



School of Graduate Studies

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Graduate Council
May 17th, 9:30 am
GH 111

Present: Dr. D. Welch, Ms. S. Baschiera, Ms. C. Bryce, Dr. N. Agarwal, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. P. Swett, Dr. T. Porter, Dr. M. Thompson, Dr. B. Gupta, Mr. P. Self, Ms. B. Gordon, Dr. A. Dean, Dr. E. Badone, Dr. A. Roddick, Dr. A. Holloway, Mr. R. Morton, Dr. M. Verma, Ms. V. Lewis, Dr. G. McClelland, Mr. P. DeMaio, Dr. J. Richardson

Regrets: Dr. M. Verma, Dr. A. Deza, Dr. A. Roddick, Dr. A. Fudge Schormans

By invitation: Dr. E. Allard, Ms. I. Piatek,

A G E N D A

I. Minutes of the meeting of April 26th, 2016

The minutes of the meeting of April 26th were approved on a motion by Dr. Hayward, seconded by Dr. Thompson.

II. Business arising

There was no business arising.

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

Dr. Welch noted that the third and final scholarship pay had taken place. By all reports it was timely and successful. Out of 2500 recipients there were 71 who were students who had not registered for the term and didn't get paid as a result. Programs had been informed ahead of time about those students. He reported that there had been as before a number of student who were wondering if they got paid correctly and directed folks to the Graduate Studies website. He also noted that assistance is available for anyone who is still confused. This uncertainty will be eliminated this coming fall when the gross amount is provided with each pay. This will be individualized and easy to check if numbers match. He thanked everyone involved.

Dr. Welch reported that after the last Graduate Council meeting the Graduate Student Association (GSA) had held their referendum. There was quite a good turnout and both items on the agenda were voted down, although the votes were quite close. The discussion around the issues in question has concluded for now and information has been sent out to all graduate students to clarify the situation.

He noted that they're in a phase of Mosaic now where they're starting to see some of the benefits of the system. He highlighted graduate student advisement as one of these benefits. It is a way of communicating on an individual student basis what requirements have been met for that particular program and what ones haven't. He noted that there had been relatively few situations where the student and/or supervisor had not understood the requirements for the degree but that each of these cases had proven to be a big challenge. The message has always been to go to the graduate calendar and figure it out but reading it can be challenging. What the student advisement report does (coded by folks in the School of Graduate Studies) is codify requirements for a given program and when a student runs the report it will show what requirements have been met as well as those that haven't. Students from September 2015 admit onwards will be able to use it. Once 5 or 6 years have passed everyone will be on the system. The plan is to release it this summer after some additional testing in the programs. It is a very positive step forward. He noted that SGS is also moving forward with the automated forms project this summer which will provide significant benefits in a number of areas.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

Dr. Bhagwati Gupta, the new acting Associate Dean of Science introduced himself. He noted that the Faculty of Science is looking at graduate funding and reviewing TA placements, to see how departments and units are recruiting and allocating TAs. The other update is an attempt to organize science-wide event connecting alumni to students to highlight pathways after graduation and to facilitate networking. Dr. Swett reported that the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Social Sciences had recently hosted the President of SHERC and held events related to the visit throughout the day. One of the highlights was an attempt to expand the MITACS program to make it much more possible for Humanities and Social Sciences graduate students to participate in the program. The Faculty is also sending two graduate students to a conference at Carleton about the future of the Ph.D. in Humanities, taking place this week. Dr. Swett will report on this at the next meeting of Graduate Council. Dr. Porter reported that the Faculty of Social Sciences had held a graduate, Masters-level career day last week, organized by administrators within the Faculty and Catherine Maybrey from SGS. Dr. Hayward noted that following the discussion regarding comprehensive exams at the previous meeting of Graduate council she had discussed the issue with program heads at the last Faculty program executive meeting. She said that there had been unanimous support to have more flexibility around the comprehensive exam and more program autonomy in making decisions about these. She noted that there was a great deal of open-mindedness and that they acknowledge that comprehensive knowledge can be tested in a number of ways.

