

GRADUATE COUNCIL
January 5, 2010, 2:00 P.M.
Council Chambers, Gilmour Hall 111

PRESENT: Dr. A. Sekuler (Chair), Dr. P. Baxter, Dr. N. Charupat, Dr. K. Dalnoki-Veress, Dr. T. Fetner, Dr. D. Goellnicht, Dr. C. Hayward, Mr. S. Jones, Dr. G. Kehler, Dr. N. Kevlahan, Ms. H. Kuiper, Dr. M. Kliffer, Mr. R. Love, Dr. L. Magee, Ms. V. Maldonado, Dr. F. McNeill, Ms. J. Merelli, Mr. N. Phan, Mr. J. Scime (Secretary), Dr. H. Sheardown, Dr. M. Thompson, Mr. J. Trzeciak, Mr. S. Way, Dr. D. Welch, Dr. J. West-Mays, Dr. T. Yoshikawa, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Assistant Secretary)

BY INVITATION: Dr. E. Gedge, Dr. M. Gough, Dr. D. Wright

REGRETS: Dr. R. Cain, Dr. D. Cassidy, Dr. K. Kanagaretnam, Dr. A. Knights, Dr. M. Stroinska

I. New program: M.A. in Gender Studies and Feminist Research and Graduate Diploma in Gender Studies and Feminist Research

Dr. Gough was invited to the Council meeting to present the proposal. Dr. Gough explained that the proposed one-year M.A. in Gender Studies and Feminist Research program will prepare students for further doctoral work in the fields of women's and gender studies as well as other discipline-specific programs in Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition, she said the graduates of the program will achieve the knowledge necessary for careers in fields such as education, law, journalism, non-profit community work, public policy, and social work. Dr. Gough briefly discussed the requirements for the Master's program, which is comprised of three compulsory half courses, three elective half courses, and an independent research project.

Dr. Gough said the Diploma in Gender Studies and Feminist Research program will enhance the training and development students receive from their home department by combining their disciplinary research with the fields of gender and feminist studies. She explained that McMaster already has existing courses related to gender and feminist studies, but there is currently no existing opportunity for doctoral students to concentrate on these fields which would be recognized on their transcripts. She explained that the requirements for the diploma are one 700-level half-course, one additional half-course from a list of approved courses, participation in a Research Symposium, and a thesis related to gender and/or feminist studies in the home department. There are four research fields in the proposed programs: literature, culture, and the arts; ethics, spirituality, and eco-feminism; work, politics, social movements, and public policy; and sexuality studies.

Dr. Fetner moved, and Dr. Dalnoki-Veress seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed Master’s program and Diploma program in Gender Studies and Feminist Research, as described in the document.”

In response to a question, Dr. Gough said the Diploma program expects to add value to a stand-alone doctoral degree (that is already offered by a department/academic unit) by broadly enhancing the student's research. She added that with the Diploma program, McMaster will become one of three universities in Canada to offer a Ph.D. program combining a traditional degree with interdisciplinary focus in women's and gender studies. The other two Canadian universities with similar programs are the University of Toronto and McGill University.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

II. Minutes of meeting

On a motion by Dr. Goellnicht and seconded by Dr. Welch, Graduate Council approved the minutes of the meeting of November 3, 2009 with minor revision: Deletion of the last sentence on page 3, last paragraph.

III. Report from the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies

OCGS Updates

Dr. Sekuler reported the status of the graduate programs submitted to OCGS for appraisal:

- SGS has received feedback from OCGS. The final recommendations from the OCGS appraisal committee are expected for the following programs: Periodic appraisals: Chemistry (M.Sc., Ph.D.), Chemical Engineering (M.A.Sc., M. Eng., Ph.D.). Standard appraisals: Global Health (M.Sc.), Health Management (M.Sc.)

- Consultants' site visits are scheduled for Social Work (MSW) – January 26-27, 2010, and Statistics (M.Sc.) – February 25-26, 2010. Plans are underway for the consultants' site visit for English (M.A., Ph.D.)

- Appraisal briefs were submitted to OCGS for Biology (M.Sc., Ph.D.), Globalization Studies (M.A.), Management Studies Diploma, and Psychology (M.Sc., Ph.D.)

- The following programs were recommended/deemed to be of Good Quality by OCGS: Anthropology (M.A., Ph.D.), Philosophy (M.A.), Mathematics (M.Sc., Ph.D.), Mechanical Engineering (M.A.Sc., Ph.D.). Electrical and Computer Engineering (M.A.Sc., M. Eng., Ph.D.) was deemed to be of Good Quality with Report by OCGS.

- Funding for the following programs was approved by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Computer Science (M. Eng.), Mechatronics (M. Eng.), Cognitive Science of Language (M.Sc., Ph.D.), and Communication and New Media (M.A.)

Dr. Sekuler said the structural changes within the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) will not take effect until September 2011. She further stated that OCGS reviews of new graduate program proposals will continue until the new process is in place. She added that OCGS will continue to review outstanding periodic appraisals until completed with no new submissions for

2010-2011 and that OCGS would not initiate any new periodic appraisals once it has completed its appraisals for 2009-2010 or earlier.

USRA/Best Practices Lunch

Dr. Sekuler reported that the Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) Annual Poster Session organized by the School of Graduate Studies was successfully held on November 11, 2009. Previous USRA poster sessions were held in January; however, it was decided this year to hold the session in November to take advantage of graduate student recruitment. Dr. Sekuler said the next Best Practices Lunch will be held on January 20, 2010. SGS will inform departments/programs of the topic for the next session.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Dr. Sekuler said McMaster's Accessibility Office recently held a presentation concerning the objective of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) to make Ontario fully accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. She added that AODA's goal has resulted in the development and implementation of accessibility standards for businesses and organizations to use in dealing with people with disabilities. Dr. Sekuler said one of AODA's accessibility standards is *Customer Service*, which applies to every designated public sector organization or person that provides goods or services to the public. She said McMaster plans to provide *Customer Service* training to all its employees, as well as its graduate students. She said the task is consistent with McMaster's goal of providing inclusivity within the community. She said SGS will notify Graduate Council when the online training sessions become available.

