

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Senate Graduate Studies Committee

REPORT TO SENATE

The Dean of Graduate Studies is responsible for the general supervision of graduate work at the University and Chairs of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee. This report outlines the position of graduate studies at Simon Fraser University, describes some changes made in the 1989/90 year and makes recommendations for future directions.

I. Enrolments and Degrees

Table I shows the recent history of graduate enrolments and degrees granted. It is taken from the 1989 S.F.U. Fact Book which will contain more detailed breakdowns by department and Faculty.

The FTE enrolment figures must be treated with caution. The process for determining them is subject to considerable variation among departments and is often based on incomplete information on a student's activities. A more consistent and logical scheme for determining FTE enrolments was approved by Senate in 1989. These provisions, and changes to the graduate fee structure, approved by the Board of Governors, improve the accessibility of our programs.

II. Degree Completion

Table II is a survey of the times required by S.F.U. students to earn their graduate degrees. The data are from the Graduate Studies Database system. I am very pleased to note a small but significant decrease in average Master's degree completion times compared with last year's data. It should be noted that these data do not take into account the possibility that a student may have been enrolled part-time for all or part of the program and thus may overstate completion times, especially for programs with large numbers of part-time students. Data on enrolment status may be found in the S.F.U. Fact Book. I remain concerned by what appear in many cases to be excessive times for degree completion. When resources are limited, it is especially important that they be used effectively.

I am actively encouraging departments to ensure both that their degree requirements are realistic and that their students make satisfactory progress, as required by Senate regulations, toward meeting those requirements. I am also considering more rigorous enforcement of the regulations requiring annual progress reports.

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I am also pressing for timely appointments of supervisory committees. In establishing the Graduate Studies Database, I encountered many students who had been here for several years, yet apparently had no supervisory committees. This situation has largely been remedied; each semester, reminders about 'delinquent' students are sent to departments by my office; a minor flood of committee recommendations follows.

III. Grades

Table III gives information on the S.F.U. graduate grades of all students enrolled in the Fall 88 semester; it includes courses taken in that semester up to the end of 89-3 and excludes students who had not yet taken an S.F.U. graduate course. Data were taken from the Registrar's data files and incorporated into and processed within the Graduate Studies Database system.

For each department, a number of measures of the grade distribution are presented. The weighted CGPA ("Wted.") weights each student's CGPA by the number of semester hours completed. The average CGPA ("Aver.") does no weighting, but counts all students equivalently. The median ("Med.") CGPA and the N% CGPA give the CGPA at the median of the distribution and at the Nth percentile. For example, in the third entry of Table III - Business, the top 10% of the students have a CGPA of 3.83 or higher, the top 20% have a CGPA of 3.67 or higher and so on.

The tremendous range in the nature of the grade distributions among departments may stem from two causes: (1) differences in grading practices and (2) differences in the abilities of students. I believe that, most likely, it is a mixture of these with the former a larger contributor than the latter. This range is one of the reasons that I have moved away from interdepartmental comparisons of CGPA in the ranking of applicants for S.F.U. graduate scholarships.

IV. Special Arrangements

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee serves as the Graduate Program Committee of students enrolled under Special Arrangements. I have given special attention to these students. With the goal of ensuring their satisfactory progress, I have brought all their supervisory committees into compliance with Senate's regulations and require up-to-date progress reports as a condition of registration. To date, the response of students and supervisors has been excellent.

I am pleased to report that the defences of theses completed under Special Arrangements, which I chair, have all been quite successful. Table IV provides some data on degree completion. These data are subject to the same caveat about part-time study as the data in Table II.

Historically, Special Arrangements have been a high risk area; students either succeed or fail spectacularly. The number of students enrolled have remained roughly constant around 25. Degree completion has been highly variable: 3 in 1989, 4 in 1988, 7 in 1987, 6 in 1986, 2 in 1985, 6 in 1984, 1 in 1983, 2 in 1982, and 4 in 1981. Other students have dropped out. By the steps outlined above and by rigorous enforcement of the criteria for entrance into Special Arrangements, I hope to improve the success rate.