V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

There was no report.

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

Mr. Self reported on the Thesis Writing Bootcamp taking place, noting that this event provided an opportunity for students who are ready to be finished to spend concentrated time working on writing up their work. The library allows them to use the entire learning commons. Students sit there and just get down to writing. There is a facilitator there that helps them move along. These events are being held three times a year as student demand is high. A council member asked about how the information was disseminated to graduate students, noting they hadn't seen it. Mr. Self responded that they have tried to focus on students close to graduation but if someone wants to come and write a paper, anyone is welcome. The information is included in the graduate student mailer. A council member asked when the next one was taking place. Mr. Self responded that they were working to set one up in July.

Mr. Self reported that Catherine Maybrey did a 'Zero to Hero' career prep five day workshop. 22 students attended and the workshop included mock interviews and job search tips.

Mr. Self also reported that he and Andrea Cole had met with a representative who works for the city of Hamilton and helps support new immigrants to the city. His team has been engaged with this group because of international graduate students who want to stay after they complete their degree. He noted that the rules have changed and it is now more difficult for international students to gain permanent resident status.

VII. Revision to MIETL Teaching and Learning Certificate of Completion Courses

Dr. Welch noted that normally changes to course wouldn't come to Graduate Council but in the case of the MIETL courses associated with the certificate of completion, Graduate Council is the one place where it's really sensible to come for discussion/approval. Dr. Allard explained that the two courses in question were part of the offerings associated with the certificate. For the course numbered 650 the proposal was to change the number of teaching experiences and the course description associated with the course as a result. For 760 – Self-directed Study the title and course descriptions were changed to show there is a research and applied option, allowing them to provide students with flexibility.

Dr. Agarwal moved and Dr. Swett seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the course changes as described in the documents.'

The motion was carried.

VIII. Faculty of Business Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Agarwal explained that the MBA program was reviewed as part of IQAP three years ago and that review highlighted the need for some major overhaul of the year one curriculum. The recommendations that came out of that review called for integrated and flexible curriculum with updated pedagogy and community and

theme-based learning approaches. Over the past two years or so the MBA program has made some changes. Now up for consideration is the complete package overhaul of the year one curriculum. Following the IQAP review the faculty itself engaged in a number of other exercises to get a handle on what kind of curriculum changes were in order, including conducting a survey of competing programs and focus groups with employers and students and faculty. He noted that they were asking Graduate Council to consider the proposal prior to the formal faculty approval because of the meeting schedules. He assured Graduate Council that the faculty had been very involved in the redesign and there have been two faculty retreats and a number of task forces consisting of faculty and staff. At the last faculty meeting a broad framework was approved in principle. He highlighted the key changes proposed: currently year one consists of ten courses and all ten are required, the proposed curriculum does away with all of those courses and starts with four modules, cohort based, followed by five required courses in term one. Term two starts with another integrated foundation module, followed by two required courses and then three required courses can be chosen from a set of five. This allows students more flexibility than there had been in the past. Term two ends with an integrated project that students have to complete. The changes accommodate and operationalize the key issues that IQAP highlighted and the information that the faculty collected.

He noted that in the past it was possible to consider applicants for transfer credit, under the new system the curriculum is so different that it would be difficult to find equivalent courses. So the second recommendation is to do away with this. Waivers are still possible. He noted that rep from MBA was in attendance to answer any questions.

Dr. Gupta asked a question about how the transfer credit works. Dr. Agarwal responded that they currently have a ten course program which is accelerated MBA program. Students who have completed an undergraduate degree in business would go straight into the accelerated program. For others there was a policy of granting them up to six transfer credits for any of the first year 600-level courses for which students may have already had the appropriate training. No waivers ever granted for 700. MBA program takes students from non-business background, 600 level courses are to prepare them.

