission/GradAppAnalysis menu items. This screen allows you to access all the student applications either with a decision or no decision for specific entry points.

- Grad Application GP screen

This is to provide you with the application details, document status, and comments made by FGS. This screen is available under GradAdmission/GradApplication menu items.

Charlotte will provide a demo of the screens at our Graduate Council meeting. Next we are working on the Assessment Information screen and the Admission Decision screen.

Graduate Record

Graduate Record Form - Final Grades for Theses and MRPs, Deferral of Application to Graduate

1. Gradebook must now be used to post the final grades for Theses and MRPs. This will eliminate adding the grades twice to the comment section of the Graduate Record Form.
2. There is now an option for the GPDs to Defer an Application to Graduate to the next convocation date (only one date).

Converting offers to Acceptances

Tammy has sent a couple of emails with some suggested conversion information. Don't hesitate to contact our office if we can be of any assistance during the conversion period. Information regarding the feedback you receive from applicants regarding our offers and the reasons they accept or decline is valuable information for all of us. Please pass on to us any useful information.

2012-13 Graduate Calendar

Thanks to everyone for reviewing their entries. Since our Calendar is electronic, late changes/additions can be accommodated. I am the main contact re: the Calendar.

Website

We are continuing to work on updating/improving the website. We are currently working on improving the display of Internal Awards/Funding. Please forward any requests regarding the website to me or Sarah Muir.

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Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Gail Pepper,
Director, Faculty of Graduate Studies