



School of Graduate Studies

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Graduate Council
November 15th, 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. S. McCracken, Dr. J. Qiu, Dr. A. Deza, Dr. A. Kitai, Dr. B. Doble, Dr. A. Dean, Dr. E. Grodek, Dr. S. O'Brien, Dr. G. McClelland, Dr. D. Pelinovsky, Dr. A. Sill, Dr. I. Marwah, Dr. A. Fudge Schormans, Dr. E. Badone, Ms. A-M Dragomir, Ms. M. Badv, Ms. S. Ramsammy, Mr. R. Narro-Perez, Mr. P. Self

Regrets: Dr. M. Verma, Dr. A. Guarne, Dr. L. Thabane, Ms. N. Shen, Ms. R. Estok, Dr. B. Gupta

By invitation: Dr. T. Hurd, Dr. D. Lozinski

I. Minutes of the meeting October 18th, 2016

The minutes of the meeting of October 18th, 2016 were approved on a motion by Dr. Agarwal, seconded by Dr. Porter.

II. Business arising

There was no business arising.

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

Dr. Welch provided a few updates from the past month. He noted that the last graduate council had been held shortly after the SGS review and that the report arising from this review had not been received yet but should be shortly. Dr. Welch and the Provost agreed that it will be made publicly available. Even without the report a number of initiatives have been undertaken to improve the admissions flow and reduce the amount of time it takes for a file to be processed once it gets to grad studies. He believed there was a number of places along the chain where things could be address and noted that there is an admissions working group to discuss.

He said they had recently talked with UTS about an end to end review of admissions module with the goal of getting that improved and making it less cumbersome. In addition to that, a third admissions officer position had been approved. They are advertising it now with the goal of having that person fully operational by the next admissions cycle.

Dr. Welch also reported on the CAGS meeting in Toronto. He said there had been a good showing of staff and Faculty and that many of the topics Graduate Council is considering are also topics of discussion at CAGS. He came away feeling that McMaster is in good shape relative to other institutions in terms of managing the

changes. He noted a number of talks had been given in terms of indigenous efforts and the evolution of the Ph.D. The person influencing the change in immigration policy gave a talk at CAGS and mentioned there were changes afoot in terms of international students getting easier time in gaining permanent residency. An attendee asked when the changes were becoming effective. Dr. Welch responded that they were going to be effective November 19th.

Dr. Welch reported that the search was on for a permanent AVP and Dean of Graduate Studies and that the committee has been approved by senate.

He noted that convocation was coming up that week and that the former GSA president will be valedictorian.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

Drs. Naresh and Porter had no report. Dr. Hayward report that the Faculty of Health Sciences was trying to be more student-centric in the materials that they're giving out to students. They have prepared a guide for all programs affiliated with FHS and are in the final stages of three videos that they will be posting online with student perspectives on why to come to McMaster. The idea for this came out of retreat and collaboration between students and programs to improve the face of McMaster. Dr. Thompson reported that the Faculty of Engineering had completed a Ph.D. survey. One of the items of note was that none of their students had gone on to faculty positions. They surveyed alumni at the 2 year mark, 5 year mark and 8 year mark and included questions about whether they are training our Ph.D.s in an appropriate manner. The Faculty is planning a retreat to see if there's a willingness to evaluate Ph.D.s in a different way. A council member asked which students had been contacted. Dr. Thompson responded that it was alumni only.

Dr. Swett reported that the Faculty of Humanities was in the process of doing an alumni survey. McGill is coordinating it for a number of universities. The first set of data is back and includes a very basic list of where alumni are working right now. They did interviews with these students as well. She also mentioned that she had had a meeting with the director for the MacData institute to discuss a cross-campus M.A. in big data.

V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

Ms. Baschiera reported on a couple of developments on graduate admissions. From the SGS review a lot of the feedback was about how admissions has been managed so they're looking at how they're handling their process, external from the system. She said they expected there to be opportunities for streamlining. They will also be helping to coach program staff and faculty to move through the process with more efficiency. She noted that they also can't simply ignore the deficits in the system. To that end, there will be another fit-gap analysis for admissions to assess where they are with improvements and where they need to get to.

She noted that the third admissions officer position should be posted. With three admissions officers programs will have faculty-specific reps as each admission officer will have primary responsible for two faculties and will be able to become experts in the faculties in question.

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

Mr. Self reported that his team was holding a one-week resume session designed by their former graduate career strategist. They will also be holding a graduate student orientation on December 15th, in recognition that many graduate students arrive before the start of the January term. He issued an open invitation to the Lawrence Hill writing strategy session for graduate students and postdocs happening later in the day, noting that 101 people had signed up. He also noted that 3MT registration opens on December 12th and that students interested in doing 3MT this year to work on their communication skills, should register at that time.