Dr. Gupta asked about the student survey, whether it was done before or after the IQAP review. Dr. Agarwal responded that it was both, during the IQAP review and after to get concrete information on what they need.

Dr. Welch noted that the changes the MBA program was bringing forward, in relation to recommendations from their IQAP review was exactly what the whole business of what program enhancement is about.

Dr. Swett moved and Dr. Agarwal seconded 'that Graduate Council approve the changes proposed as described in the documents, subject to approval by the Faculty of Business.'

The motion was carried.

IX. Faculty of Engineering Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Thompson reported that the course change is just a change to the title. The program mistakenly changed the title from what the 400 course was. The change brought forward for approval is from the Materials Science & Engineering, who are requesting a change to their course requirements which would allow one of the required courses for students to be a non-technical course.

Dr. Gupta asked if it would change the breadth of knowledge if students are taking a non-technical course instead of a technical course. Dr. Thompson responded that, particularly in the Ph.D., the supervisory committee can require the student to take any courses where there is a deficiency. More than ever they're seeing the pressing need to broaden the knowledge base beyond the technical.

A council member asked if this would allow students to take one of the courses offered by MIIETL. Dr. Thompson responded that all they're asking is to allow the option. The graduate associate chair would approve the non-technical course and ensure they're appropriate.

Council members discussed EDUCATION 750 and how it is used in different programs and relates to program requirements. Dr. Thompson noted that in the case of this program, that in the current scenario when the student takes the course, they can't count it as part of their degree requirements and have asked students to take another course on top of it.

Dr. Welch noted that SGS had anticipated this discussion in the academic advisement report.

Dr. Swett moved and Dr. Porter seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the changes proposed by the Faculty of Engineering as described in the documents.'

The motion was carried.

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

Dr. Hayward noted that Health Policy has had one of the most complex requirements for courses and they propose to reduce the number of methodology courses from 4 to 3. From the Medical Sciences program the change is not to the number of courses required but the area the student may take the course in. The change proposed would allow more flexibility in recognition that students are pursuing projects that can be considered interdisciplinary. The Committee can approve taking courses in a non-technical area. The final change was to the comprehensive examination in Rehabilitation Sciences. The program had previously has a three-part comprehensive. The issue of how complex their comprehensive exam was brought up during IQAP, highlighting the issues students were have completing on time as a result. The program proposed dropping the KT component but will maintain the two other components. The for-information items involved various course changes.

Dr. Holloway moved and Dr. Gupta seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the changes proposed as described in the documents, subject to approval by the Faculty of Health Sciences Executive.'

The motion was approved.

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

Dr. Porter had three items to report. The first was the addition of a new stream in Social Psychology to the Sociology Masters program. He noted that the Honours Bachelors in social psychology has been very popular. New social psychology courses had been created previously and the addition of the stream will highlight the items available to students. Sociology also proposed the elimination of the part-time admission option in their Ph.D. program, noting that it was a carry-over from a time when it was required but don't actually admit anyone part-time. The program also proposed the addition of the methodology requirement to the Master's thesis option which would bring it in line with other Master's degree requirements within the program.

Dr. Agarwal moved and Dr. Thompson seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the changes proposed as described in the documents, subject to approval by the Faculty of Social Sciences.'

The motion was carried.

XII. Revised Supervisory Committee Report Form

Dr. Welch noted that feedback had been incorporated into the new draft after it had been taken to various groups for their input. He noted that one of the questions that graduate administrators get a lot is from students who enter at a non-standard time, so the form now includes an attempt to clarify this. It is noted that part-time students also require annual reports. Normal deadlines apply for students that are off-campus, being off-campus doesn't mean a student doesn't have these meetings but alternative methods of attendance are an option. He highlighted different changes in the document, noting that more space was available for comment and clarification provided on who was to be commenting in what area as well as a change in the rubric to clarify what an 'excellent' means.

