Quick Facts:

FALL 2017
Committee met ten times during the semester
Developed Graduate Education webpage on Office of the Provost website
Eduventures discussed the national landscape of graduate education (63 attendees)
Attended Co-op Career Fair to network and invite industry professionals to campus
Two Open Forums (a.m. and p.m.) with Industry Professionals (50 attendees)
Open Forum for campus community (85 attendees, including students) to discuss findings from open forums and to discuss the future of graduate education at Wentworth

SPRING 2018
Committee met over ten times during the semester
Met with Provost to provide mid-year findings/themes
Met individually with three Colleges (CADCM, CET, CAS)
Met with FT graduate faculty from graduate degree programs
Provided mid-year findings to Academic Affairs Committee (Board of Trustees)
Met regularly with Faculty Senate to provide updates
Offered to meet with Faculty Senate Sub-Committee on Faculty Affairs
Met with Student Service support offices
Met with President of Faculty Federation to discuss potential contract implications

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Ad hoc Community Committee on Graduate Education met more than twenty times during the 2017-2018 academic year. We used a strategic funnel approach to glean relevant information about graduate education. Eduventures presented information on the landscape of graduate education, and industry professionals shared perspectives and guidance on future graduate program offerings. The information funneled from the three open forums provided a basis for a campus-wide dialogue session with students, faculty, staff and administrators. Further, the committee met with three Colleges, academic departments, and student support offices including the Office of the Registrar, Financial Aid, Office of Admissions, and International Programs. The funnel approach - from the national landscape on graduate education to the front-line staff who assist students - resulted in a plethora of information that will guide us forward as we strengthen graduate studies at Wentworth.
The Charge by the Provost

In Fall 2017 Provost Eric Overström assigned Associate Provost of Academic Programs Margie Arnold with forming an Ad hoc Community Committee on Graduate Education. The charge of this committee is to plan and implement a series of open forums that will allow the campus community an opportunity to engage in the sharing of ideas and perspectives about the future of graduate education at Wentworth.

Committee Composition

The committee included the following members:

Margie Arnold, Associate Provost of Academic Programs and Dean of Graduate Studies (Chair of Committee)
Deborah Wright, Dean of the College of Professional and Continuing Education (Co-chair of Committee)
Chuck Hotchkiss, Dean of the College of Architecture, Design and Construction Mgt (Co-chair of committee)
Carol Burns, Associate Professor of Architecture
Gautham Das, Associate Professor of Civil Engineering
Bob Totino, Vice President for Finance

A graduate student representative on the committee, Josh Ward (MS in Technology Management), was unable to participate due to scheduling conflicts, and resigned early in the committee’s work.

Why Are We Having This Conversation Now?

A combination of factors made AY 17-18 a good time for a larger discussion of graduate education at Wentworth. First, Wentworth reached a critical mass of graduate programs, sufficient for the Institute to achieve University status. Reaching that milestone, it was appropriate to ask whether the administrative infrastructure, delivery modes, and financial models that were put in place several years earlier were still relevant and adequate to the task. Second, the arrival of Provost Overström, with rich experience and insights of his own, prompted a re-examination of how numerous aspects of academics at Wentworth have been handled. Third, the preparation of the NEASC 5-year report, with its comprehensive review of Wentworth’s development since 2011, raised questions about the organization and direction of graduate education. Fourth, the expiration of Wentworth’s last Strategic Plan led to reconsideration of priorities for moving Wentworth into the future. Graduate education’s place in that future is potentially significant. Finally, with the growing attention to shared governance on the Wentworth campus, the Ad hoc Community Committee on Graduate Education and its forums provided a means for a wide range of stakeholders to have a voice in the shape of graduate education.
Recognition of Academic Plan from 2016

It is important to note that the good work identified in the Academic Plan (2016) provided the foundation and framework for this year-long conversation on graduate education. The Academic Plan was an institute-wide collaborative effort that began a shared governance process resulting in short-term recommendations. The Ad hoc Community Committee digested the recommendations from the Academic Plan prior to launching the year-long agenda on graduate education at Wentworth. We wish to thank those involved in the Academic Plan, particularly as it relates to graduate education, for laying the groundwork for us.

