

Report to SFC from the MELS coordinator for the MELS committee: September 10, 2014

Since the beginning of 2014 we have achieved the following outcomes:

1. Hired the MELS admin support, Brooklyn Scott, and set up a Graduate Studies office on the 3rd floor. Brooklyn is the 'go to' person for all inquiries about MELS, both for potential and current graduate students in Science, but also for Faculty and Staff with questions. Anything she can't answer, she will refer to the Co-ordinator. She also provides primary support through collating all documents, especially applications, and tracking these. Brooklyn works 2 or 3 days a week, alternating.
2. Created a MELS webpage, maintained by Brooklyn Scott.
3. The MELS committee has met semi-regularly to consider applications, new graduate courses, budget recommendations and our own governance. Minutes of all of our meetings are taken and kept by Brooklyn.
4. We have had approved and appear in the current Graduate calendar, the entry for MELS. We are encouraging additional graduate courses be brought forward by the 4 member departments. Only 1 department, Biology, is offering a graduate course in 2014-2015. Graduate methods and Graduate seminar are both being offered this Fall term.
5. MELS has recruited 4 students, all BU grads; 3 of the students are supervised by 2 Biology professors, 1 in Geology. This with no promotion. Target was 3-6.
6. 2 MELS students were successful in being awarded Manitoba Graduate scholarships.
7. We put in place temporary bridging financial support for the 2 non-scholarship holders.
8. We have also dealt with a high volume of inquiries and applications from international students, mostly from Nigeria.
9. An emerging issue, dealt with through advice from Murray Kerr, Director of Admissions, was to ensure applicants follow our requirement to discuss potential supervision and project ideas with MELS faculty prior to submitting an application, particularly international applicants. We have also received advice from Murray on how to deal with foreign credentials and grading / GPA systems for consistency in dealing with our B+ / 3.3 GPA entrance requirements.
10. Using the MELS funding from the province, we converted the former Geography Map Library into Graduate student offices, and purchased and had installed desk cubicles for 9 MELS students, and installed 3 new computer works stations and a networked printer. We are grateful to the Geography Dept for all their work on making the room available.
11. On Tuesday this week we held a 'meet and greet' lunch in the new graduate student offices. Was attended by the MELS students, their supervisors, the Dean, several MELS committee members and MELS faculty members. BU media (Glen and Alex) attended and will be producing some publicity.
12. Working with Alex Beshara, we are in the final stages of producing promotional brochures, posters and other materials to aid graduate student recruitment.

David R Greenwood, Graduate Coordinator for MELS