Recruitment Trip to China

Dr. Sekuler reported on her recent successful trip to Beijing, China with Drs. Sheardown and Chan where they participated in Ph.D. recruitment. The group conducted individual meetings with about 100 prospective Ph.D. students and potential recipients of China Scholarship Council (CSC) fellowships. Dr. Sekuler explained that only students in 60 universities in China are qualified for the CSC fellowships. She added that the recipients of the awards will be provided with living expenses for the 4-year duration of their doctoral studies. Dr. Sekuler said there are 160 Chinese graduate students who are currently enrolled at McMaster, but there are only 3 CSC fellowship recipients among these students. Dr. Sekuler said admitting CSC recipients to McMaster will provide flexible funding to departments and the savings that will be generated can be used in supporting other Canadian or international students. Dr. Sekuler said SGS will send the list of the 60 Chinese universities that were granted CSC fellowship allocation to departments/programs.

New hire in SGS

Dr. Sekuler announced the hiring of Nathaniel Knopp as Information Assistant and she added that one of the responsibilities of the position is to manage the appointments of the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies.

V. Report from the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies

Dr. Welch reported that the next SGS #101 class is scheduled for January 22, 2010, 2:30-5:30 p.m. in HSC-1A1, and 250 students have registered for the session. Dr. Welch said students who registered for a previous session but did not attend the class are automatically enrolled in the next session. A member suggested that having a checkbox in the progress report to indicate whether the student has already taken the course would improve the registration process. Dr. Welch agrees, and he commented that perhaps this function could be added to the online version of the student's progress report that is currently being developed by SGS. One member commented that it would be best for students to take the course within the first year of the program. Dr. Welch agrees; however, he is concerned that with the current method of offering the course, implementation will be an issue (i.e., difficulty scheduling class time, venues, large volume of attendees). Dr. Welch said in future there is a plan to offer the course online, and he thinks this method might address the issue. He added that once the course is offered online, the examination format would change.

Dr. Sheardown said she is involved with the development of some new graduate programs and the OCGS appraisal of the ADMI program in the Faculty of Engineering. Dr. Goellnicht discussed the recently approved graduate scholarship for indigenous students, *The Harvey E. Longboat Graduate Scholarship for First Nation, Inuit, and Métis Students*. Dr. Goellnicht said the scholarship will be awarded annually to a First Nation, Inuit, or Métis student who has demonstrated high academic achievement.

Dr. Hayward said she is currently involved with monthly meetings regarding interdisciplinary programs, various research projects, and graduate faculty evaluations. Dr. Hayward discussed briefly the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) conference that she and Dr. Goellnicht attended on November 4-7, 2009 in Halifax. She said the conference included topic sessions such as diversity in graduate education, international joint and collaborative degrees, and intellectual property. Dr. Hayward also discussed the Council of Graduate Studies (CGS) conference she attended with Dr. Sekuler and Mr. Scime. The CGS conference was held in San Francisco on December 2-5, 2009 and topics included future of graduate education, diversity and support groups for students with family, role of graduate education in promoting innovation, monitoring student progress to assist in time to completion, enrichment of student life to cut down stress, and dual and joint degrees. In response to a question, Dr. Sekuler said McMaster does not currently have a clear policy concerning dual or joint degrees.

VI. Discounted Fees

Referring to the document, Dr. Sekuler discussed the proposal to provide discounted tuition fees automatically for all Ph.D. students, and to discontinue granting eligibility to Master's students for discounted fees. Dr. Sekuler explained the issues that led to the proposal: (a) not all programs equally advise students to apply for eligibility; (b) some students (particularly at the Master's level) may not require discounted tuition because their funding might have come from external sources, and program durations are much shorter; (c) increasing variability in the degree requirements among Master's programs, with some programs not requiring a thesis; (d) considerable workload is involved in finalizing the approval process; and (e) confusion might

arise (particularly for Ph.D. program) in terms of what it means to have finished “all research except for the writing of the thesis.” Dr. Sekuler said there will be no significant financial impact on any of the Faculties with the proposed changes.

In response to a question, Mr. Scime explained that the University Student Fees Committee approves the proposed changes to tuition fees. Once the proposal is approved, Mr. Scime said the change may take effect in September 2010. Dr. Sekuler then suggested conducting a straw vote to gauge Council support. The proposal was unanimously supported by the Council members.

VII. New Graduate Scholarships

Mr. Scime presented the following graduate scholarships for Council approval:

- The Joy M. Cunningham Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Science
- The Richard J. Haslam Memorial Scholarship
- The Dr. David Williams Award in Biomedical Engineering

Dr. West-Mays moved, and Dr. Dalnoki-Veress seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the following graduate scholarships: The Joy M. Cunningham Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Science, the Richard J. Haslam Memorial Scholarship, and the Dr. David Williams Award in Biomedical Engineering, as described in the document.”

The motion was carried.

VIII. Other Business

Mr. Trzeciak, the University Librarian, briefly discussed the redevelopment of the Mills library. He explained the plan to allocate spaces in the Mills library for faculty members and graduate students use. He will collaborate with the School of Graduate Studies concerning the allocation of spaces for graduate students in the library. He added that he would welcome suggestions and comments from Graduate Council members concerning library space allocations.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.