



School of Graduate Studies

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Graduate Council
September 22nd, 9:30 am
GH 111

Present: Dr. D. Welch (Chair), Ms. S. Baschiera, Mr. P. Self, Ms. B. Gordon, Dr. E. Badone, Dr. A. Roddick, Dr. E. Gedge, Dr. A. Deza, Dr. M. Verma, Mr. D. Finnerty, Ms. C. Brown, Dr. D. Gillespie, Dr. A. Guarne, Dr. A. Shi, Ms. R. Pereira, Dr. A. Sills, Dr. P. Swett, Dr. A. Fudge Schormans, Mr. M. Bui, Dr. S. Streeter, Dr. G. McClelland, Dr. T. Porter, Dr. N. Agarwal, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. M. Thompson, Dr. A. Dean, Dr. S. McCracken

Regrets: Dr. S. Kumar, Dr. D. Novog, Dr. A. Holloway, Dr. J. Richardson, Ms. V. Lewis, Mr. J. Sharpe

By Invitation: Mr. A. Pepler, Mr. A. Viswanathan

A G E N D A

I. Minutes of the meeting of June 16th, 2015

Dr. Hayward noted that 'rescinding an offer or expelling a student' should be added under section eight of the minutes and Dr. Welch noted a peculiar phrase on page 6 to be corrected.

Dr. Hayward moved Dr. Thompson seconded that the minutes of the meeting be approved with the corrections noted.

The motion was carried with one abstention

II. Business arising

There was no business arising.

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

Dr. Welch reported on issues surrounding graduate pay. He noted that the situation the students are facing this year is quite different than the situation last year. Last year, there was an unanticipated set of circumstances for a group of students, primarily international, that created a significant cash flow problem. An emergency fund was put in place for students that they were able to access by their first pay.

There has been a lot of discussion about how to create more flexibility for students going forward. After discussion and development within the Mosaic Project Team any payments from a research

project can now be paid through the HR module. Mid-Summer they realized that by doing that, students would not have enough money in the scholarship module to pay their tuition. To cover this payment, students were asked to provide voluntary consent to take money from their payroll (HR module) to pay their tuition. Payroll went out as planned this month, although there were a number of unexpected last-minute glitches that meant some students received their pay late. The vast majority of people who were in a position to be paid received their pay on time and the remainder received their pay either on Monday or Tuesday. If the student's banking information was not up-to-date a cheque was produced and available for pick up in Graduate Studies. The delay some students experienced has created a lot of anxiety but there were actually no problems with the process.

There was a change this year in how money is distributed, described and circulated to programs and students during the summer. A lot of confusion still exists about these changes; staff are doing their best to make sure everyone understands what is going on with graduate student pay. Graduate pays for the rest of the year should be as smooth as they ever are. Dr. Welch emphasized that the situation is not parallel to the situation faced last year. He noted that communication of the pay issues were days ahead of the pay itself and that this was a call that had to be made to get the pay out on time.

Dr. Welch noted that last year there was a Graduate Pay Working Group. He would like to re-establish that group, partly to go over the situation as it stands now as well as to see if there are ways the process can be improved to help students and administrators. He asked for volunteers for this working group.

A council member asked if there would be an emergency fund available again.

Dr. Welch responded yes, explaining that the fund was established last year for students with a TA only in terms two or three, to alleviate cash flow issues that they might experience at the start of the year. The fund allowed students to get an advance on employment income in future terms. 15 students made use of it last year.

A council member asked about interest on student accounts.

Dr. Welch responded that interest is turned off for this entire academic year for all students who are registered and being paid, noting that this is the right decision for students and staff.

A council member asked how students would be able to tell how much they're going to be getting paid. They haven't been able to figure out how voluntary payment program is going to be disbursed.