V. S.G.S.C. Motions

A summary, prepared by the Office of the Registrar, of the motions passed by the S.G.S.C. is presented in Appendix A.

VI. The Future

I remain optimistic about the future of graduate studies at SFU. Exciting new program initiatives are presently under consideration by the S.G.S.C. and its Assessment Committee. These will likely be before Senate in the next few months.

The quality of most of the thesis defences which I have attended has been high. With rare exception, applicants recommended by departments for entry into Ph.D. programs have been very strong. Through more aggressive recruiting of excellent applicants with the aid of entrance scholarships, more rigorous enforcement of the present requirements for satisfactory progress, and more careful monitoring of student supervision, it should be possible to improve the quality of graduate programs and decrease times for degree completion, thus making more effective use of our limited resources.



B.P. Clayman
Dean of Graduate Studies

TABLE I

SUMMARY DATA

	<u>84/85</u>	<u>85/86</u>	<u>86/87</u>	<u>87/88</u>	<u>88/89</u>
Annualized Graduate Enrolments					
Head Count	1419	1377	1366	1426	1444
FTE	1153	1125	1084	1147	1169
Degrees Awarded					
Master's	218	279	214	213	253
Doctoral	37	39	42	50	45
TOTAL	255	318	256	263	298

TABLE II

Times for Degree Completion for Graduands Completing Degree Requirements
in 85-3 through 89-3 as of February 2, 1990

Department	Program	Number of Graduands	Ave. Semesters in Program	Median Semesters in Program
Archaeology	MA	13	13.62	14
Archaeology	PHD	8	21.00	22
Biological Sciences	MPM	49	10.43	10
Biological Sciences	MSC	42	10.67	10
Biological Sciences	PHD	39	16.23	16
Business Administration	MBA	45	7.80	6
Business Administration	MBE	133	10.64	10
Chemistry	MSC	24	9.04	8
Chemistry	PHD	18	16.06	16
Communications	MCM	27	11.00	10
Communications	PHD	4	13.75	12
Computing Science	MSC	66	9.06	8
Computing Science	PHD	7	12.43	15
Criminology	MCR	34	12.44	12
Criminology	PHD	0	-	-
Languages & Linguistics	MA	4	10.00	9
Languages & Linguistics	MAT	7	16.43	15
Languages & Linguistics	PHD	2	26.00	24
Economics	MA	61	7.31	6
Economics	PHD	24	19.21	18
Education	MAE	99	11.88	12
Education	MED	152	10.84	10
Education	MSE	4	12.50	13
Education	PHD	6	12.17	11
English	MA	39	13.23	12
English	PHD	7	18.86	19
Engineering Science	MAP	6	8.33	7
Engineering Science	MEN	0	-	-
Engineering Science	PHD	0	-	-
Geography	MA	12	11.92	11
Geography	MSC	12	8.67	9
Geography	PHD	10	21.40	17
History	MA	18	11.61	11
History	PHD	4	19.00	15
Kinesiology	MSK	28	10.04	10
Kinesiology	PHD	6	17.17	15
Mathematics & Statistics	MSC	40	8.30	8
Mathematics & Statistics	PHD	12	14.25	13
Nat'l Resource Management	MRM	47	11.09	9

Times for Degree Completion for Graduands Completing Degree Requirements
in 85-3 through 89-3 as of February 2, 1990

Philosophy	MA	1	19.00	19
Physics	MSC	24	9.33	9
Physics	PHD	14	13.36	13
Political Science	MA	9	10.22	8
Psychology	MA	36	7.94	7
Psychology	PHD	26	17.46	17
Sociology & Anthropology	MA	10	11.80	11
Sociology & Anthropology	PHD	4	21.50	23
Special Arrangements	MAS	7	10.14	8
Special Arrangements	MSS	3	15.00	16
Special Arrangements	PHS	10	17.20	17
Women's Studies	MA	1	7.00	7

Totals: 1053 Master's Graduands and 201 Ph.D. Graduands

10.38 = Average Semesters in the Master's Program Overall

10 = Median Semesters in the Master's Program Overall

16.98 = Average Semesters in the PhD Program Overall

16 = Median Semesters in the PhD Program Overall

Note: These data are based on the total elapsed time in program and do not take into account part-time or on-leave status.

