

Graduate Council
December 8th, 2015 9:30 AM
GH 111

Present: Dr. D. Welch (Chair), Ms. S. Baschiera, Dr. D. Deza, Dr. A. Roddick, Dr. E. Badone, Dr. A. Holloway, Dr. G. McClelland, Dr. E. Gedge, Dr. A. Dean, Ms. A. Ion, Mr. R. Mah, Mr. R. Morton, Dr. A. Guarne, Dr. D. Gillespie, Dr. S. McCracken, Dr. S. Streeter, Dr. M. Verma, Dr. A. Shi, Dr. P. Swett, Ms. V. Lewis, Dr. N. Agarwal, Mr. P. Self, Dr. M. Thompson, Ms. B. Gordon, Mr. M. Bui

Regrets: Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. T. Porter, Ms. C. Brown, Mr. P. DeMaio

A G E N D A

I. Minutes of the meeting of October 20th and November 17th, 2015

The minutes of the meetings of October 20th and November 17th were approved on a motion by Dr. Deza, seconded by Dr. McCracken.

II. Business arising

There was no business arising

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

Dr. Welch reported that, in terms of Mosaic, there had been some positive developments. The School of Graduate Studies held two well-advertised sessions for students in a computer lab. The sessions included a presentation on how to understand their pay and funding and allowed students to bring along their own situations for clarification. The notes from the meeting will be made available and SGS will be holding similar sessions in January for new students. There will also be nine tutorials posted on Mosaic to help students understand their pay and funding. This will be available to everyone in the New Year. Now that Dr. Welch is part of Campus Solutions executive committee he is pleased to report that there is good knowledge with respect to graduate priorities.

In terms of approving the ability of students to find what program they would like to gain admission to there has been work done in SGS to completely re-do the website with a particular focus on the admissions interface. The SGS website has had many challenges with respect to usability. Dr. Welch invited Graduate Council members to go to gs.mcmaster.ca. The webpage had already been through a few cycles of review. He noted that it is much easier to search by faculty, degree, key words and emphasized the importance of applicants being able to find the program they were interested in. He asked council members to submit any additional suggestions they had for website improvement.

The upcoming couple of months are recruiting season. Dr. Welch noted that SGS will be working with other departments and faculties to increase recruitment. As this is the final year of McMaster's Strategic Mandate Agreement with the MTCU anything the institution fails to achieve in terms of targets this year could be locked in by provincial government for the next three years.

Dr. Welch thanked Dr. Sills for her outstanding contribution as the acting Associate Dean of Science.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

Dr. Thompson reported that the Faculty of Engineering held a graduate retreat focused on highlighting three changes. The first change regards tuition policies as the Faculty has put in place a regulation that says all Ph.D. must be paid tuition plus 14K. They're trying to get feedback from departments to ensure they are able to manage the change and trying to find out how the Faculty can assist departments. The second change is the introduction of a proposed industrial Ph.D. option. Dr. Thompson noted that he and Ms. Baschiera were working to figure out details for individuals coming into McMaster and creating a streamlined path for them. He hoped to bring the proposal to Graduate Council in a couple of months time. The third change concerned recruitment. The Faculty is grappling with the issues of what can be done to increase domestic enrollment. They've put forth a number of fairly successful initiatives including getting their own undergraduate students more aware of what research areas are available. The Faculty is working on how to reach out beyond this campus to attract more domestic students. They plan to link their website with the new SGS admissions website. The Faculty also plans to use analytics as part of a much bigger marketing strategy so they know they're getting to the right audience.

V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

Ms. Baschiera reported that the heavy admissions period was about to begin. She noted that she had previously reported to Graduate Council that after the launch of Mosaic a working team was pulled together and identified 186 deficits with the admissions system. They have since made substantial gains on about 145 of these issues. Going into this next admissions period the first big improvement that will be apparent is with respect to applicant experience. Applicants will have far more ease with accessing the application itself and understanding how to apply for the program they're interested in. The next area of focus is how the program staff are able to use the system. At one point, there was no ability to print applications. Program staff can now print documents for every single applicant. Program staff has had access to 4 hours of training with SGS staff every week. The training sessions are conducted on a variety of themes. Dr. Welch noted that program staff now have ability to see who has started an application or finished an application in the previous week, which is a very important change which will assist with workflow. He also said that SGS is holding Town halls

and the drop in sessions Stephanie mentioned for staff to dig into the issues affecting their work day. Ms. Baschiera noted that desk-side service is available as well.

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

Mr. Self had no report.

Ms. Gordon reported that her team had, in the late fall, piloted the scholarships and bursaries module in Mosaic for the Faculty of Business. Students were able to apply for scholarships through Mosaic. The pilot was intended to get a feel for how the module works and functions and it went very smoothly. They are in the midst of a soft launch for bursaries which will be announced to students and departments this week. There will be a slower roll out of various in-house scholarships. The module is very flexible: students express their intent to apply in the system but the documents are outside of the system and can be submitted in a number of different areas.

VII. Faculty of Business Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Agarwal presented two changes for Graduate Council approval. The first is a proposed change to the MBA program specializations. The proposal is to discontinue offering two of those. The primary reason is the lack of demand for these two options. The program underwent an IQAP review and one of the recommendations was to streamline and rationalize the program structure and offerings. This change is a step in the right direction. Students who are currently in those specializations would be grandfathered.