History and Current Graduate Program Offerings

Wentworth’s graduate programs have grown organically, building on the strength of its undergraduate programs and the professional needs of Wentworth alumni (and others) for academic credentials beyond the bachelor’s degree. The initial graduate program, the Master of Architecture (M.Arch), began in Fall 2009, when the previous five-year Bachelor of Architecture program was reconfigured into a four-year Bachelor of Science in Architecture and a one-year M.Arch, which is a first professional degree. Subsequently, to grow the M.Arch program and address concerns of accreditors, the Department of Architecture added a two-year M.Arch (for students who completed a pre-professional Architecture program at another institution) and a three-year M.Arch (for students whose undergraduate degree is in a field other than Architecture). The evolution of the M.Arch program within the Department of Architecture, and its continuing status as the only full-time, day program of graduate study at Wentworth, has resulted in an administrative structure very different from subsequent programs, as described below.

The first graduate program to be created “from scratch” at Wentworth is the Master of Science in Construction Management (MSCM), which was launched in Fall 2010 as a part-time, face-to-face program for individuals with several years of industry experience. An administrative structure had to be created to handle student recruiting and admissions, financial aid, faculty recruiting, curriculum development, and other aspects of the new program. At the direction of then-Provost Russ Pinizzotto, the Department of Construction Management was deemed responsible for academic oversight of the MSCM program, while the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE) would handle administrative aspects of the program. A Graduate Program Director was hired within CPCE to provide day-to-day management of the program.

In 2011, Provost Pinizzotto concluded that it was time for Wentworth to create an organizational infrastructure to support the M.Arch, MSCM, and any future graduate programs. With the facilitation of a newly-hired Associate Provost, the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) was created, consisting primarily of faculty representing the graduate programs and Wentworth’s three colleges for full-time students. The GPC was initially responsible for making recommendations to the Provost regarding all aspects of
graduate study at Wentworth: new programs, curriculum review, designation of graduate faculty, grading systems, academic standing, etc.

With the GPC in place, additional graduate programs were created, starting with the Master of Science in Facility Management (MSFM) in Fall 2012. The Master of Science in Technology Management (MSTM) followed in Fall 2014. Fall 2016 saw the addition of both the Master of Science in Applied Computer Science (MSACS) and the Master of Engineering in Civil Engineering (MECE). A Master of Science in Project Management (MSPM) will welcome its first cohort of students in Fall 2018. The CPCE programs are offered in varying combinations of face-to-face, hybrid, and online instruction, in response to student demand. For the last few years, CPCE graduate courses have been organized in seven-week terms, scheduled so that two terms fit into each regular Wentworth semester. The department recently made changes to the MECE program to reflect traditional 15-week courses instead of the 7-week format.

A helpful visual (excel spreadsheet) was created to illustrate the complexities of the various graduate programs (see attached). The seven programs are identified along with their respective modalities, accreditation (if appropriate), tracks (if appropriate), number of students, faculty courses/sections per semester, staff, budget, credits, tuition, tuition deposit, tuition per credit, academic calendar, and admissions requirements.

**Administrative Structures of CPCE and Dept. of Architecture**

In most respects the administration of graduate programs has changed little since their inception. In the Department of Architecture, a graduate program director currently is responsible for all aspects of the program. With the addition of the two- and three-year M.Arch options, those responsibilities include marketing and admissions. Those tasks, in addition to responsibility for curriculum and graduate faculty assignments, have made the job description excessive for a single individual.

In CPCE, there is still a single graduate program director for all graduate programs. That arrangement, too, will be unsustainable as the number of CPCE-administered graduate programs continues to grow.

The organizational charts of the College of Professional Studies and the M.Arch Program are attached.

**University Committees Related to Graduate Studies**

As noted earlier, responsibility for recommendations to the Provost on all aspects of graduate programs was assigned by Provost Pinizzotto to the Graduate Programs Committee. Provost Hansen, who succeeded Provost Pinizzotto, reassigned some of those responsibilities to other committees, both existing and newly created. Responsibility for graduate curriculum review now rests with the Institute Curriculum
Committee. The Existing Program Review Committee and the New Programs Committee, both created during Provost Hansen’s tenure, now handle graduate program review and proposals for new graduate programs, respectively. The Graduate Programs Committee continues to consider nominations to the Graduate Faculty, and aspects of graduate academic policy not assigned to other committees.

