

Table 5

Graduate Studies

The distinctive character of a university is a deep commitment to the creation of knowledge as the essential foundation of all aspects of university life. In the case of a research-intensive university, this commitment includes vibrant and flourishing graduate programs that enrich the academic community at all levels, constitute a major source of the nation's intellectual wealth, and distinguish Canada as an important, active partner on the international scene.

A series of reflections and recommendations flows from the above statement. They may be roughly grouped into the following six areas:

1. A holistic approach. The deep commitment to the creation of knowledge should be immediately apparent on **all levels and in all aspects of university life**. “How is knowledge creation being enhanced?” should be routinely asked by all sectors before *any* decisions are made.

One implication of this commitment would involve much greater care in choosing the appropriate **vocabulary and expressions** to describe university life, keeping in mind that universities are always adapting to changing societal conditions. Thus, for example, it is imperative to review the practice of using corporate/business models as descriptors of the distinctive relationships fostered within the research-intensive university in the early twenty-first century (e.g. the use of the term “student” rather than “client”). The language used to describe universities should not only stress the importance of knowledge creation but also acknowledge that this importance can be articulated as needed and in many ways by a changing society. Similarly, we would be wise to emphasize the truly integrated nature of knowledge creation by abandoning such currently accepted juxtapositions as teaching/research (perhaps replacing this with the broader term “scholarship”) and academic/non-academic staff.

The University of Ottawa’s deep commitment to knowledge creation should be evident to students at all levels, including undergraduate programs (and not just fourth-year specialist courses). Beginning in their first year, for example, undergraduates should be informed of graduate research activities at the University, and should be encouraged to acquire a culture of continuing learning that goes beyond an undergraduate degree. Similarly, it is understood that, regardless of their requirements (e.g. course-based or thesis-based master's programs), all graduate programs focus on knowledge creation and involve a deep commitment to research activities.

- ‘ The roles of **curiosity and discovery** as the drivers of knowledge creation should be emphasized on campus and, for example, in publications about the University.
- ‘ The University should continue to focus on **strategic areas of development** to best channel its resources and its knowledge-creation specialities, thus enhancing its distinctive place on the post-secondary landscape. These areas of focus need to be regularly examined and adjusted in keeping with new directions in research and emerging areas of strength. In examining strategic areas, we need to ensure that all fields are supported appropriately. We must remember that we are all equal members of the university community and that we all want to contribute to “knowledge creation” through increased involvement with students interested in graduate research.

2. Resources. Commitment to knowledge creation implies not simply maintaining but rather increasing the depth and range of the University’s resources: **human, physical/ environmental, administrative, and financial.**

Human resources

- ‘ The University should follow the best practices to ensure the hiring of well-published **faculty** dedicated to graduate studies, that is, to excellence in teaching, research, supervision, and mentoring, and thus to creating an intellectually stimulating, positive setting that truly fosters knowledge creation.
- ‘ The University should **recruit and pay** people what they are worth. Graduate students, especially in the humanities and social sciences, are seriously underpaid or, in some cases, do not receive financial support. Special attention should be given to interdisciplinary graduate students to make sure they don’t fall between the cracks for lack of appropriate funding. Although a culture of research and publication needs to be part of every academic unit, new faculty should also be hired for their potential as “**team**” **players** whose versatility and vitality can help create an intellectually challenging and vibrant setting
- ‘ The University needs to be more flexible in its **hiring practices**. Where appropriate, for example, part-time tenure-track positions or "teaching associates" or "clinical teaching" positions should be considered.
- ‘ The University should actively recruit and admit with appropriate financial support the best **students whose** background preparation matches the requirements and the research strengths of their particular program.

- ‘ The University should hire the actual number of competent bilingual **support staff** needed to administer graduate programs effectively and with minimal bureaucracy, so that faculty and students can better devote their time and energy to knowledge creation.