He reported that postdocs had signed a new contract and those that are part of the CUPE union will now have access to career services through human resources. His team also runs a postdoc session every January.

VII. New Program Proposal – Master of Financial Math

Dr. Hurd presented the new program proposal. He said that the Master of Financial Mathematics would be a 12 month professional course-work masters within the Faculty of Science and based within the Math and Stats department. It is designed to take quantitatively trained students and enable them to get on to really excellent high-level career paths in finance industries. He said it was a unique program and that they have a lot of experience at this level as they had a nine year run with a related program stream which proved to be very successful but unsustainable. They intend to open up the new program in 2018 and have excellent faculty within Math and associated members in other faculties.

He drew the council's attention to the degree level expectations and program learning outcomes and noted that in addition to technical skills the program also promotes soft skills. The target is to have 20 students in the program within five years. He noted that current alumni from the previous stream have a very tight network and satisfied group and so the new program will have reputation that they need.

A council member noted that the proposal stated that the program is supposed to be revenue neutral and asked about the funding. Dr. Hurd responded that it's going to be MTCU funded and that the international student fee is quite high. He said there is a need to be proactive to ensure Canadians cannot get squeezed out. They have set a \$26 000 fee level for Canadians but noted that given that it has to have ministry approval they may not get that fee. Dr. Welch explained that McMaster proposes a tuition fee to the MTCU and that if the program is to be BIU funded, it must be accommodating to students in financial need. He noted that there have been issues getting the requested fee in the past.

A council member asked if there were any plans to work with advancement to ensure there are scholarships. Dr. Hurd responded that they will be opening with a marketing blitz in Canada and would have to work with advancement and grad studies on that. They haven't gotten to the level of entry scholarships. He noted that there will be an internship in the program and expected that at least 80% of students will be getting a 4 month paid internship that will provide a rebate on some of the tuition. A council member suggested that perhaps some of the satisfied grads of the previous program could be tapped as donors for incoming students.

A council member asked about the four-month internship that is part of the program and asked what kind of jobs the students get once they graduate and what kind of skills they will require. Dr. Hurd responded that they have a list of industrial partners to place students in internships which includes all major financial institutions and that it's a specialized program with a well-defined subject area and well-defined career path in the finance industry as all financial institutions employ a large number of these folks.

Dr. Lozinski said that the internship is part of a project course and it gives a lot of flexibility on how students find their opportunities. Those few that don't find internships are set up with industry mentors that work on a project. These would be unpaid but potentially more interesting projects. He said that both avenues provide soft skills needed in industry. The council member noted the need for social, emotional and collaborative learning. Dr. Hurd said that they have emphasized professional development in their program learning outcomes. These are all about communication, presentation and listening to other people. Industry partners have told them that what makes their program unique is that they recognize the need for these soft skills. With funding and revenue they will have more industry people in to do modules with student. Interviewing sessions, resume preparation and the like are all built into the program.

Dr. Hayward asked about the industry internship/project wondering who is doing the evaluation and is there a grade, noting that the evaluation had to be done by McMaster faculty. Dr. Lozinski responded that in terms of the assessment it is done on the project and presentation as part of the course. Faculty review and provide a letter grade based on performance. Dr. Hurd noted that they typically have a panel with four faculty on presentation day.

Dr. Sills moved and Dr. Agarwal seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the proposed new program as described in the document.'

The motion was approved with one abstention.

VIII. Faculty of Business Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Agarwal explained that the report contained only relatively minor items including three new course proposals, some cancellations, change in course titles and changes in unit counts.

IX. Faculty of Engineering Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Thompson presented the items for approval. He noted that Chemical Engineering proposed a change to their admission requirements to increase the language requirement. They TOEFL will be increased to 88 from 85 and the change is intended to help with the quality of student they're bringing into the program as well as their TAs. The next change proposed was from Engineering Physics. He noted that two years back they had instituted an accelerated Masters, one component of which is that students are allowed to do some work in their research in their undergraduate degree. The current wording did not allow them to use their thesis project course as part of this. The change will make them more consistent with other accelerated programs

He said that the change proposed from SEPT was to try align it so that all of their programs have an advanced credit option and expanded the potential number of courses available for this. Students in the final year of the undergraduate degree take a course at the 600 level and use it in their graduate degree should they enroll as graduate students. The change is intended to encourage students to enroll in graduate studies and assist with timely completion of the Master's degree.

He noted that SEPT had proposed a substantial change to course requirements in the Manufacturing program. MEME used to be a joint effort between three departments but now the program moved over to SEPT. The way the program was created at the time, only courses within those three disciplines could count toward required courses. The program now requested that as long as there is appropriate content, one third of the courses can be from outside of those three departments. These changes will allow students to take two courses out of their required 6 from a select list of courses.