TABLE III

SUMMARY DATA ON SFU GRADUATE GRADE POINT AVERAGES OF SFU STUDENTS
WHO HAVE TAKEN SFU GRADUATE COURSES AS OF THE END OF SEMESTER 89-3

All Students February 6, 1990

Dept	# of Stu.	CGPA 25%	CGPA 20%	CGPA 10%	CGPA Aver.	CGPA Med.	CGPA Wted.
ARCH	32	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.77	3.81	3.74
BISC	141	3.94	4.00	4.00	3.71	3.78	3.69
BUS	149	3.67	3.67	3.83	3.45	3.46	3.43
CHEM	46	3.71	3.83	4.00	3.57	3.67	3.55
CMNS	49	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.78	3.76
CMPT	56	3.83	3.94	4.00	3.60	3.67	3.61
CRIM	62	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.76	3.82	3.74
DLLL	21	3.94	4.00	4.00	3.68	3.67	3.76
ECON	64	3.62	3.66	3.74	3.39	3.44	3.43
EDUC	305	3.89	3.91	4.00	3.68	3.72	3.68
ENGL	48	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.69	3.75	3.73
ENSC	38	3.73	3.75	3.83	3.48	3.50	3.54
GEOG	32	3.89	4.00	4.00	3.59	3.56	3.53
HIST	29	3.92	3.92	4.00	3.72	3.80	3.72
KIN	39	3.87	3.92	4.00	3.67	3.75	3.66
MAST	59	3.95	3.96	4.00	3.65	3.78	3.72
MRM	56	3.77	3.79	3.85	3.55	3.56	3.59
PHIL	5	3.58	3.58	4.00	3.28	3.50	3.48
PHYS	45	3.91	4.00	4.00	3.56	3.67	3.58
POL	25	3.83	3.83	3.83	3.60	3.58	3.60
PSYC	91	3.94	4.00	4.00	3.76	3.81	3.74
SA	18	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.84	3.83	3.84
SAR	26	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.78	3.87	3.74
WS	11	3.75	3.75	3.80	3.66	3.67	3.67
Total	1447	3.89	3.93	4.00	3.64	3.67	3.63

TABLE IV

Times for Degree Completion for Graduands Completing Degree Requirements
in 85-3 through 89-3 as of February 6, 1990

Dept	Pgm	Name	Semester Completed	Semester Started	Semesters in Program
SAR	MAS		86-1	83-3	8
SAR	MAS		85-3	82-3	10
SAR	MAS		88-1	85-3	8
SAR	MAS		86-3	84-3	7
SAR	MAS		88-3	83-3	16
SAR	MAS		89-2	87-3	6
SAR	MAS		88-3	83-3	16

SAR MAS 7 Graduands; 10.14 = Average Semesters in Program
8 = Median Semesters in Program

Note: These data are based on the total elapsed time in program and do not
take into account part-time or on-leave status.

SAR	MSS		85-3	78-3	22
SAR	MSS		85-3	80-3	16
SAR	MSS		87-3	85-3	7

SAR MSS 3 Graduands; 15.00 = Average Semesters in Program
16 = Median Semesters in Program

Note: These data are based on the total elapsed time in program and do not
take into account part-time or on-leave status.

