



School of Graduate Studies

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

Present: Dr. D. Welch, Ms. C. Bryce, Ms. S. Baschiera, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. M. Thompson, Dr. S. Pope, Dr. B. Gupta, Dr. F. McNeill, Ms. J. Dawdy, Dr. A. Sills, Dr. S. Corner, Dr. S. Feng, Mr. R. Narro Perez, Ms. C. Garneau, Ms. S. Ebrahimi, Dr. A. Kitai, Mr. R. Hasan, Dr. B. Doble, Dr. I. Marwah, Dr. L. Kapiriri, Dr. P. Mhaskar, Dr. J. Gillett, Ms. M. Badv

Regrets: Dr. S. Raha, Mr. M. Liut, Dr. E. Badone, Dr. M. Parlar, Dr. S. O'Brien, Mr. T. Baldeh

By invitation: Dr. W. Wiesner, Ms. L. Barty

I. Minutes of the meeting of June 13th, 2017

The minutes of the meeting of June 13th 2017 were approved on a motion from Dr. Sills, seconded by Dr. Hayward.

II. Business arising

There was no business arising.

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

Dr. Welch noted there were a number of bigger items to report on and welcomed Christi Garneau, the new University Secretary to the meeting. He also welcomed the new associate deans, James Gillet and Sean Corner. Dr. Welch explained that one of the things that had happened over the summer was the negotiation of the new SMA. SMA stands for Strategic Mandate Agreement and is the contract between the government and McMaster. It is a three year agreement explaining how the university will be supported by the provincial government. The university had one of these already and it has expired and the university is now in the period of SMA 2. The whole process was supposed to be over in the spring but there were some delays at the province end. One of the big features is that funding is going from a model in which every additional domestic student brings money to a corridor model. If McMaster stays within 3% of the starting number during that time then the institution will get the promised amount. Above that corridor the institution doesn't get more money and if they go below they get less. Lost in this entire discussion for a long time was the question of graduate growth. The message all along had been 'we'll get to it' and then the message was that the provincial budget currently contained money for 2400 students previously expected and that they could allow that for growth. That was

the message until last week when the province allocated an additional 1440 spots on top of the previously unused spots. The allocation is based on two classes – one for people close to the previous caps and one for those who were far away from their caps in 2016 (this includes McMaster). Graduate allocation is not a corridor in the sense that the institution gets money per student up to the cap. There is still room between current enrollment and caps. Enrollment this year was flat, although there was a significant increase in the number of applications.

Dr. Welch noted that SMA 2 is not yet signed but that that is likely to happen in September. The Provost has said it is important to do our level best to grow and introduce new programs during this period. The goal is to be at or above our caps for SMA 3. The guidance in SMA 2 is that any growth in this period will be the new starting point in SMA 3.

Dr. Welch noted that McMaster did very well in the Times higher education ranking with 35 spots of upward movement and highlighted the importance of spreading the word with the hope that it would lead to more applicants and higher quality applicants.

Dr. Welch highlighted that there would be a handful of working groups of Graduate Council created to work on a problem this year. He wanted to form a working group to discuss Ph.D. chair and examiner selection for thesis defence, noting that every year there is an insane rush, with charged requests for last minute examiners and chairs. He expected the working group to look at comparator universities for other options and how they would prefer to see this work from a student and faculty perspective.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

Dr. Thompson reported that the Engineering Graduate Student Society had been steadily growing over the last few years and highlighted that they had run a third successful graduate student conference with 150 students participating. He also reported that Engineering started an optional co-op for all grad students and the first workshop has 35 students enrolled in it. He was looking forward to seeing how it rolled out.

Dr. Hayward reported that in the Faculty of Health Sciences they had launched their Speech Language Pathology program and Child Life and Pediatric Psychosocial Care is moving into its second year. She also noted that the Global Health Ph.D. proposal was going through subsequent steps of approval and that a couple of other graduate programs were in development.

Dr. Gillet reported that there were a number of fairly new Ph.D. programs in the Faculty of Social Sciences including Labour Studies which had just accepted its first cohort and Health Studies and Social Gerontology which were moving into their second year. He also highlighted a relatively new diploma from social work in

community engagement starting next year. They have some groups within the faculty interested in developing diplomas or new MA programs around policy. They also have a relatively new stream in social psychology, connected to the undergraduate side.

Dr. Gupta said that the Faculty of Science had been working a few things related to improving the student experience. The Graduate Student Society in science was hosting a welcome for new students and they're considering hosting another alumni event. They're also considering hosting an information session for students to let them know about their responsibilities and rights.

Dr. Corner reported that the new Ph.D. program in Communication, New Media and Cultural Studies had just taken in its first cohort.

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. Dr. Welch mentioned that Mr. Self and his team had been busy with a number of very successful welcome events.

