



TO: Planning and Budget Committee

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DATE: April 26, 2006

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION: School of Graduate Studies: Proposal for a new PhD in Planning to be offered through the Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts and Science.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Excerpt from the terms of reference for the Planning and Budget Committee:

4.4.2. The Committee advises the Academic Board on the planning and resource and proposals to establish, disestablish or significantly restructure academic programs. implications might include significant planning and budgetary changes within the significant effects on other divisions, the University as a whole and the public.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

To be presented to SGS Council on April 25, 2006.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The proposal for a new PhD in planning builds on the success of the current MScPl program and is a response to the growing demand for PhD-trained planners in universities and in the world of professional practice. A brief description is provided in the attached Executive Summary.

The degree name and designation have been proposed to convey the breadth of the doctoral program, and given the association of the proposed PhD program with the Masters in Planning. The size of the program has been determined in the context of financial implications and resources available to the program. Acceptances would be re-visited in the future, and enrolment will likely increase.

The proposal has received the support of related units at the University, including the Centre for Urban and Community Studies, the Urban Studies Program (Innis College), the Centre for the Environment, and the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

The Department of Geography and the Faculty of Arts and Science have committed to provide all the resources needed for this program. There are no implications for the University budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning and Budget Committee recommends to the Academic Board:

THAT the PhD in Planning at the Faculty of Arts and Science Department of Geography be approved, effective September 2007.

Executive Summary

The primary initiative described in this proposal is the establishment of a new Ph.D. in Planning to be situated within the Department of Geography and Program in Planning. The Ph.D. in Planning will complement existing graduate programs within the Department, and build on the highly successful M.Sc.Pl. Degree program in Planning. The proposed initiative fits squarely within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences academic plan as it capitalizes on current strengths in Planning/Geography in urban, regional and environmental research. It also complements those existing and planned units on campus with urban interests, and it will create important linkages between the University and public policy agencies as well as local communities. The University's Stepping-Up Plan also emphasized the urban realm as one of its five long-term priorities.

Pedagogical Issues

There is a great deal of energy, enthusiasm and intellectual commitment within the Department in support of the development of a Planning Ph.D. program. The faculty believes that a Ph.D. in Planning will allow many of us to develop even stronger synergies between our research and our teaching than is now the case and will enhance our ability to attract high quality students.

Demand

Every year, outstanding graduates from our own M.Sc.Pl. program go on to pursue a Ph.D. in Planning or a closely related field elsewhere in Canada, the UK or the United States. There is further evidence of strong demand for doctoral training in the field internationally, as demonstrated by frequent unsolicited requests from potential students. The supply of Ph.D.-trained planners in Canada also does not meet the current demand.

Rationale

The rationale for the proposed Ph.D., in addition to the increasing demand for academic faculty and professional planners, is that we have the resources and expertise to create a first-class program within the Department. We need the intellectual legitimacy and external visibility of a separate Ph.D. in Planning, which would not be provided by a stream within the existing Geography program, in order to be competitive, to attract high-quality students, and to secure professional accreditation. The Department of Geography is the logical place to host such a program since it already has enough faculty strength in the fields of urban research, spatial planning and environmental sustainability to support the proposal.

Resource Implications

The Department's recent Graduate Enrolment Expansion Plan (October 2005) envisions starting with a class of three Planning Ph.D. students in the fall of 2007 and then admitting three students in each subsequent year for a total projected/steady-state enrolment in the program of 12 by 2010-2011. We have received approval from the Dean to increase the number of Ph.D. students in the Department, including 12 Planning Ph.D. students. The Department will ensure that each additional student receives the required TA and RA support as part of the guaranteed minimum funding package and as for all our Ph.D. students, work effectively with our own scholarships to substantially enhance this. As outlined elsewhere in this proposal we feel that we have the faculty resources and facilities in place or in the pipeline, to mount an effective and efficient Ph.D. program in Planning.

Program Impact on other Divisions

The Director of Planning has consulted with the Centre for Environment (formerly the Institute of Environmental Studies), Innis College, the Centre for Urban and Community Studies and the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design. These are the four existing academic units identified as having a specific interest in the creation of a Ph.D. in Planning. All four support the proposal.