



School of Graduate Studies

1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
L8S 4L8

Phone 905.525.9140
Ext. 23679
<http://graduate.mcmaster.ca>

Graduate Council
June 13th 9:30 am
GH 111

Present: Dr. D. Welch, Ms. C. Bryce, Dr. T. Porter, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. B. Gupta, Dr. N. Agarwal, Dr. M. Thompson, Dr. T. Adams, Dr. A. Kitai, Dr. E. Grodek, Dr. S. O'Brien, Dr. A. Sills, Dr. A. Fudge Schormans, Dr. E. Badone, Ms. R. Estok

Regrets: Dr. S. McCracken, Dr. M. Verma, Dr. A. Dean, Dr. D. Pelinovsky, Ms. S. Baschiera, Mr. P. Self, Ms. S. Ramsammy

By invitation: Dr. A. Baumann

A G E N D A

I. Minutes of the meeting of May 16th, 2017

The minutes of the meeting of May 16th were approved on a motion by Dr. Hayward, seconded by Dr. Agarwal.

II. Business arising

There was no business arising.

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

Dr. Welch noted that a theme this past year had been the renewal of the Strategic Mandate Agreement. The university is planning for and working toward the renewal in light of the province giving new direction on priorities and trying to establish targets under new funding arrangements. The province's goal was to conclude SMA negotiations by July but since there hasn't been a schedule put forward for the second round of negotiations, July is probably optimistic. McMaster has prepared documentation with growth for the graduate sector. There have been programs that were approved that are ramping up or starting now and consequently that growth is not in the current numbers. Even to just allow for those spots to be funded, they need to convince the province. He noted there is every indication that that is going to happen but it hasn't happened yet. Dr. Welch said that across the entire sector the province is not going to go above 2400 spots that remained

unfilled from the previous growth plan so that's an upper limit. He noted that McMaster is in a good spot to acquire those as there are new programs with a lot of interest and applications.

Dr. Welch noted that he had mentioned that a number of Associate Deans were leaving and had already announced all but one of the new associate deans. As approvals had been finalized for the final new associate dean he announced that Dr. Sean Corner from Classics would be the acting Associate Dean for Humanities for one year.

Dr. Welch explained that Dr. Porter had prepared a ten-page document of best practices to assist in a communication plan for associate deans, staff, chairs and associate chairs. The document was compiled in conjunction with programs and the intent is to provide it to incoming chairs and update annually.

Dr. Welch also noted that SGS would be releasing a statement of all the changes that have occurred in the past year from the graduate side of things to go out to chairs, associate chairs and staff.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

Dr. Hayward reported that she had attended an AFMC meeting where they discussed challenges and best practices. She noted that one of the big discussions was around the CIHR situation and that some universities reported that they've already been decimated in terms of Ph.D. enrolment declines because of it. Staff from CIHR were in attendance to hear the concerns. The depth to which there are concerns at the different universities was quite striking and even if a correction is put in place, it's probably going to take a number of years for the system to correct itself. She said that it was comforting to hear that McMaster hadn't been hit as badly as other institutions. Additionally, in it came up in the discussion about best practices around professional development that the University of Calgary has a practice where 8 hours of professional development is mandatory for students in programs. She suggested this was something that a group of graduate council members could look at next year. She also reported that she had met with heads of FHS graduate programs and had a discussion about policies related to course evaluations. They grappled with the issue of what to do with limited numbers of students in course or few individuals who have completed evaluations. They thought there needed to be a policy but the group didn't vote on a consensus so the Faculty imposed a limit of what can reasonably be shared due to privacy concerns. She noted that the student members of the committee noted concerns that the limited number of observers make it awkward to provide an evaluation. The overarching policy provides a lot of detail for undergraduate course evaluations but not graduate. A lot of programs are not doing what they're required to do, which involves passing along an evaluation. She also reported that they had held a very successful 8th research plenary and noted her appreciation for GC members and SGS folks who had attended.

Dr. Welch said that it was his experience that undergraduate policies get figured out first and best practices and graduate policies tend to lag. He said that it was something to keep that in mind going forward.

Dr. Agarwal noted that his Faculty has an unwritten but widely practiced procedure that if any course has less than five students they don't follow the usual practice of submitting a course evaluation questionnaire. In this case there are other ways of collecting data, including a Chair visit with students. He reported that the MBA program revamped its year one curriculum completely and that one consequence of the new model is that it was not deliverable on a part-time basis. As a result the program is currently working on a new part-time MBA program which will involve a blended learning cohort based model with three residencies and the rest of the courses online. The first step in approval process is meeting with the Deans. Dr. Agarwal expected the proposal to be in front of graduate council members in the fall.

Dr. Gupta reported that the Faculty of Science had conducted a review related to undergraduate teaching and noted that there will also be an ad hoc committee to look into graduate supervision. He also reported that a new director of the MINDs program had been appointed.

Dr. Porter noted that the risk process was revised last year and said that there had been some questions raised by Chairs about requirements and procedures around how the paperwork flows. Department Chairs have a large responsibility in determining whether field research is low risk or not. He has been working with EOHSS to get clearer on details of paper flow and will circulate a document that shows what's supposed to happen.

Dr. Thompson had no report.

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

There was no report.

VII. New Program Proposal: Global Health Ph.D.

Dr. Hayward introduced the new program. She noted that the proposal was approved by FHS Executive Council and the Faculty of Social Science. The Faculty of Business reviewed it and because their involvement was relatively minimal they didn't take a vote but did provide feedback to the program. The Global Health Masters has been an extremely popular program with a lot of applicants. A number of students had enquired about the possibility of doing a Ph.D. in the same discipline.

Dr. Baumann thanked the associate deans from the three associated faculties for their feedback on the proposal. She explained that the program had a strong relationship with Maastricht and noted that students will have the option of spending some time at Maastricht depending on their research topic and supervisors. She noted that the proposal has strong faculty support and that many health science researchers are very excited. She also highlighted their strong relationship with Business and Social Sciences.

Dr. Baumann said that the program will be very student-focused and that applications will be scrutinized very carefully to ensure they have the capability to guide them through the program.

Dr. Welch asked what the proposed start date was. Dr. Baumann responded that they're hoping for September 2018 but that there are many more approvals to go through.

Dr. Welch explained that Maastricht is a university in the Netherlands with strong ties to the program, so there is a built-in international component. Dr. Baumann said that the program also has funding from Erasmus, so there is European funding to help support students who go study there.

Dr. Hayward moved and Dr. Porter seconded. 'that Graduate Council approve the new program as described in the document.'

The motion was carried.

VIII. Faculty of Engineering Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

There was no motion as this item was presented for information.

IX. Graduate Calendar Administrative Section Change – 2.6.3

Dr. Welch explained that there was one final element of clean up and articulation to the administrative sections of the calendar. The major clarification in the section is explaining that degree requirements for a degree are separate from all the courses a student might wish to take and that they don't automatically count toward degree requirements. Previously the calendar text wasn't sufficiently clear on this matter but it will now explain a little better how extra courses are different from normal courses.

Dr. Thompson moved and Dr. Agarwal seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the proposed change as described in the document.'

The motion was carried.

X. Change to Scholarship Descriptions

There was no motion as this item was presented for information.

A council member asked about students who with accommodation concerns switching to part-time and changing fees accordingly and noted that it would be good to have a process for consideration for that.

Dr. Welch apologized for that not coming back as part of the graduate calendar changes but noted that more discussion was needed and that in the meantime if there is an accommodation made the associate deans are well aware of need to accommodate students of need to accommodate on case by case basis.