Ms. Gordon explained that when a student logs into their account they can see charges against the account as well as what scholarships have been paid in Term 1. TA information has also been loaded into student accounts, so students are able to see the gross amount of TA for each scheduled term. The

initial pay was from HR and included only two weeks of pay, they wanted to make sure students could see what commitment had been paid. Any research money being paid from a research grant has been loaded for the year and is also disbursed on biweekly basis. All of this is available in student accounts and the scheduled scholarship payments for Fall and Summer terms are under 'anticipated aid'.

The council member clarified that the question is when money is going to be taken from students in the payment plan.

Ms. Gordon responded that the first payment wouldn't be coming off accounts until October 2nd. The calculation for the payment is partly based on scholarship amounts applied to student account and was part of the agreement that students signed. The amount will be different for every student based on scholarship and TA. She advised that students should log in to their accounts after October 2nd to ensure that the information contained therein is correct. As mentioned earlier, interest has been turned off for the year, to ensure students have until August 31st to reconcile their accounts.

A council member asked if there was going to be a module in Mosaic that provided a month by month projection of what a student is going to be paid. Previously department administrators had a print out that provided this information month by month, is this a possibility in the future?

Ms. Gordon responded that scholarship pay is being done term by term, not monthly. A student's account does show that what they'll be receiving in January and what they'll be paying in January and it's the same for May.

Dr. Welch emphasized the importance of future communication to ensure there was clarity with respect to any of the changes that have occurred.

Another council member seconded the request for more information, particularly highlighting the need for some clarity around income available month by month.

Dr. Welch responded that he understood the concerns, particularly in light of the issues students encountered last year, and supports the business of improving the clarity around all of this.

Dr. Welch mentioned that Dr. Hayward had proposed a Graduate Council Working Group around best practices for graduate program handbooks. This group would work to ensure there is a standard reference for graduate program handbooks and that there is a process in place for propagating changes that happen centrally out to the program handbooks.

Dr. Hayward noted that in the Faculty of Health Sciences graduate program handbooks are reviewed on an annual basis. Programs submit a track changes version of their document to highlight what's been revised. As some inconsistency exists with respect to the content in handbooks, she suggested that one of the tasks of the working group should be to provide uniformity around content.

The graduate program handbook, supplementing the graduate calendar, constitutes a legal document of what the program and institution must provide to graduate students.

Dr. Welch reiterated his support for this initiative and asked that council members consider being a part of this group.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

Dr. Thompson introduced Adam Pepler, the new career development manager in the Faculty of Engineering. Mr. Pepler noted that he had been hired about four weeks ago, and his work background includes about 8 years of engineering recruitment for companies in North America. The hope is that the career-planning model being used in Engineering will be effective to roll out to the rest of campus. There seems to be a real need in the graduate student community to gain work experience related to their research, particularly as many will not be heading into academia. Dr. Agarwal mentioned to Adam that the MBA program has a co-op option. Mr. Pepler responded he's meeting with Jennifer McCleary from the program.

Dr. Hayward reported that the M.Sc. in Child life has been fully approved and is preparing to launch in September 2017. The Master of Public Health program launched at the beginning of the month. The Faculty of Health Sciences has been working collaboratively with programs to launch a Graduate Student Ambassador Program and has obtained a group of enthusiastic individuals who are keen on being student leaders. The Faculty is looking at how best to utilize these student ambassadors over the coming year – they expect that these students will act as representatives of their programs at important events.

Dr. Agarwal reported that Business is working on two new programs, including an M.Sc. in Business which would have three fields. He expects the proposal will be coming to GC early next year. The Ph.D. program in Business Administration is planning to add a 7th field.

Dr. Porter had nothing to report.

Dr. Swett reported that the Faculty of Humanities is working on the development of a new Ph.D. in Cultural Studies and New media.

Dr. Sills noted that the Faculty of Science had had three associate deans in 18 months and didn't have anything else to report.

V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

Ms. Baschiera provided a brief update on program approvals, reporting that the M.Sc. in Child Life had been fully approved as well as a new Ph.D. in Labour Studies. Two graduate diplomas in Social Work have cleared Quality Council and are sitting with the MTCU under expedited review.

