

**GRADUATE COUNCIL  
FEBRUARY 2, 2006, 1:30 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GILMOUR HALL 111**

**PRESENT:** Dean F.L. Hall (Chair), Mr. L. Ariano, Dr. K. Bennett, Dr. M. Boda, Dr. G. Bone, Dean D. Capson, Dr. L. Chan, Ms. K. Espiritu, Ms. E. Giles, Dean D. Goellnicht, Dr. M. Head, Dr. C. Ingram, Ms. K. Kowalska, Mr. Y. Li, Dr. G. Luke, Mr. S. Luyk, Dr. G. Moyal, Dr. R. O'Brien, Dr. D. Pawluch, Dr. S. Porter, Dean N. Rahimieh, Dean C. Richards, Dr. P. Solomon, Dr. M. Stein, Dr. G. Steiner, Dr. C. Swartz, Dr. R. Viveros-Aguilera, Dr. J-P Xu, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Recording Secretary)

**REGRETS:** Dr. B. Allen, Mr. S. Kleinknecht, Ms. T. Kuzmenko, Mr. J. Scime

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**I. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of October 27, 2006 were approved on a motion by Dean Capson, seconded by Dr. Steiner with the following revisions: (a) the addition of Dr. Moyal's name to the list of those present at the meeting; and (2) page 4, item VI - *Recommendation from the Ad Hoc MBA Admissions Evaluation Committee*, Dr. Steiner's comment was replaced with: *Dr. Steiner suggested that an upper limit be placed on the number of students admitted outside the rules.*

**II. BUSINESS ARISING**

- (a) Dean Hall reported the results of the e-mail ballot conducted among the Graduate Council members on November 28, 2005.
- Masters of Communication Management: Approved (16 in favour, 1 opposed, 1 abstained, and 2 requested Graduate Council to reconvene)
  - DeGroote School of Business Alumni MBA Scholarship - Approved unanimously
  - Revised admission requirement for the M. Eng. in Entrepreneurship and Innovation - Approved unanimously
- (b) Graduate Council membership status of Divinity College representatives: Dean Hall reported that Dr. Porter is now an ex-officio member (with vote) and Dr. Mark Boda is now a voting faculty member of Graduate Council.

**III. DEAN'S REPORT**

School of Graduate Studies' Annual Report to the University Planning Committee

Referring to the document, Dean Hall reported that the School of Graduate Studies has organized a total of 151 Ph.D. defences. Dean Capson said the 151 defences represented a total distribution of 1000 theses by Graduate Studies. Dean Hall also mentioned the external and

internal examiners' contributions and said that a letter was sent to all the examiners thanking them for their involvement in the defences. Dean Hall noted that there was a 20% (who participated in two or more defences) increase in Ph.D. defences over the past five years. In the report, Dean Hall pointed out that the figures for the external and internal scholarships were reversed: the figure for external scholarships should be \$2919 in 2000-01 and \$6046 in 2005-06, while the figure for internal scholarships should be \$1145 in 2000-01 and \$1254 in 2005-06. Over the five years, the amount of the external scholarships doubled and there was a 10% increase in the internal scholarships.

Dean Hall then drew attention to *Section 7 - OCGS Activities*. Over the next year, there will be 20 new programmes in the approval process. The M. Eng/M.A.Sc./M.Sc./Ph.D. Computational Engineering and Science will be presented for approval at the OCGS meeting on March 3, 2006. Dean Hall reported that the Department of Kinesiology has recently received a recommendation from OCGS to change the name of its M.Sc./Ph.D. in Human Biodynamics to M.Sc./Ph.D. in Kinesiology to give the program wider recognition. As the university does not have a set procedure for changing program names, Dean Hall proposes to use the procedures for changing the names of fields when proposed by OCGS. This means the recommendation will only need approval from the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Faculty Dean, and to be reported to Graduate Council and Senate. There was no objection. The change is expected to take effect March 3, 2006.

#### Distribution of Grades in Graduate Courses

Dean Hall informed the Council that the School of Graduate Studies has compiled a list concerning grade distributions in graduate courses. The data was presented at the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Graduate Council Executive and the following recommendations were made: (a) Dean Hall will send a memo to department chairs with a list of their own grade distribution over the past three years, including the university's total distribution; and (b) the data will be provided to the Graduate Scholarships Committee for the NSERC and SSHRC rankings in the Fall, and for the internal scholarships in the Spring. Dean Hall noted that for the past four years, generally between 16-20% of students have attained A+ grades. There was no objection to this procedure.

#### **IV. M.D./Ph.D. PROGRAM**

Dean Richards reviewed the proposed M.D./Ph.D. program, which will be managed by the Faculty of Health Sciences. Graduates of the program will contribute to the need for clinician scientists in a variety of roles including academic research teams, public sector positions in government, or private sector positions in health-product related companies. The program anticipates accepting 1-3 students annually and will use the M.D. curriculum and the graduate programs and fields in Medical Sciences and Biochemistry. Other graduate programs such as Health Research Methodology and Rehabilitation Sciences (once its Ph.D. program is approved), are expected to participate in the future. As compared to M.D./Ph.D. programs offered by other universities, Dean Richards said the proposed program is unique because of the nature of McMaster's M.D. curriculum and the shorter time required to complete the program in an integrated format. Dean Richards also discussed at length the admission requirements, degree requirements, faculty listing and the schematic diagram of the structure of the program. The

proposal was approved by the Faculty of Health Sciences Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee and was recently approved by the Faculty of Health Sciences Executive Committee on December 21, 2005.