**KEY POINTS FROM OPEN FORUMS AND MEETINGS WITH FACULTY**

As previously mentioned, there were four open forums held during the fall semester and the key points are identified as:

**National Landscape**

*Graduate enrollment nationally has been growing slowly, to about 3M in 2016.*

*In our region of the country (the Boston-Worcester-Providence market), graduate enrollment is growing faster than nationally.*

*Online graduate enrollment continues to outpace the overall market.*

*Lots of firms and higher education institutions are trying to disrupt the graduate education model.*

*Student loan debt is a big issue in graduate education as 15% of all students are graduate students and they hold 38% of all federal loan debt.*

**Industry Professionals**

*Students must be proficient in technical skills (such as software technologies) as well as soft skills or power skills (such as social intelligence, ability to communicate).*

*Certificate and short, intensive learning programs to supplement employee skills are needed and not necessarily master’s degrees.*

*Team leaders must be generalists with increasing specialty knowledge (such as the ability to synthesize data and metrics) to coordinate others’ work.*

**Students, Faculty, Staff**

*More certificates needed, enhance careers/promotions offerings*

*Offer more full-time and part-time programs with hybrid options*

*Stronger marketing strategy and efforts are needed by university*

*Need for separate graduate studies office with a dean*

*Allow faculty to teach in the graduate program either within load or as overload*
THEMES FROM COLLEGE MEETINGS WITH FACULTY

College of Architecture, Design and Construction Management

Admission Process, Curriculum, Academic Oversight and Federation Contract: The faculty in the above-mentioned college wanted a more centralized admission process with input from the departments. They believed that raising the admission standards would improve the overall quality of the program. It was suggested that the faculty teaching in the graduate program should improve the rigor and technical content of the courses, a better-quality program would improve the reputation of the institute.

It was recommended that the branding and marketing of the graduate programs within the university should improve significantly. The faculty wanted the new graduate program to be more flexible to allow students who are in different stages in their career to be able to attend this program. The graduate programs should be able to cater to industry professionals or to students straight out of the undergraduate program. It was repeatedly highlighted during this meeting that faculty should have academic freedom on developing courses and let the courses evolve to meet industry needs and standards.

The faculty voiced concerns about the current graduate program in the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE). The current infrastructure, the admission process and the overall administration of the graduate program was a cause for concern within this college. More academic oversight is needed by the academic departments.

Currently, graduate programs are taught outside the parameters of the faculty union contract. The faculty in this college indicated concerns about the restructuring the union contract to include the graduate teaching loads.

College of Engineering and Technology

Admission Process, Curriculum, Academic Oversight and Federation Contract: The faculty (and the department chairs) expressed concerns about having no control over the admission process of the current graduate program in CPCE. The overall administration of the current graduate program was flawed and needed to be restructured. The faculty expressed concerns about the 7-week model for administrating a graduate program and felt it was unrealistic for most engineering programs. However, the faculty in the computer science department felt that the 7-week model worked very well. They did emphasize that they had not received any formal feedback from the current cohort of students.
Financial support such as teaching and research assistantships was discussed during the meeting. Developing a better infrastructure within the university to support graduate programs would attract international students. It was recommended that the university could potentially adopt a 4+1 program to increase the enrollment in the graduate program. To facilitate the 4+1 program, it was recommended that the seniors in the undergraduate program have the ability to take two graduate courses as their electives in the senior year.

Faculty reiterated that the union contract needs to be renegotiated as it should be able to cater to the demands of teaching graduate level courses. The faculty recommended that the shell space in the new building should be converted into space for the graduate students. Internship and/or co-op programs within the graduate program would be unique for Wentworth and could be a potential selling point.

College of Arts and Sciences

Admission Process, Curriculum, Academic Oversight and Federation Contract: The faculty in the above-mentioned college were concerned about the low enrollment in the current graduate programs. The faculty expressed the concerns about current admission standards as there are no GRE or GMAT requirements.

One of the main concerns of developing a graduate program in this college was the low number of full–time faculty within the college. The faculty felt that some incentivization would encourage faculty to develop and teach graduate level courses.

The disconnect between CPCE and the individual academic departments was disconcerting, and it was recommended that the graduate programs be housed within the department itself. Undergraduate research and EPIC guiding principles should carry over to the graduate program. The faculty viewed the lack of resources such as space and money, and competition within close proximity of Wentworth as major obstacles to the success of the graduate program.