The School of Graduate Studies held a series of computer lab session that were available to program administrators to help with practical experience in Mosaic that would allow them to manage through daily business processes. Building on that, Ms. Baschiera and Ms. Gordon will be hosting a series of town hall meetings that will include opportunities for program administrators to bring agenda items forward. The hope is to build some networks cross-faculty to help solve some administrator issues as well as to deliver news as it arises. Dr. Welch noted that the Best Practices lunches that the School of Graduate Studies used to run will be replaced with these more functional communication channels between SGS and administrators.

She also reported that they had spent a lot of time reviewing how admissions worked with Mosaic and improving upon that. Their first priority was enhancing the experience for the applicant. To that end a new piece will go live in the very near future. The second priority was the program staff. There have been a series of enhancements in this respect that will be going live in about two weeks.

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

Mr. Peter Self reported on the Indigenous Undergraduate Student Research program, funded through the Provost's office. The program has received two years of funding. This year 14 indigenous undergraduate students participated and they expect 15 participants next year. Mr. Self's team is actively recruiting supervisors ahead of time.

The Graduate Student Life Team ran eleven events over welcome week. Events ranged from a Welcome Week Breakfast, student awards and an international student fair. Graduate Career Strategist, Catherine Maybury has been extended for another year.

The Student Life Team is running a number events as part of Postdoc Appreciation Week including networking for introverts and an appreciation reception.

VII. Presentation from Dr. Hayward: FHS Graduate Program Selection Website and Research Plenary

Dr. Hayward noted that last year Faculty Deans at the university were focused on how to improve student enrollment. To explore and address this issue in the Faculty of Health Sciences complete a survey of students and held a retreat. An item that arose from these efforts was the need to update the

website to include small snapshots in a consistent format with information on all of the programs offered by the Faculty. If potential applicants want more information on a program than what is offered on the FHS Graduate Program Selection Website they can click on the program title and get to the program website for more information. The website developed within the Faculty includes all of their programs as well as any associated interdisciplinary programs. Dr. Hayward suggested it would be great if there was a similar site to cover all programs at the university.

Ms. Baschiera noted that SGS had reviewed the FHS program page and will be doing some work on the SGS website to improve the listing for all programs. Dr. Hayward stated that through their survey and retreat they found that one of the most important factors for applicants was the university's website.

Dr. Hayward shared a video with Graduate Council highlighting the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Plenary event. Dr. Hayward put forth this initiative to help resolve the issue of lack of recognition for outstanding graduate work. It's a very successful event and provides an opportunity for students to share their data and research and to receive feedback from people outside of their program.

VIII. Final Assessment Reports

The Final Assessment Reports for review concern the Global Health, Health Research Methodology, Medical Sciences, and Religious Studies programs. All recommendations to programs in the Final Assessment Reports from Quality Assurance Committee in this group were standard: reverting back to the standard cycle for review with an 18 month follow-up. The 18 month follow-up is against recommendations accepted from the reviewers report.

Dr. Welch provided some context for council members, noting that programs used to be reviewed by the Ministry. Part of the new, internal process is that these reports come to Graduate Council for review.

IX. M.D./Ph.D. Proposal

Dr. Hayward provided some background on this as the council might see the item as an e-ballot between Graduate Council meetings. The M.D./Ph.D. program combines MD undergraduate training with a Ph.D. degree. Students can complete their Ph.D. component in multiple programs and the program would like to provide a separate calendar section to reflect this. They would also like to add Chemical Biology and Health Policy to the list of available programs as well as adding the ability to include other programs on case-by-case basis.

A council member asked what departments have collaborated to date.

Dr. Hayward replied that these programs include Medical Sciences, Biochemistry, Neuroscience and now Chemical Biology. They want to be receptive to all students interested in relevant Ph.D.

