

GRADUATE COUNCIL
JANUARY 22, 2013, 2:00 P.M.
COUNCIL ROOM, GILMOUR HALL 111

PRESENT: Dr. A. Sekuler (Chair), Dr. N. Agarwal, Ms. B. Basse, Dr. P. Baxter, Dr. P. Bennett, Mr. A. Carrothers, Dr. T. Chamberlain, Mrs. B. Gordon, Dr. D. Goellnicht, Dr. P. Graefe, Dr. A. Guarné, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. M. Heath, Dr. A. Holloway, Dr. M. Horn, Ms. Y. Hunter, Mr. J. Jaskolka, Dr. M. Lawford, Ms. V. Lewis, Dr. J. McDermid, Dr. B. Milliken, Mr. P. Self, Dr. C. Sinding, Ms. E. Tatham, Mrs. A. Thyret-Kidd (Secretary), Dr. D. Welch, Dr. W. Wiesner, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Assistant Secretary)

REGRETS: Dr. A. Campos, Dr. S. Crosta, Dr. S. Fast, Dr. R. Hackett, Dr. T. Hoare, Dr. B. Ibhawoh, Dr. V. Ignieski, Dr. T. Porter, Dr. H. Sheardown

BY INVITATION: Dr. J. Connolly, Dr. S. Searls-Giroux

I. Minutes of meeting

After introductions, the minutes of the meeting of November 20, 2012 were approved on a motion by Dr. McDermid, seconded by Dr. Chamberlain.

II. Business arising

There was no business arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

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

Dr. Sekuler reported on the following activities:

- The topic for the December 11, 2012 *Best Practices Lunch* was Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP). 60 attendees. Facilitator: Mrs. Stephanie Baschiera. The next *Best Practices Lunch* will be on January 23, 2013 and the topic is Due Diligence in terms of Academic Integrity, Student Appeals, and the Environmental & Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS). Facilitators: Mrs. Andrea Thyret-Kidd and Mrs. Michelle Bennett (University Secretariat)
- There will be an IQAP information session on February 8, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. in Gilmour Hall 111. The session will discuss the new quality assurance process such as the evaluation criteria for new program proposals and the procedures involved for reviewing existing programs. Facilitators: Dr. Donna Woolcott (Executive Director) and Ms. Cindy Robinson (Manager) of the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

- *Dine with the Dean*, December 12, 2012. Topic: Work/Life Balance. Guest speakers: Dr. Charlotte Yates (Dean, Social Sciences), Dr. Heather Sheardown, and Mr. Nathan Cooper (Student Wellness)
- *Dine with the Dean*, January 11, 2013. Topic: Building Transnational Research and Learning Cultures. Guest speakers: President Patrick Deane and Dr. Diana Broydon (University of Manitoba)
- The next *Dine with the Dean* will be held on January 30, 2013. Topic: Student Learning Portfolio. Guest speaker: Ms. Laura Harrington (Health Sciences)
- The School of Graduate Studies launched a new funding program called, Student-proposed Projects for Intellectual Community and Engaged Scholarship (SPICES). The objective of the program is to support projects created and led by graduate students that will enhance McMaster's community and beyond. One proposal has been received from the Department of Health, Aging and Society concerning a conference. The deadline to submit applications is March 31, 2013.
- The School of Graduate Studies is collaborating with Mr. Nathan Cooper (Student Wellness) and the Student Success Centre's "Student Success Leaders" program in recruiting a small group of graduate students to develop and facilitate writing support for other graduate students. Three graduate students already signed up for the project.
- McMaster University is hosting its first *3-Minute Thesis Competition* in April 2013. The competition seeks participation from graduate students to present their research in 3 minutes or less to a panel of non-specialist judges. Registration for the competition will open in mid-February 2013. The provincial competition will be held on April 18, 2013 at Queen's University.
- The current total number of graduate applications is down by 8%, with the exception of Geography and Earth & Environmental Sciences, Health Management, Mechanical Engineering, and Psychology. The final application numbers will be relayed to the Faculty Deans once they become available.
- The scholarship allocation information will be available end-January. It is anticipated that the funding allocation for each Faculty for next academic year will be quite similar to the current year. The allocation of the scholarship funding for programs will depend on how Faculty Deans distribute the scholarship monies.
- McMaster is still in growth mode in terms of accepting students in the Master's and Ph.D. programs.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

Dr. Agarwal will have a meeting next week within the Faculty of Business to discuss the graduate curriculum changes proposed by the Area Chairs.

Dr. Hayward is involved in the development of three new graduate programs. Dr. Hayward announced the Faculty of Health Sciences *Research Plenary* scheduled for May 2013.

V. Report from the Assistant Dean, Graduate Student Life and Research Training

Mr. Self explained that 16 universities are competing this year for the *Ontario 3-Minute Thesis Competition* which will be held on April 18, 2013 at Queen's University. He added that future competitions with the same number of participants will be held at McMaster University in 2014 and Western University in 2015.

VI. Report from the Associate Registrar and Secretary of Graduate Studies

Mrs. Thyret-Kidd reported that the Admissions Workshop for graduate advisors and graduate administrative assistants held on January 17, 2013 was well-attended. The workshop focused on the application process, assessing applications, recommendation summary (offers, financial support, supervisors, etc.), visiting students, and exchange students. She added that a workshop to be hosted by the School of Graduate Studies will be held in March 2013 for students who are ready to defend their theses.