Dr. Welch asked how an undergraduate is enrolled in a graduate course. Dr. Thompson responded that they can't enroll themselves. They have to get approval from program director and then the instructor provides 600-level content. If they utilize this advance credit option, this is then put on the graduate student's record with a P/F mark.

Dr. Thompson noted that the final change proposed by SEPT is the addition of a course-work only option to the MEME program. Currently the program requires 6 courses and an industry project. While students who are able to find an industry partner have created really interesting projects, it is tough to find folks in industry to take them on and is particularly difficult for international students who are trying to participate. So the program is proposing an option of doing two courses in place of the project. The program is still adamant that they'd like to keep the project, but would also like to offer this additional option.

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

The motion was carried.

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

Dr. Hayward explained that the BDC program had made some changes to their calendar copy. The Nursing program has proposed a change to course requirements. She noted that Nursing had previously replaced a course but didn't update their course requirements and that now they were cleaning it up. The other change proposed by Nursing was a change to their comprehensive procedure. The program has been unhappy with it for some time and some very successful students have had difficulty with their comprehensive exams. The change helps formalize better the evaluation and what happens if there is any discrepancy between examiners. It will also now take the form of a thesis proposal and defence of it. They are hoping the changes will help students complete the program in a faster timeframe. She noted that the other items are all information and include new courses and course cancellations.

Dr. Hayward moved and Dr. Porter seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes as described in the documents.'

The motion was carried.

XI. Faculty of Humanities Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Swett explained that the main item for consideration is the calendar copy for the new PhD which has now gone through all stages of approval and is planning to accept new students this winter. In addition to the program notes, there are two new courses. The only other item for Graduate Council approval was the change to calendar copy from English and Cultural Studies. They proposed reorganizing and reemphasizing certain stages of the program. The other items for information were housekeeping measures.

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

The motion was carried.

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

Dr. Porter explained that Anthropology changed the name of their seminar and want to put a Milestone in mosaic to more efficiently track progress against this requirement. Social work consolidated one of its methods courses and have changed their requirements accordingly.

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

The motion was carried.

XIII. Concurrent Masters/Ph.D. Admission change - Section 2.1.2

Dr. Welch explained that McMaster has had on the books for a long time that a McMaster student could start their Ph.D. while concurrently finishing masters. The timescale for this overlap has been two months but there's very little tracking of the situation. He noted that there have been several occasions where students were put into a difficult position. In the current situation the deadline comes in the middle of a term so whatever gets decided doesn't have much effect and its right near November count where a student's status makes a big difference. He consulted other Ontario graduate deans and that all of the ones that had policies that work, had this one term overlap.

He asked for a friendly amendment to the original motion to make the change effective January 2017.

A council member asked for a specific situation that would be relevant to this policy. Dr. Welch responded that whether or not a student is a Masters or a Ph.D. is supposed to depend on whether they're complete or not. There is already a grace period for people to do the defence in September. The council member asked if the student is waiting for due process. Dr. Welch responded that this would apply to students who haven't gotten to the point of writing up their thesis but are in the process, or are waiting for faculty members to be available for a defence.

A council member asked if this would this apply only to McMaster students or if it would also apply to students who are finishing their Masters at another institution. Dr. Welch responded that the intention is that it would apply to McMaster students. The council member responded she knew of situations where students had come to McMaster into a Ph.D. in September without defending their M.A. and said they have always given them to September 28th deadline to remain in Ph.D. program. She asked for confirmation that these people would not get the extra leeway. Dr. Welch confirmed.

Another council member said she was not sure that that was clear from the wording of 'C' and suggested there was some ambiguity that a student coming from somewhere else doesn't get to utilize this option. Dr. Welch responded that number '2' refers to a McMaster degree.

Dr. Hayward said that in practice this would mean that if you wanted to offer a student entry into the Ph.D. program you would put a condition in their offer letter. She said it had proved to be helpful in declining someone who was not a good choice upon arrival and who was not anywhere near completion of their Masters degree. She liked the wording and thought that someone looking from the outside will see that they need to have their Masters to get into the Ph.D.

Dr. Welch noted that students can transfer to Ph.D. without completing their Masters and they have to do it by month 22 of their program. After that point they have to complete their Masters.

A council member noted a potential difficulty arising in a small cohort program where students are accepted from their own MA and external MA. She said that there might be an issue of inequity there. Dr. Welch

responded that that was true but that there is an inequity currently. The idea here is to make it more functional, as it doesn't work very well right now.

Dr. Sills moved and Dr. Hayward seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes to section 2.1.2 as described in the documents.'

The motion was approved with three abstentions.