A council member was quite concerned about tying the rating of Excellent to time to completion. Humanities completion times are very different. Her students are currently getting E ratings and they would be bumped down to G based on this one stipulation. She also noted that sometimes these reports are turned to for dissertation awards. It could also raise equity issues. Time to completion is a different question from the quality of the students work. Dr. Welch responded that the document is intended to be a moving evaluation, and it isn't something that normally appears on a transcript or is considered for student awards.

Another council member responded that they agreed with the concern. Even though it doesn't appear on a transcript it can have an important psychological effect on a student which can be detrimental to completion time. She would like to disconnect the issue of time to completion to 'Excellent'.

Dr. Hayward noted that this also brought some strong responses from programs in FHS and suggested an 'E' and 'E' overtime.

Dr. Welch proposed a modification to that to remove the last clause in 'E'. A council member responded that she thought 'Excellent' should include timeliness. Another council member responded that this is still a confusion between time to completion and quality of work. She suggested that two measures might be required, time to completion and quality of work.

Dr. Welch said that the committee and document are already are measuring research and academic progress. There is a built in measurement of whether the progress is at an acceptable rate or not. He was concerned about a contradictory message and suggested that one modification might be to apply it to over time but not out of time students.

A council member responded that the question is what is being assessed: quality of work or time to completion and noted that there are different averages for time to completion between programs. It might force programs to change academic approach to program to student to ensure they are complete. She saw time to completion as an entirely different section.

Dr. Porter noted that this is a tricky issue - speed of publication is related to quality. If someone has twice as long and produces a lot of material, it's not the same. He said that one option is to alter the wording to 'considering time to completion can be an important element of this evaluation.' He thought it was good to have this kind of benchmarking. He also said that if it ended up changing program requirements it might not be a bad thing, in light of funding requirements.

Dr. Swett said that 'and who are normally on track to complete on time' reminds us to get them out while they're still funded.

A council member noted that under anticipated date of completion there could be a check box to note whether the student is in time/overtime/out of time.

Dr. Welch noted that going forward the academic advisement report will go along with this. That will provide the information about the student's status in completing their degree requirements.

Dr. Welch proposed a friendly amendment to delete 'and who is clearly on track to complete in four years' and the section under 'good' that starts with 'overtime students'. He didn't want to introduce an additional set of ratings right now. Dr. Hayward asked if they might modify 'E' to say 'given to student who is making expected timely progress'. Dr. Welch responded that it already says that in a way at that at the beginning of the section. He noted that it is explicitly stated that this is not a cumulative report, but a snapshot of a particular time.

Dr. Hayward moved and Mr. Morton seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the revised Ph.D. supervisory committee form, to be used exclusively come September 2016 and optionally before that time at the discretion of the program.'

The motion was carried.

XIII. Comprehensive Exam Discussion

Dr. Welch noted that they had begun to have a discussion on this issue previously. He highlighted the collection of information in the comprehensive examination chart provided. He expected that the Council will get to this in a more vigorous way in the fall in anticipation of change. He noted that Dr. Swett had looked into some of the competitors and how they deal with comp exam, including whether it's a requirement at the institutional level or not.

Dr. Swett reported that she had done a quick scan with own thoughts about who competitor institutions are. She found that there were five universities that did not require a comprehensive examination at the university level. She was sure that many programs do have a comprehensive at the program level but there was no university policy, these institutions included the University of Toronto, York, McGill, Waterloo and Carleton. There were four others that did require the comprehensive examination including, the University of Ottawa, Queens and Alberta. She noted that Alberta only requires oral. The University of Ottawa refers to exam or equivalent. The only other thing that she'd add is that Queens seems to be under discussion at the moment as they are holding an associate deans/graduate advisor retreat to hold a discussion around the comprehensive examination.