Physical Resources/environment

- ‘ The **library** is a pillar that supports knowledge creation across the disciplines, and especially in the social sciences and humanities. It must provide the print and electronic resources, as well as the expertise required by faculty and students in the 21st century. The University should increase its holdings by conducting targeted fundraising, and by actively soliciting collections that dovetail with areas of research interest. Current holdings should not be “rationalized” (i.e. disposed of). This short-sighted measure focuses only on current document-circulation patterns, and makes no provision for future directions in research. Great libraries are powerful magnets for scholars and students.
- ‘ **Labs and technical equipment.** Labs and lab equipment (including computer labs) must be up-to-date, of sufficient number, and readily accessible to properly service the needs of faculty and graduate students. We need top facilities to attract top researchers across the disciplines, not only in the sciences but also in the humanities, where, for example, computer labs are now essential.
- ‘ With the University’s shift toward electronic communications (including the sending of messages to students via InfoWeb, tabulating and posting grades, recruiting, etc.), **computers** should be considered standard equipment (just like telephones) for all professors. Similarly, graduate students (including those in interdisciplinary programs) should have easy access to up-to-date computers and printers.
- ‘ **The environment.** Creativity requires interaction. We need to create a community on campus, not only through intellectual engagement, but also through a sense of **attachment to place**. Graduate students need a graduate house as well as office space. Faculty and students need a reading room in the library and places outside of their specific academic units to gather comfortably and discuss spontaneously. This need is the same for all graduate students, whether or not their programs are course-based or thesis-based.

Administrative

Development of graduate studies is a key to the advancement of the University and its mission. Above all, the **FGPS has** to be more involved in all aspects of University life to create a culture of deep commitment to and stimulation of knowledge creation. We are a few years away from the influx of the double cohort into the graduate studies stream, but we need to prepare immediately both for that opportunity and for the results of increasing enrolment at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Leadership is required at all levels, beginning with the Faculty of Graduate Studies, which, through its programs, enriches the whole institution.

- ‘ The **FGPS** must continue to insist upon and encourage excellence in research (as demonstrated by publication in scholarly peer-reviewed venues) as the fundamental criterion for **membership** in the FGPS and thus for the supervision of dissertations. In addition, the FGPS should play a more active role in the hiring of new professors.
- ‘ The University should plan to increase **enrolment** in graduate studies from the current 13% to 20% of all full-time students. This increased proportion should be distributed appropriately across the graduate programs.

Financial resources

Sufficient funding needs to be in place to enable all activities to run smoothly, including hirings and renewals, equipment and other resource purchases of equipment and other physical resources, and to prompt the best graduate students to attend the University.

3. A vibrant and flourishing graduate program is the product of our efforts to offer students and faculty a high-quality setting for their work, that is, a welcoming environment to explore and learn in, and first-rate support services that, in combination, foster learning, teaching, and research.

There is no single **best graduate-studies model**; indeed, the University has demonstrated the appropriateness of many different program requirements (course-based or thesis-based, for example), all of which reflect a commitment to knowledge creation. Success will follow those programs that have a clearly articulated mission and actually follow through on that mission (i.e. truth in advertising): that is, when the mission is reflected in the construction of the program, in its delivery, in the hiring of staff, and in the recruitment of students who fit well there. Academic administrators should know how their colleagues at other universities organize and deliver programs, particularly since new students engage in detailed “**comparison shopping**” of most programs, including their delivery and their funding.

Among the most significant factors in successful programs is excellent **supervision**. This requires a clear articulation of the student-supervisor relationship, and the responsibilities of both in each form of interaction (one-on-one thesis work or many-to-one project work, etc.). Individual academic units and the FGPS have important roles to play here.

- ‘ The University should recognize the significance of **mentoring and supervision** by a) continually re-visiting the guidelines for and responsibilities of the supervisor, the institution, and the student; b) being vigilant and clear in its delineation of ethical issues; c) offering specific training for supervision; d) creating a Scholar of the Year Award as a way to recognize the combination of teaching, research and mentoring involved in graduate studies.
- ‘ Academic units should be encouraged to design tools that help achieve the best **match** between student and supervisor at the earliest possible opportunity.
- ‘ Quality supervision should be **supported** by scholarships, teaching assistantships, and careful attention to quick progress through a realistically conceived program of studies.
- ‘ High achievers should be given the tools and encouragement to strive for national and international **scholarships** and to share the results of their **research** through conferences and publications in all fields.

