



**School of Graduate Studies**

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Tuesday May 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am in Council Chambers (GH-111)

Present: Dr. D. Welch (Chair), Ms. C. Bryce, Ms. S. Baschiera, Dr. K. Hassanein, Dr. S. Corner, Dr. M. Thompson, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. A. Sills, Ms. A. Devitt, Dr. C. Hayward, Ms. S. Ramsammy, Mr. P. Self, Dr. S. Raha, Dr. B. Doble, Dr. E. Grodek, Ms. M. Badv

Regrets: Dr. W. Farmer, Dr. P. Mhaskar, Dr. A. Kitai, Dr. S. Pope, Dr. S. Feng, Dr. I. Marwah, Dr. E. Badone

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**I. Minutes of the meeting of April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

There was no vote on the minutes due to lack of quorum.

**II. Business arising**

There was no business arising.

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

Dr. Welch thanked Drs. Gupta and Thompson for acting on his behalf while he was away. He reported that part of his trip involved attending a meeting of the Canadian Bureau of International Education in Norway. He noted that it's a country that has a lot of attraction for graduate exchanges and programs like cotutelle. They have excellent funding for students doing exchanges and the majority of grad programs that would interest McMaster students are delivered in English and everyone speaks English. He said it was a profitable and interesting visit. After that, he headed to Brisbane for a meeting of the U21. Patrick Deane also visited, and McMaster became the 26<sup>th</sup> member of the U21. Attached to the end of that trip was a meeting of deans and directors of graduate studies from institutions from around the world. He said it was very interesting to share issues and become knowledgeable about joint graduate programs. He said that he also met up with Julie Birch in Queensland.

He reported that there had been an interesting development related to the MELD program led by the Faculty of Humanities. They are now offering a new program, MERGE (McMaster English Readiness for Graduate Excellence). The first offering will begin May 22<sup>nd</sup> and finish in July. It is designed to be an intense period during which an international student can bring up their English language skills to a level appropriate to graduate work. He said that it was a cost recovery program and would be relatively expensive. To get the first offering off the ground the provost is covering the costs for ten graduate students from various faculties. Associate

deans have been asked to identify the students. They have a chance to receive the training at no cost this year. It is likely to be an ongoing program, where students will normally take it before their graduate degree. He noted that they could take it once they were graduate students as well.

Dr. Welch also reported on developments for SMA 3. He noted that as it is not too far away, the province is working to steer institutions into readiness. There are 3 pilot projects related to the next SMA happening at McMaster university. Dr. Gupta is the lead on the pilot project for tagging grad courses for experiential learning and is interacting with partners at Laurentian and Ryerson. They are working on identifying experiential learning in graduate courses going forward.

He noted that the provincial winner of 3MT held at York University was from McMaster. The student in question is Matthew Berry from Psychology. As a result, McMaster is now hosting the provincial 3MT competition in 2019.

Dr. Welch reported that there is a search on currently for the acting associate dean graduate for the Faculty of Engineering. The hope is that the search will conclude in time for the appointment to be official on July 1<sup>st</sup> to cover Dr. Thompson's time as Vice-Provost and Acting Dean of SGS.

He also reported that Marsha Duncan had retired after being at McMaster for 30 years.

Dr. Welch noted that the online Ph.D. supervisory committee reports are fully functional and available to everyone. This change is something that he had been hoping to have achieved for many years and it will take a huge amount of paper out of circulation. The final report will become part of the student record in Mosaic. He thanked everyone involved in the project.

#### **IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans**

Dr. Gupta reported that he had asked programs in his Faculty to provide info on funding packages. They are doing this to see what changes are being put into place with regards to international tuition.

Dr. Hayward reported that the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Plenary was taking place and that the location for the posters session was on their website. She also reported that they had received approval from Quality Council for the Ph.D. in Global Health and M.Sc. in Psychotherapy. They are waiting to hear whether MAESD will fund the programs.

Dr. Hassanein reported that they had also received approval for the new Blended Learning Part-Time MBA program. When they opened admissions, they had over 90 applications for 35 spots planned and another 50 in the works.

Drs. Corner and Thompson had no report.

#### **V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary**

Ms. Baschiera noted that the admissions project was still ongoing. They are hoping by the end of the summer to have some key deliverables including easier navigation and applications processing with a view to more substantive improvements and bigger projects in 2019.

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

There was no report.

#### **VII. Faculty of Business Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report**

Dr. Hassanein presented the changes. He noted that the first change in the approval section was to the Master of Finance program. They proposed changes to course information, course requirements (replacing 602 and 603 with 605), expanding the list of electives, and adding clarification on the condition for taking an elective outside of elective list of courses. The final change proposed was to add participation in a video interview as an admission requirement.