VII. Introduction to Graduate Council

Dr. Welch wanted to ensure council members understood why Graduate Council existed, what it does and how decisions are made. To that end he included in the meeting package a copy of the McMaster Act which established McMaster University and the the legal framework of the university. He noted it is one of many such acts around the province. There is another one on campus for Divinity College. These are acts of provincial legislature which passes along the power to do certain things. He said that it talks a lot about how the Board of Governors is organized and it also describes main decision making bodies in university. Senate is the main body for academic decisions and Board of Governors for business decisions. He noted that the McMaster Act has a section in it that refers specifically to Senate. Senate has certain responsibilities and Graduate Council reports its decision to Senate. The whole description of what Graduate Council does is contained in the Senate by-laws. On page 11 it describes the set of powers that the Senate has – including determining courses of study, standards of admissions and qualifications of degrees. Senate can confer degrees that follow those specifications. Graduate Council is the arm by which these programs get consideration from the full range of academic stakeholders. Once Graduate Council has made a recommendation here the information either goes to Senate for information or approval.

Dr. Welch noted that he had previously given a talk about where degrees came from. There is no specification explaining what constitutes a degree but as McMaster is a publicly assisted university the institution follows the guidelines the province has set out with respect to degree level expectations and program outcomes.

Also involved in the conception of degrees is OCGS, a body that produced a document also included in the package which highlights principles for graduate studies at Ontario universities. This is a list of principles agreed upon by graduate deans about what constitutes graduate work in Ontario. They explain what institutions are committed to at the graduate level and in some ways this is the most informative document. Dr. Welch noted this document includes a version of the infamous ten hour rule. He noted that these are principles, not laws. The current form of ten hour rule involves a statement that the institution has an obligation to make sure students make timely progress and that the institution is not going to get in our way on that obligation by assigning too much work to a student.

The document also includes resolutions that describes what constitutes a good degree at the graduate level. This is the sort of thing that McMaster and Graduate Council is attempting to measure new programs against. He noted that the final document included in the package was one prepared to highlight changes from Graduate Council in the previous year. He said that this is something that had been missing in the past and that from year to year it has not been clear to people what changed last year. This list will now be routinely produced to provide a summary of what was looked at last year and significant changes made.

Dr. Hayward said that there had been talk last year with changes to the comprehensive examination about having a retreat to discuss options about assessing comprehensive knowledge university-wide. Dr. Welch responded that he thought it was a good idea and something that they should discuss at the SGS executive meeting and then bring to Graduate Council.

A council member noted that Canada has the biggest gap between the number of graduate students graduating and jobs that require that level of education. He asked if that was something that they were aware of and asked if there is anything they could do to address it.

Dr. Welch responded that he hadn't seen that information directly and suggested that the source of the information be tracked down and decide what to do from there. The province and federal government are both ensuring that there's more experiential learning. He noted that it's fair to say that they don't understand the range that already exists but they want more in various places. McMaster is now in the process of enhancing how much experiential learning is going on at the institution and how best to track this.

VIII. New Program Proposal: Part-Time M.B.A.

Dr. Wiesner introduced the proposed new program to be offered by the School of Business. He noted that they currently serve a young demographic with the existing co-op and full-time program; these are generally students with 0 to 3 years of experience. The Executive MBA serves a population with 15+ years of experience. There is a demographic in between that are not served well by the existing programs that the School offers and it includes individuals employed full-time, many with young families. The expense of the executive MBA is not something their employers would countenance. So the question was how to make a program accessible to that particular group. They decided that they would concentrate their learning on three weekends and then the rest online in a blended learning format. Commuters found evening classes unworkable and survey data suggests the model they are proposing would be a particularly attractive program. It would draw a group of students currently underserved. The program also fits with McMaster's emphasis on experiential learning as the research projects would be integrated in what they're doing at work, within their community.

Dr. Sills moved and Dr. Gupta seconded, "that Graduate Council approve the proposed new program as described in the document, subject to the approval of the Faculty of Business.'

The motion was carried.

IX. Quality Assurance Committee Membership

Dr. Welch noted that there would be a new quality assurance committee member: Dr. Jiaping Qiu from the Faculty of Business. He explained that all universities in Ontario are required to review both graduate and undergraduate programs on an 8 year cycle. The Quality Assurance Committee is an internal committee member at McMaster – Dr. Welch and Dr. Searls-Giroux chair the committee and it oversees all the reviews, looks for assurances that standards are met and that the program responds appropriately to any concerns highlighted by reviewers and can recommend a review happen on a shorter timescale. It is the final step of internal quality control at McMaster and the items from the committee are reported to Senate.

Dr. Gupta moved and Dr. Sills seconded, 'that Graduate Council approve the new member of the Quality Assurance Committee.'

The motion was carried.

X. Change to Award Names

For information item.

Dr. Thompson noted (related to the earlier discussion about graduate student outcomes) that UBC had released a document on Ph.D. career outcomes and there's a lot of good stats there. By all accounts about

90 percent are employed within 6 months of graduation. The council member commented that there was a difference between employment in Canada and employment overseas. Dr. Welch responded that the issue was worth further discussion and that this was the sort of thing that should be discussed at Graduate Council.