

Submitted by R.B. Lennox, July 7, 2013

The following is the Department of Chemistry's formal response to the Cyclical Review Committee's report received June 12, 2013. This response is directed to the recommendations presented by the Review Committee (RC) and not explicitly the narrative commentary that precedes each set of recommendations.

The Department will review its Hiring Plan in Fall 2013. The Department will remain alert to opportunistic hirings – recognizing that an opportunistic hiring usually involves getting early credit for a potential retirement. The Department will review the issue of faculty activity in theoretical chemistry in the context of hiring priorities discussions.

The Department supports this recommendation, noting that the requests-to-hire for 2013-14 had to be submitted June 27, 2013 to the Faculty of Science. Note that one of the positions (the joint Chemistry-

(in terms of specific research themes) graduate student admissions, as described in the Self Study Report, will continue in the coming year as will new approaches to graduate student recruitment.

(i) Number of graduate students: The Department's recruitment and admissions policy is linked to laboratory capacity and research funding/resources. Since the renovations, research funding is now the principal limiting factor in terms of graduate student numbers. We will continue to undertake an annual survey to determine graduate student funding capacity, noting that there are very few research groups who have sustained funding in excess of their present cohort of students.

(ii) Quality of graduate students: The average admissions GPA of graduate students has been steadily rising over recent years. The Department will review (Fall 2013) the means to attract more scholarship-level students. We note that additional methods of attracting scholarship students will be explored, as traditional methods such as financial inducements ("top-ups") no longer seem to provide a competitive advantage in recruitment.

Both of these issues will be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee in the Fall 2013.

The Department submitted a request April 4, 2013 for shared administrative support for the Chief Advisor/Director of Undergraduate Studies, as well as for the Graduate Program Administrator. Notwithstanding current budgetary pressures this position remains a Departmental priority.

The two Faculty Lecturers are working at capacity, and each is active in both course and laboratory teaching. The Department strongly supports the recommendation of hiring additional Faculty Lecturers, while maintaining the present number of tenure-track faculty. The Department also strongly supports the idea of a specific position of Course Manager and will explore this concept with the Faculty of Science.

The undergraduate Chemistry students indeed have a direct link to the Chair and Director of Undergraduate Studies through their association (CUSS). Both formal and informal meetings are the norm, with some year-to-year vs



the undergraduate teaching mission is an uncertain solution to this problem given that the teaching/research time competition problem applies to graduate students as well as faculty. A time-neutral redistribution of TA duties might however provide some much needed relief. Substitution of some current tasks with marking and course management tasks will thus be explored.

The issue of fund administration is one governed principally by either tri-council rules or the terms of a contract. The Departmental FST oversees research grant finances and compliance issues, but ultimately the grant holder is responsible for their grants. The complexity of some contracts appear to be disproportionate to the accruable research benefits. The University (and its researchers) should carefully review the terms and conditions of contracts and outright refuse contracts that require unreasonable and unmanageable levels of administrative support, such as monthly reports to meet monthly budgetary targets. Alternatively, given that contracts garner significant indirect costs (usually 40%), the Department would welcome 'fund facilitators' being assigned and supported by the University. Such a facilitator would focus of grant administration within research groups but not oversight and compliance issues.

This recommendation might have arisen from a misunderstanding among some students regarding the design and intended use of the research office space in the new research laboratories. The design implemented was derived from a



University-to-university practices vary greatly regarding net tuition fee costs carried by a graduate student and cited gross stipend levels are often misleading. It is known, however, that the current stipend for a McGill Chemistry student is currently less than that at UBC, Toronto, and Alberta but is greater than that for U. Ottawa and McMaster, for example.

The 180 hours represents two TA sessions per week, usually for a 13 week term, paid out at the hourly rates defined by the AGSEM collective agreement. This is the standard fulltime TA assignment as defined by the union. The Department cannot come to a separate compensation agreement with its graduate students. It also must abide by the terms of the priority pool conditions as set out by the collective agreement. A 90 hour per term (i.e. one TA session) assignment per graduate student is possible but will increase the funds required from a supervisor's research funds. Moreover, limiting a typical graduate student to one TA session per term will lead to staffing shortfalls in the undergraduate laboratories. The Department will discuss in Fall 2013 the implications of implementing a 90hr TA period in funding and teaching terms.