VII. New graduate scholarships

This agenda item was withdrawn because the graduate scholarships listed have already been approved at the November 20, 2012 meeting of Graduate Council.

VIII. Good Academic Standing

Mrs. Thyret-Kidd explained that the current admission offer letter used by the School of Graduate Studies does not include a statement that would allow programs the ability to revoke a conditional offer, if the student receives a grade of F or an academic dishonesty/misconduct notation. It is recommended for the current statement in the offer letter to be amended as follows:

"This offer is conditional upon the receipt of an official transcript confirming that your Bachelor's degree has been conferred with at least a B- average in the final year (in the discipline you are entering) and have maintained good academic standing."*

*Average pertains only to Engineering.

Mrs. Thyret-Kidd added that the change will result in revising the *“Notes for Successful Applicants for Graduate Study”* document (included in the offer letter) to incorporate the meaning of “Good Academic Standing.” She explained that “good academic standing” refers to a passing grade in all currently in-progress courses and free of academic misconduct/dishonesty.

Dr. Chamberlain moved, and Dr. Baxter seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposal to add a statement concerning “good academic standing” in the admission offer letter, as discussed above and described in the document.”

The last line of the statement was amended to read: *“and **you** have maintained good academic standing.”*

The motion was carried.

IX. Revisions to McMaster’s *Policy on Academic Program Reviews*

Dr. Sekuler referred to the document and reviewed the proposed revisions to McMaster’s *Policy on Academic Program Reviews*. She explained that the revisions are necessary to clarify further the procedures involved in reviewing academic programs.

After the discussion, the Council made the following changes:

- Page 7, section 5.3.4.d. – last line: “700-graduate level” was replaced with “700-level”
- Page 10, first paragraph that starts with “Reviewers will be selected from a list.....”, second line, “endorsed with the Dean” was replaced with “endorsed by the Dean”

Dr. Chamberlain moved, and Dr. Hayward seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed revisions to McMaster’s *Policy on Academic Program Reviews*, as described in the document.”

The document will also be submitted to the Undergraduate Council for approval.

The motion was carried, subject to the amendments mentioned above.

X. M-Bridge Program

Dr. Sekuler explained that McMaster currently has a graduate course, *SGS #301 – English as a Second Language Training*, which is offered in collaboration with Mohawk College to students in the School of Engineering Practice who have not yet satisfied the English proficiency requirement at the time of admission. If the McMaster-Mohawk contract for this course (which will expire in February 2013) is renewed, there is a possibility of offering the course to students

in other graduate programs. Dr. Sekuler invited Dr. Connolly and Dr. Searls-Giroux to speak about the proposed McMaster ESL Bridging (M-Bridge) program. The Department of Linguistics and Languages is proposing the M-Bridge program for undergraduate students who meet program-specific academic requirements but do not possess the English proficiency requirements. Dr. Connolly said the proposal may also serve the needs of graduate students to further their academic English proficiency. Dr. Connolly explained that most Ontario universities are offering bridging programs with the exception of McMaster, OCAD and Nipissing. Dr. Connolly explained in detail how the M-Bridge program works (timing, courses involved, program fees, etc.).

Upon reviewing the proposal, the members made the following comments/suggestions:

- Create a bridging program that is specifically designed for graduate students, as it may be difficult to convince graduate students to take a level 1 undergraduate course.
- Offer a student service on a case-by-case basis, such as drop in centres for help, instead of a course
- Since students in the program are not considered McMaster students because they were only granted conditional admission offers, they are not governed by any McMaster policies—how will the University classify the status of these students? If problems arise, how will McMaster deal with these issues? These concerns are not addressed in the proposal.
- If the program is offered in the summer, issues such as living in residence and meal arrangements are not addressed in the proposal.
- Visas are not granted to international students with conditional admission offers—the document does not address how the program will handle immigration issues.
- The proposal should probably be a certificate program (6-month duration, etc.) for international students to be able to obtain a visa.
- There is a large number of good applicants who pass the language requirement, and programs can choose from this group. Is a bridging program necessary at the graduate level?

Dr. Sekuler thanked Drs. Connolly and Searls-Giroux for their presentation and the Graduate Council members for their comments/suggestions.

XI. Other business

Library update

Ms. Lewis, Acting University Librarian, reported that graduate students who normally have 2-week loan privileges will now be granted extending borrowing privileges at the library.

Update - Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS) competition

In response to a query concerning the OGS competition, Dr. Sekuler explained that the initial plan is to provide a university-wide OGS competition in March where each program will have an allocation of nominations for its returning and new students. However, in determining the number of nomination allocations for each program, several issues arose concerning the process. Dr. Sekuler explained that one of the concerns is that the OGS internal deadline would occur before the results of the NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR competitions are announced. It was anticipated that students who will win these awards would have been nominated for OGS as well. This will increase the number of nominations that will be assessed, which in turn will expand the reversion list, and therefore result in an increased workload for the Faculties and programs.

After the discussion, Graduate Council made a final decision as to how to handle the OGS competition for 2013-2014.

Dr. McDermid moved, and Dr. Welch seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the allocation of OGS awards for 2013-2014 as follows: allocations will be made to programs based on their recent past performance in scholarship competitions. All awards for 2013-2014 (including new programs with students who are eligible for OGS awards) will be for one year.”

It was noted that programs should contact their Faculty Deans if they have not received their allocations. Dr. Sekuler explained that awards not allocated by the programs will be returned to the Faculty for redistribution.

The motion was carried.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.