

**Administrative Response to the Report of the
University Ombudsperson: 2002-2003**
(October 17, 2003)

Overview:

The administration thanks the Ombudsperson for her very informative report. It is clear that progress is being made in addressing many of the concerns raised in previous reports. The administration will continue to invest in communication of information, dissemination of best practices and training of administrators to ensure that issues of concern are prevented, or dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

Response to Recommendations:

The following administrative responses to specific recommendations from the Ombudsperson are made in accordance with the direction made by Governing Council that the University Administration provide an annual response to the Ombudsperson's Report.

Recommendation 1: That, pending the upcoming operational review of the Office of English Language and Writing Support, the Administration provide an ongoing and expanded resource allocation for this important program, designed specifically for those graduate students whose first language is not English.

The Provost's Office is committed to working with the School of Graduate Studies on this issue. This area will be reviewed as part of the Academic Planning exercise.

I would request that, as part of the Administration's Response to this year's annual report, the Administration provide an update as to the outcome of this group's [Safety in Field Research] consultation in terms of this important area of policy/procedural review and development, campus-wide, as it relates to graduate students.

With the change in leadership and responsibilities in the offices of the Vice-Provost, Students and the Vice-President, Research, some aspects of this consultation have been delayed. A database capable of identifying and locating all students, staff and faculty who are outside the country on University business has been developed, and will be activated this fall. In the next three months, the Vice-Provost, Students will bring together University offices with responsibilities for graduate students and staff conducting field research. This group will consider methods to extend the safety and emergency services currently being provided by the Safety Abroad Advisor.

Recommendation 2(a): That academic units incorporate, as a matter of practice, the University’s “Statement of Institutional Purpose”(in part) and “Statement on Human Rights” (See Appendix H) in their academic calendars, as well as other important publications; and,

Recommendation 2 (b): That this information be prominently featured in such publications with reference, wherever appropriate, to the publications’ subsequent listings of the University’s equity and diversity representatives, including the members of the Equity Issues Advisory Group and the Office of the University Ombudsperson.

The Provost’s Office agrees that prominent listing of these statements is important. The University Registrar is currently reviewing core listings in all calendars, and will take this recommendation into account. The Statement of Institutional Purpose may be revised by Governing Council as a result of the academic planning exercise. A new statement would therefore need to be disseminated broadly.