SAR	PHS		88-1	83-1	16
SAR	PHS		88-1	85-3	8
SAR	PHS		86-2	80-1	20
SAR	PHS		87-1	81-2	18
SAR	PHS		86-2	81-1	17
SAR	PHS		86-3	82-3	13
SAR	PHS		86-3	79-3	22
SAR	PHS		86-2	78-2	25
SAR	PHS		88-3	82-3	19
SAR	PHS		87-1	82-3	14

SAR PHS 10 Graduands; 17.20 = Average Semesters in Program
17 = Median Semesters in Program

Note: These data are based on the total elapsed time in program and do not
take into account part-time or on-leave status.

APPENDIX A

Report to Senate of the Activities of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee from January 1989 to December 1989.

Number of Meetings - 7

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee with delegated power from Senate to:-

1. Recommendations for Admission under Special Arrangements. Seven recommendations were considered. Four recommendations were considered once and approved. One recommendation was considered at three meetings and was not approved. Two recommendations were rejected.

The procedure for evaluating Applications for Admission under Special Arrangements was revised in that these admissions will be evaluated by the Dean of Graduate Studies and an ad hoc subcommittee of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee composed of the Graduate Program Committee Chair(s) and at least one student SGSC member, all in the subject areas relevant to the proposed graduate work. The SGSC delegates to the Dean of Graduate Studies the authority to approve or reject an application, except in cases where any member of the subcommittee or the proposed senior supervisor disagrees with the decision, in which case the application will be considered by the SGSC.

2. Approved the following changes in the General Regulations - Graduate Studies:

- a) Part-time Study: The graduate programs approved for part-time study are the EMBA, M.Eng and MRM. Any program maybe amenable to part-time study if approved by the relevant Graduate Program Committee.

The following addition to the criteria for part-time enrollment was approved:

The student will be spending no more than 50% of his or her productive time on his or her graduate studies.

Graduate Studies Regulation 1.12.1 was changed

FROM: A student shall complete all of the requirements for a Master's degree within five calendar years of enrolment as a Master's student.

TO: A student shall complete all of the requirements for a Master's degree within twelve semesters of full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolment. In addition, all requirements of the Master's degree must be completed within six calendar years of initial enrolment as a Master's student.

Graduate Studies Regulation 1.12.1 was changed

FROM: A student shall complete all the requirements for a Doctoral degree within eight calendar years of enrolment as a Doctoral student.

TO: A student shall complete all the requirements for a Doctoral degree within eight calendar years of initial enrolment as a Doctoral student or, in the case of a student who has transferred from a Master's program into the Doctoral program without completing the Master's degree, within eight calendar years of initial enrolment as a Master's student.

Graduate Studies Regulation 1.6.3 was changed

FROM: In consultation with the graduate student, the Graduate Program Committee will appoint a Senior Supervisor as soon as possible after admission to the graduate program. Normally, this appointment shall be made no later than the beginning of the third semester after the student's admission, although in certain circumstances, and with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies, the appointment can be made later. The Senior Supervisor is the person principally responsible for supervising the student throughout the degree program. Senior Supervisor must hold the rank of Assistant Professor or above.

TO: In consultation with the student, the Graduate Program Committee shall appoint a Senior Supervisor as soon as possible after admission to the graduate program. Normally, this appointment shall be made no later than the beginning of the third semester of full-time equivalent enrolment after the student's admission, althoughetc.

3. Graduate Curriculum Changes in the Departments of Political Science, Chemistry, Physics, School of Computing Science, School of Engineering Science, Natural Resources Management, the Day and Executive MBA program.
4. Approval of new graduate courses in the Departments of Natural Resources Management, Biological Sciences, Economics, Languages, Literature and Linguistics, Mathematics and Statistics, the Day and Executive MBA program and the Faculty of Education.
5. Course revisions in the Department of Geography and Archaeology.
6. The notation "GN", meaning "Grade Not Submitted" was approved and added to the Graduate Grading System for the 1990 Fall Semester.
7. Two new programs were approved: Master of Aquaculture and Master of Fine Arts.