The delivery methods for teaching graduate programs were discussed by the faculty. The faculty stated that Wentworth needs to focus on one vision and get good at it. Experiential, job focused, and hands-on learning should be encouraged within the graduate program. This sentiment supports the perspectives of the industry professional panel members.
DISCUSSION

Over the course of the past academic year and throughout the very robust campus engagement, several themes emerged. First, there is varied interest in future graduate program offerings including 4 + 1’s, certificate programs, accelerated programs, partnership programs, full-time, part-time, fully online, hybrid, and face-to-face. Despite this wide range of perspectives, we found that faculty were generally interested in offering traditional full-time programs from within their academic departments, an infrastructure outside of CPCE. While the Architecture Department’s program sets a precedent of a traditional full-time graduate program, the department is adamant that their current structure, with a paucity of support, should not be used as a model. The comparisons of personnel and other operational provisions to that of the infrastructure in College of Professional and Continuing Education indicates a need for restructuring and integration in the areas of recruitment, admissions, marketing, and academic oversight. Some faculty who expressed interest in offering full-time graduate programs also expressed interest in conducting graduate research projects and working with graduate assistants.

It will be important to establish clear protocols for creating new programs and determining modalities (i.e., 4+1, part-time, accelerated, full-time, online) that will appeal to the appropriate audiences and that will not inadvertently hamper or disadvantage one program format over the other (e.g., cost of part-time vs. full-time, availability of scholarships, ability to move from one program to the other). Establishing a high functioning Graduate Council will be beneficial in building an infrastructure to support the growth, quality and development of programs. Faculty liaisons (i.e., graduate coordinators) was a recommendation that emerged from the 2016 Academic Plan and one that resurfaced during this past year. The composition of a new graduate council should include all faculty graduate coordinators among others (deans, chairs, etc.) and the council’s role and responsibilities might include graduate curricula, new programs, program reviews, graduate catalog, and enhancing the graduate student experience.

Another theme was the desire to have a dean of graduate studies to coordinate and collaborate with all deans to enhance and grow graduate programs. Integrating efforts such as recruiting, admissions, marketing, and branding Wentworth as a University will need to occur. Combining the forces of CPCE, M.Arch, Office of Admissions, Academic Advising, Student Services, and Marketing was often mentioned in conversations. Casting a wider net around these offices to include graduate students and programs seems necessary. For example, academic advising is an example where collaboration efforts will work to provide a better student experience. While CPCE currently has professional advisors for “adult learners”, the Center for Academic Excellence is introducing
professional advisors for first-year students for “day school” students. An integrative approach among all advisors on behalf of graduate students seems appropriate. Challenges will exist as, for example, the Office of Admissions currently focuses on enrolling traditional undergraduate students.

Terminology and how we refer to Wentworth students (adult learners, day students, etc.) provided some confusion particularly among the newer faculty who were not accustom to these identifiers. Rather, students are students and they might be categorized as full-time or part-time students, and undergraduate or graduate students. It is further defining this structure and its impact on the institution that will need to be a focus moving forward.

Working with Eduventures or a similar company, Wentworth should position itself for growth at the graduate level by preparing a comprehensive and long-term strategy for new program development rather than the individual program introductions. Becoming a university and working with the Dean of Graduate Studies will help to make this process more strategic. Creating a *Graduate Studies Strategy Team* to establish the University’s mission and vision of graduate studies, and the development of a five-year strategic plan including an enrollment plan, will be advantageous. Having a more refined plan with a new national marketing partner such as Education Dynamics will contribute to positioning the University to provide a more predictable revenue model.

**Actions by the Provost**

The committee met with the Provost in early spring semester and the following five action items were determined. The items, combined with the emerging themes identified in this report, should provide a roadmap moving forward as we strengthen graduate studies at Wentworth Institution of Technology.

1. Part-time undergraduate and part-time graduate programs will be administered by CPCE with 100% academic oversight (curriculum and faculty) by the respective academic departments. New programs will be explored/developed through established policies and procedures in strategic collaboration between CPCE, the respective academic department and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

2. Full-time undergraduate and full-time graduate programs will be administered and managed 100% by the academic departments. New programs will be explored/developed through established policies and procedures in strategic collaboration between the respective academic department and the Dean of Graduate Studies.
3. “Education Dynamics” has been retained as consultants regarding marketing and enrollment strategies.

4. Regarding marketing differentiation of graduate programs, we will promote "enhancing career growth and success" for non-traditional students, and we will de-emphasize (yet not abandon) the term “adult learner” and other age-targeted demographic identifiers as primary markets.

5. The new role of “Dean of Graduate Studies” will be established to oversee and facilitate the alignment and strategic development of Wentworth’s graduate programs, in collaboration with the Deans and Department Chairs.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gautham Das
Bob Totino