Engineering Graduate Studies Committee – Annual Committee Report for 2003-4

The Engineering Graduate Studies Committee met seven times during 2003-4 academic year. The major committee actions and initiatives are listed below.

1. The committee reviewed and approved two new graduate programs in the Department of Biomedical Engineering: Master of Engineering and Doctor of Philosophy. The School of Engineering faculty, Arts, Sciences and Engineering faculty, the Provost, and the Board of Trustees, subsequently approved the degree programs.

2. The committee established a new policy with respect to entering graduate students being required to audit specific undergraduate courses. The policy is stated below and process guidelines are being distributed to the school’s departments.

   **Policy Regarding Recorded Audit for Graduate Students in the School of Engineering:**
   A department may require incoming graduate students to audit specific undergraduate courses when the student’s undergraduate background makes taking required graduate courses impractical. The specific courses to be audited must be identified to the student in writing prior to their matriculation.

3. The committee clarified the school’s policy regarding graduate student advising and mentorship. The policy is stated below.

   **Policy Regarding Graduate Students Advising and Mentorship in the School of Engineering**
   Providing guidance to graduate students in their programs of study, research and career advice is a core responsibility of a graduate faculty. Several individuals involved with the student’s degree program may fulfill these roles. In particular, it is expected that all graduate students have an academic advisor, responsible for advising their program of study, who is a full-time faculty member of the student’s home department. Students doing theses will also have research supervisors. Subject to departmental approval, a primary thesis supervisor need not be full-time faculty in the student’s home department. In these cases, a full-time faculty member of the home department should be identified and agree to serve on the thesis committee as co-thesis supervisor.

4. The committee surveyed the current masters degree programs in the School of Engineering and unanimously endorsed a school-wide requirement that all masters programs require 10 course credits unless the program is part of a dual degree masters program.

5. The committee established the following policy regarding graduate student participation in commencement.

   **Policy Regarding Graduate Student Participation in Commencement**
   Participation of School of Engineering graduate degree candidates in the May commencement exercises is limited to those candidates who have completed all requirements for their respective degrees with the exception of MS in Engineering Management (MSEM) degree candidates. Candidates in the MSEM program, who have completed all degree requirements except for the final summer program required for all Gordon Institute students, may participate in commencement.
6. The committee reviewed current admissions deadlines and procedures, and recommended that
- all part-time applications be assessed on a rolling basis, and
- the fall admission deadline for full-time students be moved to February 1 for domestic applicants and January 1 (current deadline) for international applicants.

7. The committee reviewed and recommended several students for several fellowship and award programs:
   Provost’s Fellows: The committee recommended 5 students for Provost’s Fellows; the Graduate Education Council selected 3. The three students accepted admissions offers from other universities.
   Dean’s Fellows: The committee approved 4 students for Dean’s Fellows, which entails a supplemental fellowship of $12,000/year for two years, with required department cost matching and a commitment to maintain support through a two additional doctoral study years. Two students accepted Dean’s Fellow appointments and two declined.
   Award for Outstanding Graduate Contributor to Engineering Education: shared by Ethan Danahy (Electrical & Computer Engineering) and Matthew Dombach (Mechanical Engineering).
   Award for Outstanding Graduate Researcher: Vassilis Karageorgiou (Chemical & Biological Engineering)
   R. Hollister Award for Community Service and Citizenship: Peter Chandonait (Civil & Environmental Engineering), shared with James Huntley (Urban & Environmental Policy and Planning).

8. The committee identified the need for more focused and aggressive graduate student recruiting. While the departments were pleased that the quality of their applicant pool increased, the quality increase made successful recruiting more difficult. The experiences with the Provost’s and Dean’s Fellows candidates illustrate this competitiveness. With the encouragement of Dean Abriola, the committee is formulating a recruiting plan for 2004-5. An ancillary marketing study for School of Engineering graduate programs is also being conducted by a Gordon Institute student as his major masters project. This marketing report and the committee’s recruiting plan will be made available under separate cover.

9. A department roundtable was incorporated into every committee meeting. This proved to be a particularly valuable means of exchanging information and identifying important operational and strategic issues. The assistance of the staff of the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, particular Gretchen Inman and Alida Poirier, were of great help to the committee.

The continuing growth of research and graduate education within the School of Engineering and in interschool programs will make next year’s committee work even more challenging. Next year’s committee will be chaired by Sergio Fantini, while Vincent Manno is on-leave. The committee chair would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire committee member for their collegiality and hard work during this very productive year.

For the committee,

Vincent Manno, chair

2003-4 Engineering Graduate Studies Committee:
Laurie Baise (Civil & Environmental Engineering)  Joseph Noonan (Electrical & Computer Engineering)
Sergio Fantini (Biomedical Engineering)  Nak-ho Sung (Chemical & Biological Engineering)
Robert Greif (Mechanical Engineering)  Mary Viola (Gordon Institute)
Roni Khordon (Computer Science)

Ex-officio: Vincent Manno (Associate Dean, chair)
          Alida Poirier (Graduate & Professional Studies)