Dr. Welch said that Dr. Thompson is on the CAGS committee that will be considering comprehensive exams nationally this fall. This will be timely for input on how McMaster changes things moving forward. He said he thought there were many good reasons to hold a comprehensive but the way he will be approaching this discussion is determining whether the program should be in charge of it or whether the university will be requiring it. The issue is worth examination and discussion over the coming year

Dr. Hayward said that the Faculty of Health Sciences is very supportive of having increased flexibility for programs to be thinking about how they're comprehensively assessing knowledge. Some of the ideas that had come up in the discussion within her Faculty included staged phases of comprehensive testing.

Dr. Agarwal noted that there is already a lot of variation on how the requirement is operationalized and that there are two issues: whether it should have be mandatory or not and second, whether there should be flexibility if the first is yes.

XIV. Spring 2016 Graduands

Dr. Novog moved and Dr. Dean seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the list of the 2016 Spring Graduands, with amendments/corrections to be made as necessary by the Associate Graduate Registrar.'

The motion was carried.

XV. Report on Faculty of Health Sciences Initiatives

Dr. Hayward reported on a number of initiatives from within FHS to give council members a sense of what the Faculty has been working on with the assistant deans and program directors within and affiliated to FHS. She recognized the team effort behind all of the work that had been accomplished.

She noted that the 2016 Research Plenary poster session was coming up and wanted to point out that this was to assist with graduate students being recognized for quality of work, noting a lack between the undergraduate world and graduate world in this respect.

The Faculty held a retreat in response to the request that they work on promoting doctoral student enrollment. Now each month the Graduate Program Executive meets to discuss initiatives, including student life and application data. This provides programs the opportunity to tell other programs about their success stories.

After the retreat the Faculty worked on a number of projects. Starting this September they will pilot initiative to create Michael G. Degroote scholarships for excellence. There is a four year commitment to recruiting students with these awards and they have implemented a rapid process to go from identifying a candidate to putting forward a proposal. The hope is that this will make programs very nimble at attracting top individuals that are likely to become top students. She noted that this was an exciting opportunity with the possibility of offering 30+ scholarships over 4 years.

Another initiative was the development of program-specific endowment awards to alleviate funding pressures. She noted that this is something that has to be an ongoing effort at the university and that she was happy to work with others to create merit-based endowed awards to help programs be more competitive.

The Faculty has conducted alumni surveys to collect career-related information and to identify transferable skills students that need.

Another successful initiative was the FHS student ambassadors program, where students were identified by program for one year term, potentially renewable. The Faculty also worked on program awareness at a collaborative event. FHS Student ambassadors participated. Undergraduate students flocked to ambassadors to find out about their programs. The event was very successful in responding to the need to put a student face on programs.

They have worked to develop a quick guide to graduate programs - each program has a short summary, including pertinent information and link to programs website. The Faculty office has also worked with programs

on a website evaluation. They wanted to ensure that the material available there was student centric and feedback received was shared with programs.

The Faculty has collaboratively worked on graduate course and instructor evaluation. They have been able to do this online and it allows for analysis data across programs as well as specific program information. Instructors and Chairs receive the results. For this upcoming fall term 56 courses will be evaluated this way.

There have now been two years of reviewing program handbooks and this year as a quality improvement initiative they have recruited a graduate student to review, not just ensuring policy and procedures are included but also that student's needs are being met.

They have held a couple of faculty-wide events on how to make an effective presentation. Sandy Raha facilitated to demonstrate how to present excellent poster/oral presentation. There have also been annual CIHR application sessions that are open to anyone who wants to come. Karen Beattie delivered the talk this year and they have turned out to be really helpful to show students how to prepare high-quality scholarship applications.

Dr. Welch asked the University Librarian, Vivian Lewis to report on any library items. Ms. Vivian Lewis reported on one item. She noted that construction is going to begin on a Makers Space in the lower level of Thode library. This space will allow students to explore making and innovation. To make it happen they are moving four thousand books into storage. All items in question have never circulated once in the history of the circulation system. They'll be in storage and will still be accessible. She acknowledged there can be sensitivity around this.