The second-most frequently cited factor of success is competitive, attractive **funding** for graduate students, so they can concentrate fully on their studies.

- ‘ Top-ranking potential students should be given the opportunity to **visit the campus** and to meet with potential supervisors in their field.
- ‘ **Tuition-fee waivers** should be widely advertised for international students.
- ‘ Students and new faculty should be **recruited** by the best means, including professors who are articulate ambassadors for the University. Travel to other institutions should be encouraged and facilitated, not only to conduct research or deliver papers, but also to speak to students and professors about the University.

The graduate student experience must also embrace more than the pursuit of intellectual excellence; it must also be a highly enriching **human experience**.

- ‘ A high-quality graduate experience includes active involvement in the **graduate community**, such as GSAED, Let’s Talk Science, and other student organizations and volunteer activities. This involvement should be encouraged, recognized,

and even rewarded.

- ‘ A high-quality graduate experience also stems from special opportunities that establish a sense of community: colloquia, symposia, guest lectures, etc. at which faculty and students **create and exchange** ideas.

What’s more, the quality of the graduate experience rests on supportive **administrative structures**, that is, on clearly articulated policies and regulations, as well as prompt and efficient **service** (admissions, registration, libraries, etc.).

- ‘ An environment that encourages creativity, discovery, and flexibility is a nurturing one. The University should help faculty and students who wish to launch new projects achieve what they want to without excessive bureaucratic interference.

4. Collaboration. By definition, universities are primarily structured around individuals. This feature is evident in that students and professors are evaluated in terms of their personal records. At the same time, universities recognize that the creation of knowledge is fundamentally collaborative, since no individual can advance understandings without relating to and utilizing the work of others. Over the centuries, universities developed academic units (departments, faculties, research centres, etc.) as a way to group individuals based on certain ways of knowing and on the objects of study. This privileging of individuals is still paramount—and useful—in a number of fields, especially in the humanities and social sciences. Those who wish to collaborate, however, may find that the “vertical” structures of academic units can isolate them from those outside their unit and whose collaboration could be very fruitful.

- ‘ FGPS should produce a clear guide on issues of **authorship**, intellectual contribution, and the **ethics** involved in collaboration between colleagues and between professors and students. Incentives must be put in place for good supervision and for mutually advantageous collaboration.
- ‘ Institutional arrangements (revolving around the autonomy and primacy of departmental units) should be revisited, so that we can create **incentives** for developing interdisciplinary, cross-faculty collaborative programs and centres, and so that resources are well defined and based on specific targets and particular areas.
- ‘ Collaborative projects of all kinds should be possible, and they should be facilitated by the university structures when useful to all concerned. However, one **drawback** of collaborative work is that it may not encourage the

development of a separate, personal research vision. This is a particular danger for graduate students in certain fields, who must leave the University with a distinct research profile.

- ‘ If collaborative and problem-based interdisciplinary projects are to be encouraged, then funding councils, publishers, and other structures need to be **lobbied for change**. Major academic publishers such as Cambridge and Oxford, for example, refuse to publish collaborative works (e.g. anthologies of essays on a single theme).
- ‘ While collaboration should be encouraged where useful, it should also be possible for **individual researchers** to continue researching and publishing. In the humanities, individual researchers continue to make the greatest impact on scholarship and attract the most students. Here, the nature of the object studied (the human experience), and thus the inherently hermeneutic nature of humanities research, makes for a distinct mode of researching, publication, and supervision.

5. Serving society at large. The intellectual wealth of universities underpins knowledge-based societies in two basic ways: by educating significant proportions of the population; and by creating knowledge the larger society can use. In this context, the distinctive role of the University of Ottawa reflects its location in the federal and international capital of Canada and its historic commitment to the study of issues particularly relevant in Canada. The University’s use of French and English consolidates this distinctive role by making it easier for students and researchers to discover and experience two of Canada’s and the world’s great intellectual and cultural traditions.