Dean Richards moved, and Dr. Xu seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposed M.D./Ph.D. program, as outlined in the document.”**

In response to a query, Dean Hall said there is a regulation in the graduate calendar allowing admission to the Ph.D. program directly from a bachelor's degree. Dean Hall added that OCGS is not keen on this idea, but universities are embracing this procedure because they want to be competitive with American universities. In response to a query, Dean Richards said the duration of the program is shorter by a year as compared to a similar program offered by the University of Toronto. Dean Richards stated that only three graduate half courses are required because the program also allows credit for the satisfactory completion of M.D. horizontal electives. Dean Richards explained that horizontal electives are sessions that are completed for a few hours in a clinic each week, or once a week for a period of 8-12 weeks. The student is required to complete satisfactorily a minimum of 80 hours of horizontal electives.

Dr. Bennett asked if there is a relationship between the horizontal electives and the comprehensive examination of the program. Dean Richards explained that there is no link at all between the two because the regulations of the Ph.D. comprehensive examination for participating departments are different from each other. In response to Dean Hall, Dean Richards said he already had discussion with Dr. Brash concerning the possibility of Biomedical Engineering participating in the program. In response to a question, Dean Richards said the thesis defence is conducted earlier because the program intends to incorporate the Ph.D. component first, before the clerkship commences. If, for some reason, the defence does not occur at the specified time, Dean Richards said students will have some flexibility deferring the thesis defence after the clerkship.

After half an hour of discussion, the motion was **carried** unanimously.

## **V. CLOSURE OF THE M.A. IN MUSIC CRITICISM PROGRAM**

Dean Hall referred to the document concerning the proposed closure of the M.A. in Music Criticism. Dean Hall explained that a decline in the number of faculty members due to retirement, resignation, and transfer has left the faculty complement no longer able to offer the program. The M.A. program is due for OCGS periodic appraisal in 2006-07. An internal university review of the department was conducted, and it recommended either hiring two new faculty members or closing the program. Dean Hall then referred to the memo (signed by three faculty members) from the department recommending the closure, and the document, *Protocol for the Closure of Graduate Programmes or Fields*. Dean Hall said his recommendation to close the program is consistent with the *Protocol for the Closure* document, and that he is now seeking a recommendation from the Council to be forwarded to the University Planning Committee.

Mr. Luyk commented that as far as he is aware, the proposal was not discussed within the department—there was no official faculty meeting, and the graduate students enrolled in the program were not given a chance to participate in the discussion. Mr. Luyk further said that one of the faculty members who is actively teaching in the program is not mentioned in the document. Mr. Luyk said it seems the decision was made based on the result of the internal review. In his opinion, the internal review does not represent the majority of the faculty members in the department. Dean Hall stated that he was in communication with the two faculty members in the program who had not signed the memo, but had not deemed it appropriate to communicate with the students. Dean Hall added that students who are already in the program will be assisted until the time they would normally expect to graduate. In response to Mr. Luyk's comments, Dean Rahimieh explained that the decision is not an implementation of the internal review; rather, discussions were held with the faculty members long before the internal review was conducted. She reiterated that the closure was mainly because of the retirement and departure of faculty members last year. The three faculty members whose signatures are on the letter sent the memo to Dean Hall because a decision has to be made before the OCGS review, which is scheduled in July 2006. In response to a question about whether or not there will be new hirings, Dean Rahimieh said the internal review strongly recommends that the School of the Arts focus the program at the undergraduate level. She added that there has been discussion within the Faculty about a new graduate program in "Music Cognition," however, Dean Rahimieh said no decision has yet been made concerning this new program. Mr. Luyk commented that the research interests of the remaining faculty members are in "music criticism," not "music cognition."

Dr. Luke inquired about the impact of the closure on the faculty members who are involved in the program. Dean Hall said that at this time, the faculty members are not affected because they are busy teaching undergraduate courses. Dean Hall said he corresponded with the other two members; they are not happy with the proposed closure but they recognize the resource problem and they are looking forward to their involvement with other programs in the Faculty of Humanities. Dr. Pawluch expressed her concern that the program is shutting down because of lack of faculty renewal; in her opinion, the two faculty members do not have a choice because they cannot do anything about the decision not to hire. Dean Hall added that of the remaining five, one is about to move to another department, another one is considering the possibility and the remaining three who signed the memo will still remain in the Faculty. Dr. Steiner expressed concern that the program is closing because of some faculty members' actions (retirement/resignation). He believes the decision to close the program should be made based on whether the program is successful or not, i.e., if there is a demand for this type of program. Mr. Luyk commented that there are currently nine students in the program; the previous year also had about the same number of students enrolled; and that this number of students is consistent for the program.