The second set of changes for approval were from the MBA program. He noted that the program had proposed the addition of specialization requirements to Graduate Calendar. This was a housekeeping item as these had been included in MBA handbook but were not in the Graduate Calendar. The second change proposed was the cancellation of the supply chain management specialization due to low enrolment. The third change proposed was the addition of a new specialization in Business Analytics. The fourth change proposed was the addition of the program calendar copy for the MBA BLPT. Dr. Hassanein noted that a minor adjustment to this document had been approved at the Faculty level: two electives from the Finance area, F741 and F743, should appear on page 55. He noted that the final change proposed for approval was overall changes to the MBA calendar copy and said that this was also a housekeeping item to remove some redundant information and reflecting some of the changes they've talked about. He noted that the same two courses mentioned previously were missing from this section as well and needed to be added in.

With respect to the for-information items he noted that the Faculty had approved a correction to i602 course description and there is an additional sentence to be removed. The course was being updated to reflect changes to the Foundations courses in the MBA program.

There was no vote due to lack of quorum.

#### **VIII. Faculty of Health Sciences Graduate Policy and Curriculum Committee Report**

Dr. Hayward reported on a number of items for approval. The first was a change to course requirements from Global Health; the program had introduced a new course in methodology and this course will replace another required course. The second change for approval was from the Speech Language Pathology program. She noted that the program had launched this year and have proposed a change to their calendar copy. Professional

behaviours are important in clinical programs and they had some people who have applied to the program and have been very rude. The program wanted to make it clear that that will be considered as part of the application process.

The next set of changes proposed were from Health Science Education. She noted that the program has a new incoming Assistant Dean and that he had gone through a lot of aspects of the program calendar to update the descriptions of length of time in program, statement of interest requirements, and the issue of full-time and part-time enrollment. She noted that the changes are all straight forward and in keeping with what they intend their practices to be.

The final change for approval was from the Child Life and Pediatric Psychosocial Care program. The program has two streams. Stream one is for students looking to gain professional qualification. Stream two is for folks who already work in the healthcare field and are taking the program to focus on pediatric issues. They changed their calendar copy to reflect that they can't change streams part way through the program.

She noted that the other changes are for information.

Dr. Thompson asked about the admissions piece, wondering if the program had talked to legal services or the equity office. Dr. Hayward responded that admission decisions are not appealable and the change to the language in the calendar is to be transparent that they include the behaviour of the applicant as part of their recommendation process. Dr. Thompson responded that he still wondered if they need a paper trail.

Dr. Welch said that usually if someone is going to appeal or complain they'll discuss how they've been treated unfairly and that there should be some standard about how egregious behaviour is recorded. He was not suggesting that Graduate Council modify the change proposed but noted that how it gets executed going forward will matter.

Dr. Gupta asked if the denial would contain this information and noted that that could be grounds for complaint. Dr. Hayward said it was not standard practice to provide a reason a student wasn't being admitted to the program and that they just wanted to make it transparent that this is one of the criteria that they are judging in the application process.

A council member thought applicants should be informed, if this is about transparency. Dr. Hayward responded that they don't give applicants feedback on how their scored. A situation like the one described is very rare but would not meet the requirements for behaviour in an academic program.

Another council member commented that the transparency is that this goes in the calendar. Dr. Hayward confirmed. She also said that no other programs give feedback about an applicant's admissibility and she thought that was probably the case university-wide.

Dr. Welch said a potential way to track would be a checkbox on the file regarding reasonable applicant behaviour. Dr. Hayward responded that she didn't think they would have to tick that off for most people. There were a few individuals with egregious behaviour.

A council member wondered how the line between acceptable and not acceptable behaviour was defined. Dr. Hayward responded that the professional group associated with the program has a long list of acceptable behaviour available on their website. The council member commented that it's known to the program. Dr. Hayward confirmed and noted the importance of these behaviours for group learning and clinical placement. Dr. Hassanein noted that the spirit of the change is for deterrence more than anything.

A council member asked if they had any examples of applicants that got admitted to the program who were professional when admitted but not as professional as they thought as time passed. Dr. Hayward responded that Speech Language Pathology is a new program so there is no historical data. She thought there was a lot of data for doctors regarding behaviour during training and success in practice and noted that part of the interview process and MMI that they use is to find people with the appropriate skills and behaviours.

There was no vote due to lack of quorum.

#### **IX. Faculty of Science Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report**

Dr. Gupta explained that the Psychology program had proposed the introduction of a new course for the clinical internship in the RCT stream and related to that are changes in the calendar copy. In this stream students do an internship and the program recognized that this should be formalized. He noted that there were a few for-information changes for Kinesiology, removing three old courses and creating a new one.

