

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Memorandum

TO: Senate

FROM: Bruce P. Clayman
Dean of Graduate Studies

SUBJECT: Calendar Revision - History

DATE: December 22, 1998

At its meeting of September 14, 1998, Senate tabled the motion contained in paper S98-69 to approve calendar revisions for the department of History, that had been approved by the Senate Graduate Studies Committee and SCAP, pending delivery of the report of the Graduate Student Survey Implementation Task Force. That report has now been received and is available to all in the community at: <http://www.sfu.ca/vpacademic/planning/gssitf/index.html>

My reading of the report reveals no recommendation that specifically relates to expectations of time for degree completion. However, the following quotations from the section of the report describing an "ideal department" are highly germane and support the adoption of the proposed calendar revision:

"Prior to accepting an offer of admission the student is made fully aware of expected times of completion, planned course offerings in the next year, and of funding and other resources (office, supplies etc.) that will be made available to them during their time in the program."

"Program requirements The unit has developed clear descriptions of precisely what is required to graduate including the expectations of each requirement (e.g., of courses, projects, theses, seminar presentations, oral examinations, and depth, field and comprehensive examinations) which are made available to the graduate students."

As I have in the past, I support very strongly making available to students and prospective students a clear statement of the expectations of the department. Our graduate regulations require that the academic progress of every student be evaluated annually and, if progress is found to be unsatisfactory, require remedial action or withdrawal. A clear statement of what constitutes satisfactory progress is extremely helpful to both students and departments when making this determination. The calendar language proposed by History comprises part of that clear statement and should I believe be approved by Senate. I also continue to encourage other departments to consider similar statements of expectations for inclusion in the calendar.

Motion: *Referred back to SGSC by Senate (s.m. 11/1/99)*

"that Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors as set forth in S.99-12 and amended by SCAR, the following addition to the Calendar entry for Graduate Studies in the Department of History:

Full-time M.A. thesis-option students are expected to complete their degree requirements in a maximum of five semesters, and project-option students in a maximum of three semesters. Part-time thesis-option students are expected to

complete their degree requirements in a maximum of eight semesters and part-time project-ption students in a maximum of six semesters.”

I shall be pleased to address this matter when it is placed on Senate's agenda and ask that Dr. Jack Little, whose memorandum of April 7, 1998 is appended to paper S98-69, be invited to participate in the discussion.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Bruce Clayman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the main text block.

c. J. Little

S I M O N F R A S E R U N I V E R S I T Y
D E P A R T M E N T O F H I S T O R Y

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: April 7, 1998
TO: Roger Blackman, Associate Dean of Arts
FROM: Jack Little, Chair History GPC
RE: Addition to Calendar Text
CC:

With the support of the Dean of Graduate Studies, a number of years ago the History Department stipulated that the expected MA completion time was five semesters for full-time thesis students, and three semesters for full-time project-option students.

Part-time students can take an extra year. These requirements appear in the department's Graduate Brochure, but we now wish to add them to the Calendar. The rationale for having such a time limit is quite simply to encourage students to complete their degrees within a reasonable amount of time. Though the policy has not been rigorously enforced, our completion times have improved dramatically since it was introduced. The reason we wish to add this policy to the calendar is to ensure that students and supervisors realize that it has the university's sanction.

The exact wording of the calendar text which we wish to add is as follows:

"Full-time thesis-option students are expected to complete their degree requirements in a maximum of five semesters, and project-option students in three. Part-time students may take one additional year for completion."

J. J. Little