XIV. New Scholarships and Changes to Existing Scholarship

With respect to the change to the terms of one scholarship Dr. Hayward asked about the logistics about giving a scholarship to research staff member, wondering if McMaster could do that. She said she thought that to get a scholarship, and for tax purposes, the recipient had to be a student. Dr. Welch noted that this was an excellent point. Ms. Ramsammy said she would take it back to TFOC. Dr. Welch asked for a motion to table that change and withdraw the original motion. Dr. Hayward moved and Dr. Deza seconded and the motion was carried.

Council members discussed an e-ballot for the remaining item once the issue was clarified.

Dr. Hayward moved and Dr. Swett seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the first two items in the scholarship document.'

The motion was carried.

XV. Additional Scholarship Committee Members

Dr. Porter moved and Dr. Sills seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes to scholarship committee membership as described in the documents.'

The motion was carried.

XVI. Doctoral Dissertation Discussion

Dr. Welch explained that there was a CAGS based initiative to examine the doctoral dissertation and consider allowing changes and modifications. The discussion document was circulated to last meeting and one of the items noted during the discussion was a request to be briefed on what rules currently are. These items were included with the graduate council packet. He said there were a number of aspects about the evolution of the dissertation to discuss including what other forms it could take, what other forms should it be allowed to take, how it can be defended and how achievement could be measured.

He said that discussion around this topic came up at the CAGS meeting. At UVIC there were a large number of students from an indigenous background and that there had been a request for defence to be conducted in the community. It was something that the Dean at UVIC (David Capson) was trying to think through. Dr. Welch

noted that McMaster allows public defences and anyone can attend. It is also the case that there is recognition that indigenous communities in particular are concerned about how information arising from indigenous community comes back to indigenous communities. He said there were some logistical issues surrounding this including the distance to be traveled, the boundaries, the expectation that faculty would be obligated to take two days to travel to and from a defence. He said those are some of the practical considerations of some of these proposed changes.

Dr. Welch asked for input/feedback about where the rules might be expanded or modified. He said that currently McMaster had two forms sandwich and traditional and asked if there were any thoughts on additional forms. Dr. Swett responded that in the newly-approved Ph.D. they have the research-creation thesis. Three models will be accepted in the program and it will be the first of its kind on campus. The thesis will combine artistic work and scholarly analysis of it.

Dr. Hayward said she thought some changes would be required to handles things like that, including how the multimedia contribution would be handled. Ms. Bascheira responded that MacSphere can handle a variety of formats. Dr. Hayward said she thought the kind of change required could be handled through minor changes to requirements in the graduate calendar.

Dr. Welch said he thought that change could come from the top or bottom (program-level) and that some framework for orderly change would be desirable. Dr. Hayward agreed that that would be important as external examiner would need to know what is acceptable for a graduate thesis. As the graduate calendar trumps handbooks, something would need to be included the graduate calendar.

A council member noted that they had looked at McMasters requirements when they were developing the new Ph.D. and saw that they were quite broad and general. She said they might have missed a regulation along the way, but they were quite helpfully broad and not super detailed.

Dr. Hayward said that the associate deans get involved when someone has an external reviewer that doesn't approve the thesis moving to defence and noted the importance of revising this part of the regulations and communicating it out.

Dr. Agarwal recalled working with a group where they discussed the sandwich thesis particularly in light of student contribution and co-authorship.

Dr. Thompson said that the role of the external examiner is important but also obstructive in the evaluation process for Ph.D. He noted times where he has had to discuss with a reviewer who was unwilling to agree that the thesis was ready for defence and said that they are often surprised that McMaster values their opinion this highly. In many other institutions the external is just a single voice in the overall committee. He thought if McMaster was going to look at different ways to evaluate the Ph.D. an important item to consider is the evaluation of the examiner. One idea is to bring them back to the same level as all of the other examiners. If

this was the case, if there were misunderstandings with new formats, this would not impede a dissertation from moving forward.

Dr. Welch said that there should be additional models where a student's contribution can be highlighted more clearly. There are many times where the student is nth author on a paper or two out of the three papers. He thought there must be more obvious ways of displaying the student's original contribution.

A council member said that in social work there is a push from a number of different communities that defences be done in the community rather than in the school and asked that this be considered as well.

XVII. CIHR Training Modules

Dr. Hayward explained that CIHR was offering a number of excellent training modules, that don't take that long to complete. They deal with issues related to sex and gender from different perspectives. She wanted to make sure Graduate Council members were aware that this existed and noted that it was really of interest to people who are filling out applications where you have to indicate that you've taken such factors into consideration. A council member noted that in their discipline the discussion had moved beyond gender and sex binary and was wondering if CIHR had taken that into consideration. Dr. Hayward responded that that was likely best sent directly to the agency.