X. Quality Assurance Committee Membership

Dr. Welch informed the Council that QAC is the overarching committee of the Internal Quality Assurance Process. The committee looks over all of the reviews and sees if there are issues that need to be addressed. The proposed members are Dr. Alison Holloway (Health Sciences), Dr. Sue McCracken (Business) and Dr. Christina Baade (Humanities). All are returning from last year.

Dr. Agarwal moved and Dr. Hayward seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the proposed members of the Quality Assurance Committee.'

The motion was carried.

Dr. Hayward asked about succession planning and wondered about opportunity for others to participate. Ms. Baschiera responded that the committee had a lot of new members this year and in the previous year so they wanted to keep some experience members but that there is certainly opportunity for change in the upcoming years.

XI. New Scholarships

Ms. Gordon noted there were four new scholarships for approval. A council member asked the values of the scholarships. Ms. Gordon responded that values vary. Some are specific but others are an endowed fund and the amount is fluid year over year.

Dr Swett moved and Dr. McCracken seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the proposed scholarships as described in the documents.'

The motion was carried.

XII. Scholarship Committee Member approval (hard copy distributed)

Dr. Welch noted that the workload expected of previous scholarship committee members had been untenable and unsustainable, so they have asked for additional members this year with the intention of leveling the amount of work involved. Committee members will be split into two groups – a

set of members for big external competitions and a group for smaller scholarships throughout the year. This will allow members to choose between the short intense group or more meetings over the course of the year and help spread out the workload. The approval today is of the names submitted so far as the list is not complete yet. When the list is complete graduate council will vote on the additional nominees. Dr. Porter noted that he had an additional few names and asked if the council should vote on them now. Dr. Welch suggested they be added to the next batch of names for approval.

Dr. Sills noted that a committee member was listed twice. A council member noted a small typo in the student from Philosophy.

A council member asked a question about student members: if they're applying for a scholarship are they still eligible for the panel? Dr. Welch responded that they would not be eligible to contribute to that particular competition. The council member asked if they were ineligible for the entire competition? Ms. Gordon clarified that there is a rule in the calendar regarding faculty and they would extend that protocol for students. Dr. Welch confirmed that this would prevent them from reviewing anything in their own department.

Dr. Swett noted that she has already divided her names between the big competitions and the smaller, more frequent work and wondered if this was correct. Dr. Welch responded that some faculties had already done that and some hadn't.

Dr. Hayward expressed appreciation for the changes in committee composition.

A council member asked if they were to operate under the assumption that every name on the list had agreed? Noting that while they hadn't agreed, their own name appeared on the list. Dr. Sills responded that every program except for Neuroscience already have agreement

Dr. Hayward asked if membership will be handled the same was as a selection committee: if someone can't serve you'll substitute without approving a new name. Dr. Welch confirmed this was the case.

Dr. Sills asked for a friendly amendment to strike the Neuroscience names off the list.

Dr. Sills moved and Dr. Porter seconded, 'that Graduate Council approved the proposed members of the Scholarship Committee with the minor changes noted and with the Neuroscience names removed.'

The motion was carried.

XII. Other Business

Dr. Welch asked for volunteers for the Graduate Pay Working Group. Mr. Donal Finnerty, Ms. Carla Brown, Dr. Amber Dean and Dr. Alison Sills agreed to join. Ms. Gordon noted that in addition to discussing the current issues surrounding graduate pay the working group will also be concerned with the mechanism of graduate pay, including the minimum graduate stipend. The discussion will not only be of a technical nature.

Dr. Welch also asked for volunteers for the Graduate Program Handbook Working Group. Ms. Stephanie Baschiera, Dr. Hayward, Dr. Swett, Dr. Gillespie and Dr. Fudge Schormans agreed to participate. A council member suggested that they might want to touch base with graduate chairs as well. Dr. Welch agreed and noted a graduate administrator might be useful as well. Dr. Fudge Schormans suggested Darlene Savoy might be someone to approach in this context.