Although he supports the closure, Dean Goellnicht said he wanted to inform the Council that the Chair/Director of the department has refused to respond to the proposal. Dean Goellnicht wondered if the refusal to provide a statement will have an effect on the closure proceeding. Dean Hall said there was a discussion between the Provost and the University Secretary that a refusal to respond to such a review is unacceptable and cannot prevent such a procedure from

moving forward. One member asked if it is desirable at all to replace the faculty members who left and to continue to offer the program. Dean Hall explained that the financial outlook presented by the Budget Committee is bleak: the province has not funded any inflationary increase for operating universities. The university pays its bills by accepting more students and it will be hard pressed to meet existing costs much less to hire replacement faculty members. Dr. Steiner inquired about the possibility of a similar situation occurring in other programs, i.e., departure of 1-2 faculty members and the university's subsequent closing of the program for budget reasons. Dean Hall said such a scenario is possible; he said the Faculty of Social Sciences is in deficit and is unable to replace faculty members. Dr. Pawluch expressed her concern that the university is asking for a commitment to graduate expansion while at the same time recommending a program closure because it does not want to commit to faculty renewal. Mr. Luyk said even if the university hires two junior faculty members, it will be spending just half of the total salary of the two senior faculty members who retired/resigned. Dr. Luke was concerned that the Council has not been presented with enough information to make a recommendation. He said perhaps the recommendation to close the program should come from another body. Dean Hall said if the program is submitted for review, OCGS will still recommend closure because it will not approve the program with only three faculty members active in the field.

Dean Capson moved, and Dean Goellnicht seconded,

**“that Graduate Council endorse the proposal of the Dean of Graduate Studies to close the M.A. in Music Criticism program.”**

The motion was **carried** with regret. (12 in favour, 2 opposed, 8 abstentions)

## **VI. CURRICULUM REVISIONS**

### Proposal to eliminate the Part I Comprehensive Examination for the Master's degrees in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering

Dean Capson reviewed the rationale for the change: (i) the breadth of the discipline has grown extensively since the examination was initiated; it was difficult to develop a curriculum that is fair to all students; and (ii) Materials Science and Engineering is the only department at McMaster and the only materials science department in North America to have such an exam component in its Master's program.

Dean Capson moved, and Dr. Bone seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposal to eliminate the Part I Comprehensive Examination for the Masters degree in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering, as outlined in the document.”**

The motion was **carried**.

## Proposed changes to the Health Research Methodology Ph.D. Admission Requirements

Dr. Bennett explained that one of the requirements for admission to the Health Research Methodology Ph.D. program is a thesis-based Master's degree or equivalent in health research methods or a relevant discipline. This requirement prevents the program from looking at prospective students with course-based Master's degrees. In addition, external candidates are treated differently from the internal candidates. The department is now proposing a change to requiring students to have a thesis-based Master's degree in health research methods or the equivalent, or a combination of a course-based Master's degree and strong supporting evidence of their potential as independent investigators.

Dr. Bennett moved, and Dean Richards seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes to the Health Research Methodology Ph.D. admission requirements, as set out in the document.”**

The motion was carried.

## Proposal to establish fields of specialization for the Health Research Methodology program

Dr. Bennett discussed the five fields of specialization proposed for the Health Research Methodology program as follows: clinical epidemiology, biostatistics, health services research, public and population health, and health technology assessment. Rationale for establishing the new fields is to enhance the quality and strengths of the program. The four fields (clinical epidemiology, health services research, public and population health, and health technology assessment) will be offered at both the M.Sc. and Ph.D. levels. Biostatistics will only be offered at the Ph.D. level.

Dr. Bennett moved, and Dean Richards seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the five fields of specialization for the Health Research Methodology program, as outlined in the document.”**

The motion was carried.

## **VII. NEW GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS**

Dean Hall presented the list of the new graduate scholarships for Council approval.

The MBA Entrance Scholarship was retracted because the Council asked for clarification as to why the awarding of the scholarship gives preference to students in the MBA Co-op program. Dr. Moyal suggested revising the description of the Radisav Stevanovic Memorial Book Award in order to clarify that two awards will be given—one to an Engineering Physics student and another one to a student in French.

Dr. Pawluch moved, and Dr. Xu seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the new graduate scholarships (with the exception of the MBA Entrance Scholarships), subject to the revision of the description of the Radisav Stevanovic Memorial Book Award.”**

The motion was carried.

## **VIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

Australian Report: Dean Hall will present his report at the next Graduate Council meeting.

### Straw vote conducted at Graduate Council

Dean Hall explained that the faculty adjudicators have received a complaint from a supervisor about a thesis draft that has been plagiarized. Dean Hall said since the Academic Integrity Policy does not address this issue, the Academic Integrity Officer contacted the School of Graduate Studies for a response regarding the problem. Upon Dean Hall's suggestion a straw vote was conducted among the members concerning the issue at hand, and the results of the vote are as follows:

- plagiarism on a thesis draft is an offence - 14 votes
- plagiarism on a thesis draft is not an offence - 4 votes
- need to think about it - 2 votes

Dean Hall said this issue will be discussed at length at the next Graduate Council meeting in line with the result of the straw vote.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.