The second change for approval comes from the Master of Finance program and the proposal is to add a 16 month program option. This is a course-work only program where students complete courses over three consecutive terms. The proposal is to introduce a scheduled break in the summer term for those students who would like to gain work experience. This will enhance the marketability. In more traditional graduate programs the summer term is typically used for research. As the Master of Finance is a professional program they would like to allow students gain professional experience in this time frame. Dr. Welch noted that customs and immigration Canada rules only allow them to stay over the break period if it is part of the degree. Dr. Agarwal agreed and noted that 90-95 percent of students in the program are visa students and that regulations allow them to work during a scheduled break.

A council member asked if students would be paying tuition during the break. Dr. Agarwal confirmed that they could not and that additional supplemental fees would apply.

Dr. Thompson moved and Dr. Deza seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the curriculum changes proposed by the Faculty of Business as described in the documents.'

The motion was carried.

VIII. Faculty of Engineering Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Thompson presented changes for two departments. Electrical and Computer Engineering proposed an updated to their comprehensive procedures. Previously it was largely review of undergraduate knowledge with some graduate course content. The program now proposes to reduce course content evaluation and broaden it so that student is pulling together a proposal in a similar manner to what they would be doing for their own research. This will allow a student to display analysis and project management skills and will allow the program to evaluate this during the examination. This is consistent with other departments.

Engineering Physics proposed a number of changes. These included the introduction of an Accelerated Option (which already exists in Chemical Engineering and Materials Science and Engineering). This option would allow an undergraduate student to take a 400/600 level course at the graduate level and receive credit for that should they go on to become a member of the grad program. This reduces the amount of time to degree completion. McMaster is in competition with other universities that offer similar accelerated options and the hope is that this will entice many undergraduate students to stay for a Masters degree. The next change proposed is an advanced credit option which is a similar idea. The difference being that the accelerated option requires students to also work on thesis project in the summer before their graduate degree. The advanced credit option would allow an undergraduate student to take a 600 level course during their undergraduate degree to count toward their Masters degree. The program also proposed reducing the number of required courses in M.A.sc. and Ph.,D and replacing Part II of their comprehensive with a thesis proposal and supervisory committee meeting.

Dr. Welch noted that it has been traditionally very difficult to have undergraduate students registered in grad courses and asked how this worked in practice.

Dr. Thompson responded that the student in question has to choose from a selected number of courses within their program. The student has to approach associate chair for permission to take the course at the graduate level and then have to go to instructor to notify them that they want to be evaluated on the 600 level. The instructor reports back that the student passed the 600 level course requirements. When that happens, a petition for credit is sent to the Associate Dean. The student will see a 'pass' on their transcript for the course in question when and if they become a grad student.

A council member asked if this means they don't go through the application process for graduate school. Dr. Thompson responded that this was absolutely not the case. Basically they just store the credit with the

associate chair and if the student does apply to the graduate program, they can petition to apply it to their record.

A council member asked for clarification on the pass/fail credit notation on the transcript. Dr. Thompson responded that it looks exactly the same as a credit would appear for a course from another university. The council member wondered if there were implications for scholarships/going on to other degrees. Dr. Thompson noted that they are aware of the potential issues but confirmed that they have thought this through. Dr. Welch responded that the student would still get the grade for the 400 course which would appear on their transcript. The council member responded that they are concerned that students aren't aware of that issue and discussed the issue of how a transcript might be evaluated at another institution. Dr. Thompson said they are aware of the issue and will be reviewing it.

Dr. Swett asked if there was a limit on the number of times a student can do this. Dr. Thompson responded that they have to do it immediately. Dr. Swett asked if a student can utilize the option more than once. Dr. Thompson responded that this wasn't the case. For the accelerated option they can 'accelerate' one course only. For the advanced credit M.Eng option its two courses. The proposal is not intended to allow students to skirt requirements, just help them to complete on time.

Dr. Deza moved and Mr. Morton seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the curriculum changes proposed by the Faculty of Engineering as described in the documents.'

The motion was carried.

IX. Faculty of Science Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Agarwal presented the items on Dr. Sills' behalf. The first two recommendations are from CSE – the first proposal was the cancellation of the course-based M.Sc. and M.Eng degrees and the second is a change to course requirements for the M.A.Sc. Both changes result from an IQAP review that the program underwent recently. The course-based degrees have been inactive for a number of years and the primary reason is lack of research component. The changes to course requirements for the M.A.Sc. also arise from the IQAP review. Currently the course requirements for the M.A.Sc. are a minimum of four half courses plus a thesis. The IQAP review recommended that if students came in with background which already covered the information contained in the core course, they should be able to substitute with other appropriate grad course requirement, subject to the approval of the program director.

The other item presented for Graduate Council approval is a new stream in research clinical training for the Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour program. This recommendation flows from an OCGS review that

the program underwent. One recommendation was to broaden the scope of Ph.D. program to allow students to broaden their training in clinical research and this stream is intended to address this. The program expects it would help grow graduate enrollment.

Dr. Welch commented that he is glad programs are not just adding, but also subtracting appropriate items

Dr. Holloway moved and Dr. Deza seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the curriculum changes proposed by the Faculty of Science as described in the documents.'

The motion was carried.

X. Faculty of Social Sciences Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

There was some confusion regarding the items to be presented in this report. Ms. Bryce clarified that it was a report for the October items only as the November meeting items still had to go to the Faculty of Social Sciences. The item was deferred to the next meeting.

XI. Change to Scholarship Name and Description

This item was presented for information only. Ms. Gordon explained that this was not a change to the actual terms as it pertains to the student and that this sort of change happens periodically as donors change over time.