Proposal for renaming the *Office of Graduate Studies* to *School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies*

Background

UOIT established the Office of Graduate Studies and launched its first graduate programs in 2006. Since that time, the number of programs has grown to 43 and its shared responsibilities have expanded to include program design and growth, quality standards, recruitment and enrolment management, scholarship support, graduate student professional skills development, international/research partnerships and postdoctoral studies. These are both academic and administrative roles, which are not properly reflected in this unit's current title of "Office". An Ontario-wide benchmarking exercise (summarized in Appendix 2) reveals that all Graduate Studies units perform similar roles within their institutions, yet are typically called "Faculty" or "School". Given UOIT's established Faculty structure it is felt that the "School" designation is most appropriate, conveying its academic and administrative nature while being differentiated from the other academic units.

Motion

With the increasing importance of graduate education to society's advancement, the current focusing of the University's strategic priorities, and the recent addition of postdoctoral fellows to Graduate Studies' administrative portfolio, the proposed change of name – from Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) to School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) – is both timely and necessary to accurately reflect its complete function, while providing several other benefits.

Academic Council is asked to recommend to the UOIT Board of Governors that:

> *That UOIT's Office of Graduate Studies be renamed School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, effective 1 July 2017.*

Process

The University of Ontario Institute of Technology Act, 2002, s. 9(1)f provides that the Board of Governors has the power "to establish faculties, schools, institutes and departments and to establish chairs and councils in any faculty, school, institute or department of the university". Pursuant to s. 10(5) of the *Act*, the Board shall, through the President, consult Academic Council in respect of any decisions pertaining to 9(1)f.

Should Academic Council support the establishment of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, its recommendation will go to the UOIT Board of Governors.

Rationale

The roles and responsibilities of the Office/School are summarized in Appendix 1. "School" conveys a primary academic/intellectual/scholarly mission whereas "Office" presents more of an administrative primary role. Such a name change would be advantageous, both internally and externally to UOIT.

Anticipated internal advantages

As a School, Graduate Studies would be better positioned to create a community of scholars and professionals, and set a standard of excellence across all disciplines. Specifically, this would facilitate:
 - ensuring quality control for all aspects of graduate education;
 - bringing an institution-wide perspective to all graduate programs;
 - developing new programs for interdisciplinary research and education;
 - finding ways for the graduate/postdoctoral enterprise to enhance undergraduate education;
 - supporting the intertwined nature of research and graduate/postdoctoral education.

In addition, the name change would validate a number of situations already in effect:

- Most graduate programs have been externally appraised and found to be of good quality
- Graduate Faculty and Associate Graduate Faculty membership is an academic status
- UOIT's website places Graduate Studies under the "Academic" tab.

Anticipated external advantages

A School designation would bring UOIT in line with the vast majority of other universities (Ontario names summarized in Appendix 2), raising the profile of Graduate Studies and making it more recognizable by prospective students and partners alike.

In addition, this would facilitate:
 - establishing research/entrepreneurial partnerships;
 - developing alumni relations;
 - fundraising from individuals, companies and foundations;
 - liaising with provincial, national governments.

Overview of Key Functions

Programs

- Nurture and enrich graduate programming jointly with home Faculties
- Support program development, modifications, reviews and ensure adherence to all QA processes
- Strategic Enrolment Management

Graduate Student Finance

- First line of contact for graduate students and liaise between units on their behalf
- Ensure graduate funding policy and process are followed, including: GRA, TA/RA assignments, accounts receivable, payroll deductions, refunds
- Administer internal and external scholarship competitions
- Disburse scholarship funds to graduate students

Recruitment/ Communication

- Graduate Studies Viewbook, promotional materials,
- Determine recruitment priorities and strategies within existing budget parameters
- Communication of graduate studies, programs and key information to various audiences and venues

Research & International

- Advise on strategic areas, policies, procedures; Cotutelles
- Scholarship funds to institutionally driven research projects

Enrolment Services/ Registration

- First line of contact for applicants to a graduate program
- Accept and assess applications, generate offers
- Ensure final decision on all applications
- Communicate processes and regulations related to enrolling in courses to new and returning students
- Register fees (flat fee programs)
- Add/drop courses for graduate students, as well as undergraduate students in graduate courses
- Advise students/process requests: change of program; supervisor; time-status; residency; leave of absence; program withdrawals, etc.
- Manage grade appeals, academic standing, dismissals
- Coordinate and monitor thesis defense and program completion requirements

Student Engagement

- Orientation for new graduate students
- Enhance existing Graduate Professional Skills programming
- 3MT competition
- Grad student meetups, ambassadors, and other programming

Postdoctoral Services

- Oversee processes, funding competitions
- Enhance community for postdoctoral fellows

Appendix 2 – Names of Graduate Studies units at other Ontario universities

Ontario University Summary of Unit name for Graduate Studies

University	Unit name
Brock University	Faculty of Graduate Studies
Carleton University	Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs
University of Guelph	Office of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Studies
Lakehead University	Faculty of Graduate Studies
Laurentian University	School of Graduate Studies
McMaster University	School of Graduate Studies
University of Ottawa	Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Queen's University	School of Graduate Studies
Ryerson Universtiy	Yeates School of Graduate Studies
University of Toronto	School of Graduate Studies
Trent University	School of Graduate Studies
University of Waterloo	Graduate Studies Office
Western University	School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Wilfrid Laurier University	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Studies
University of Windsor	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Office of Quality Assurance

* As noted in the survey: OCGS Organization of Graduate Studies in Ontario 2015