

Question from Senator J. Welsh, President, Society of Graduate and Professional Students (Submitted for the October 23, 2008)

Given that the Province of Ontario provides standards for work space for graduate students in various disciplines, that the Ontario Reaching Higher program allocates capital funding to universities specifically for the space needs related to graduate student enrolment growth, that graduate student enrolments at Queen's have increased greatly under the Reaching Higher program, and that Queen's has already begun receiving Reaching Higher capital funds calculated according to graduate student enrolment growth, the Society of Graduate and Professional Students would like to know:

- a) What is the current estimate of total Reaching Higher graduate student capital funds Queen's is set to receive?
- b) How much has been received to date?
- c) How are the funds being allocated?
- d) How much total work space is currently allocated to graduate students at Queen's?
- e) What percentage of the standard graduate student work space, across each discipline, does this represent at Queen's?
- f) How has this changed since the Reaching Higher program began in 2003?

Response provided by Dr. Patrick Deane, Vice-Principal (Academic), Dr. Janice Deakin, Associate Vice-Principal & Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research and Mr. Andrew Simpson, Vice-Principal (Operations & Finance)

The purpose of the Graduate Capital grants, as stated by the government, is to "support capital construction and renovation in support of graduate expansion". To date Queen's has received \$2.7 million in graduate capital funding. The future annual funding stream will depend on the University's ability to meet graduate enrollment growth targets.

The graduate capital funding has contributed to the University's overall capital program, of which graduate expansion is an important component. Long before the Reaching Higher program, the University started to invest in infrastructure required to accommodate the growth of graduate programs. The capital construction and renovation projects funded by the University in the recent years significantly added and improved space for graduate students. Some examples of completed projects include: Louise D. Acton Building (School of Rehabilitation Therapy), Goodwin Building (Mining), Dupuis Hall (Chemical Engineering), Ontario Hall (Art), Goodes Hall (Business), and Chernoff Hall (Chemistry).

From 2001-02 to 2007-08, the total number of graduate students at Queen's has grown 41% from 2,224 to 3,127. In the same period of time, office space allocated to graduate students has increased 41%, from 6,562 M² to 9,241 M². Applying an average renovation cost factor, this increase in graduate student office space represented at least \$4.2 million investment from the University.

While the Ontario government does not stipulate a standard for the amount of office space for a graduate student, a commonly-used metric developed by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) suggests 4 M² per student as a benchmark. Queen's provided on average 3 M² per graduate student in 2007-08, which is ranked sixth in Ontario.

In addition to graduate office space, the University also provides study space on campus both within and outside the library system. While it is difficult to delineate graduate study space from undergraduate, we can report that Queen's is number 2 in Ontario, second only to the University of Toronto (St. George campus) in on-campus study space for students overall.

Finally, in the development of new graduate programs and the periodic assessment of ongoing programs, space requirements for graduate students are reviewed as part of a seven-year cycle by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS). While no specific square footage requirements are provided, appraisers focus on space available specifically earmarked for graduate students and the graduate program in general. On occasions where space is not adequate (as described by either the university or noted by appraisers during their campus visit), information is requested from the university about plans to address the problems.