- ‘ One of the major challenges for the University is the effective and accurate **communication** of its goals and mission to society at large. It must be reiterated that universities are not simply transmitters of knowledge (the function of colleges, technical schools, and other institutions of higher learning). Universities fuel economies as a by-product (rather than as the primary object) of their deep commitment to knowledge creation; they are essentially a public rather than a private good. In this context, graduate programs must be described first and foremost in terms of knowledge creation.
- ‘ The University is not the only creator of knowledge; hence, it must clearly define **its unique place** in the triad of Government-Industry-University.
- ‘ Our faculty and some of our graduate students already appear in public forums (National Arts Centre, public library panels, CBC Radio, adjudication of various

types, etc.). We should continue **to serve** the larger Canadian community in this way, explaining our own research to the public and helping shape decisions and decision-makers of all kinds.

A special mission of the University is **bilingualism**. In addition, the history and current character of the University (as articulated in the slogan “Canada’s University”) is steeped in **multiculturalism**. Globalization, for its part, has shown both the benefits and challenges of maintaining bilingualism.

- ‘ The University must clarify its **policy** on bilingualism, especially as the institution places new emphasis on linguistic choice (“English or French, the choice is yours”).
- ‘ The University must provide **the resources and tools** to facilitate the learning of French or English for both graduate students and faculty; for example, rather than insisting on bilingualism before admission, it may be preferable to ease and support language learning after arrival on campus.
- ‘ Attention must be directed to how **potential students and faculty perceive bilingualism**. At present, many believe that bilingualism is a prerequisite for all disciplines. Similarly, the University must recognize that, for some international students for whom English and French may be the second if not then third or fourth language, official bilingualism may be seen as a serious obstacle to graduate studies.
- ‘ The University needs to articulate its policy on multiculturalism and, more specifically, on **international students**, especially in light of its branding as “Canada’s University.”
- ‘ The University’s commitment to bilingualism should be reflected in its **graduate student population**. More should be done to attract francophone students both from Canada and abroad.

6. The University’s reputation. Despite its location and history, the University of Ottawa has only a **modest** profile nationally and a **marginal** one internationally. Though these profiles have increased in recent years, new policies and additional resources are urgently required for the University to fulfil its potential as a significant contributor to the national and international scene. Specifically, policies and resources are especially needed for graduate programs, so that we can a) attract a larger proportion of students from outside Ontario and outside Canada; b) support research travel by graduate students within and beyond Canada; and c) finance collaborative projects across institutions and societies, and so forth.

- ‘ Key researchers at the University are well-known internationally but almost invisible within the institution. The reputation of the faculty should be more actively promoted both inside and outside the University. The University should actively celebrate achievement, reward creativity, strength, and productivity, and **advertise our excellence, both on and off campus.**
- ‘ International faculty and student **exchanges** are a productive way of raising the University’s profile abroad. Still, the University must ensure that exchange programs are more than transactions of paper; only those involving direct participation should be maintained.
- ‘ The University has relatively few international graduate students, and offers few incentives for these students to apply to the University. These numbers need to increase, and adequate funding must be put in place as a way to boost them. At the moment, only 30 **international graduate scholarships** are offered every year, one of the lowest rates in Canada. That means that only 30 students will go back to their countries and talk about Canada and the University.
- ‘ The University should engage in **target marketing** at all venues, including national and international conferences, and events (including sporting events).

Recommendations

- ‘ That all decisions on campus be taken in light of the University’s deep commitment to knowledge creation;
- ‘ That the University increase enrolment in graduate studies from the current 13% to 20% of all full-time students;
- ‘ That the University regularly re-examine its *Strategic Areas of Development*;
- ‘ That the University increase the number of Differential Tuition- Fee Waivers;
- ‘ That the University develop awareness and sensitivity toward the spectrum of relationships and different models involved when addressing issues of collaboration and graduate supervision;
- ‘ That the University remain open to potential partnerships and remove obstacles to innovation;

- ‘ That the University remain open to a variety of research models, including the single-researcher model;
- ‘ That the University establish new policies and invest additional resources to strengthen its role nationally and internationally;
- ‘ That the University track its graduates, so that, in the future, we have a clear picture of how these graduates have helped Canadian society (e.g. number that have held public office, achieved high government appointments, Olympic status, etc.);
- ‘ That the University establish a number of well-advertised full scholarships per province and territory to attract top graduate and undergraduate students;
- ‘ That the University make a concerted effort to attract francophone students within and outside of Canada.