

5 November 2018

Dr Kathleen McNutt
Associate Vice-President (Research) and Dean of Graduate Studies
University of Regina

Dear Dr McNutt,

I am pleased to provide a brief response to the August 2018 *Response to External Reviewers' Report* by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. I want to begin by thanking you and your FGSR colleagues and staff for working with the Academic Unit Review Team (Dr Paula Wood-Adams of Concordia and Dr Lisa Young of the University of Calgary) to facilitate a thorough review, and also for taking the time to respond in some depth to the reviewers' recommendations.

As you and the reviewers note, graduate education on our campus is in a period of rapid evolution and indeed growth. Course-based and professional programs in areas such as public policy, health administration, nurse practitioner education, and computer science have seen dramatic increases in enrolments as mid-career learners seek to upgrade their education. Traditional research-based master's and doctoral programs in areas like the sciences show continuing solid enrolments, even as funding available to support research students is constrained.

In this context, your intention to develop a 5-year vision for graduate education and research here at Regina is commendable and necessary. Given strategic planning cycles, I would suggest consideration of how best to prepare that 5-year vision in conjunction with a new institutional strategic planning exercise that will culminate in an institutional plan for 2020-25.

Turning now to several specific aspects of FGSR's response, I would identify the following as especially noteworthy:

- Clarification of FGSR's relationship to line Faculties with regard to several major protocols and areas of authority, including moving graduate grade approvals to the line Faculties (3): this is a change long overdue and I applaud FGSR's willingness to respond to this recommendation so quickly
- Delegation of authority for admissions to line Faculties/Schools where and when appropriate (2-3): I recognize that this, for a variety of reasons, is a much more complex issue than grade approvals. Nonetheless, I am delighted to see that FGSR is willing to pilot this shift in one or more of the professional programs. Doing so will help to improve our response time to applicants, and in so doing should increase our competitiveness
- Attention to morale and workload (4): together with many other units on campus, FGSR has seen an increase in workload (for example, number and complexity of applications) at a time when resources and campus staffing are highly constrained, and are likely to remain so for another few years. Given the realities of budget, seeking new efficiencies will be important;

moving some aspects of admissions elsewhere, as noted above, will assist to a degree; and ensuring that staff morale is good and workloads fair will be a crucial task for FGSR leadership

- One of the many drivers of rapid change in graduate education is the rise of social media as a conduit for communicating programs, opportunities, and – not least – the outcomes of graduate research and creation (6). FGSR has an opportunity to position itself at the forefront of similarly-sized graduate Faculties, and lead in the use of communication tools like social media to attract students to Regina, and to disseminate their discoveries, creations, and successes
- A key issue of campus conversation at the moment is the Centre for Teaching and Learning. It is good to see FGSR planning to collaborate with CTL (7) in providing professional development opportunities for graduate supervisors
- Our graduate demographic has shifted dramatically over the past decade to include a much greater proportion of visa students, new Canadians, and Indigenous students. As part of the University's drive for meaningful Indigenization, FGSR has a key role to play in attracting, retaining, and graduating Indigenous students in increasing numbers across the full range of graduate disciplines at this University.

I hope you find these brief comments on your response helpful, and am happy to discuss them with you at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Chase'.

Thomas Chase
Provost

Copies: Dr V Timmons, President and Vice-Chancellor
Dr D Malloy, Vice-President (Research)
Council Committee on Academic Mission