There was no vote due to lack of quorum.

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

Dr. Corner explained that three programs proposed a calendar change to reflect a new co-op fee in each case. He noted that there was one item for-information regarding a minor change to course description.

There was no vote due to lack of quorum.

#### **XI. Spring 2018 Graduands**

There was no vote due to lack of quorum.

#### **XII. Thesis Working Group Recommendations**

Dr. Hassanein presented the proposal of the working group of Graduate Council. He noted that one of the main issues was the process for securing an external examiner. A Graduate Council working group was formed to discuss the issues and it included members from different faculties and a Ph.D. student. They also consulted with administrators and associate deans. The working group recognized that the current model is restrictive,

and the proposed approach is to ease the restrictive oversight of SGS particularly around the selection of the external. He noted that currently the supervisor and committee are in the dark about the external. He also said that emails from the thesis coordinator are often ignored and that on average they have to send 2.4 emails per examiner. This can cause a lot of bottlenecks.

The proposed new process involves a supervisor selecting external, while observing guidelines of what constitutes arms length, and contacting the examiner directly. A standard template will be provided which will include the arms length language. The interaction with the external will allow the supervisor to negotiate the time and date for defence. The supervisor will also have the option to nominate a chair. The student will initiate the defence process as now and will require the approval of the supervisory committee to proceed. SGS will continue to provide access to the defence room and will support technologically. They will also be responsible for ordering phone service when needed. The old process will be maintained for the time being in addition to new process. The supervisor will make a choice as to which process they would like to utilize.

He noted that the working group proposed some other changes to the current process. In the present model, the external report is not shared with the student. Now the report will be shared at least two weeks in advance with all and the student will have to agree to continue with the defence if the external report is not available two weeks in advance of their planned date.

The presence of an external examiner is now required, in person or by electronic means. This change resolves the issue of obtaining the internal examiner. He noted that students will not have any contact with the external examiner and the examiner will be able to withhold their identity in the case of a negative report.

Dr. Welch noted that nobody has to adopt this new channel if they don't wish to. SGS will continue to provide the same service as in the past. They are very aware of their limitations in terms of the ability to contact people, particularly in the summer. The change in process allows the black out periods for SGS arranged defences to be used if all the people involved agree to the dates and times. He believed the change would open opportunities with only a marginal additional burden to the supervisor and staff.

Dr. Hassanein noted that its easier for a potential external examiner to ignore an email from a generic address and that if a colleague from another institution is approaching them, they may be more responsive.

Dr. Gupta asked when the new process will completely switch over. Dr. Welch responded that SGS will continue to provide this process indefinitely until its clear that nobody wants the old process anymore. He imagined that different people in different faculties would use the new process different amounts. He thought that some programs would continue to do it the old way but also expected a very large number of programs would quickly appreciate the benefits of the new system. They will see how it goes and make the decision about a future switchover as appropriate.

Ms. Baschiera noted that there is no change for the student. The change and what everyone will see once it gets approved is that the supervisor will have a choice about which process to utilize. All supporting documents

will link off of their choice. David Lu will be developing a process in admin tools for the supervisor-coordinated defence.

Dr. Hassanein added that regardless of whether the old or new process is used, students will get the report ahead of time. The group saw no reason to not share the external report.

Dr. Welch asked if the change was approved today when can they start doing this. Ms. Baschiera responded that there had already been interest. They're hoping to start by June 1<sup>st</sup>. This will involve a minor change in admin tools, with decision point about which process to choose, for June 1<sup>st</sup>

Dr. Hayward noted that all programs indicated they were happy to try this out and asked if how the process was organized meant the supervisor could decide not to utilize it even if the program has agreed to do so.

Ms. Baschiera responded that they could. They hadn't discussed what would happen if there were two points of view in this case. Dr. Welch said that the Chair can send along some instructions and encouragement. Dr. Hayward wondered if Ph.D. programs should distribute to an overview letter suggesting that faculty members try this out. Ms. Baschiera noted that the Academic Services Officer for the program in question could go to meetings to show how the process is going to flow and explain expectations.

Dr. Gupta asked if the external is made aware of arms length criteria. Dr. Hassanein said this would be included in the form. Dr. Welch noted that it is already included in the documentation in the current state.

Dr. Hayward said if programs are communicating to supervisors it would be helpful to have a copy of what constitutes arms length in those materials.

A council member asked for confirmation that the two different processes only involved the process of securing an external and that the omission of the internal and sharing the report are in place now and will not be an option. Dr. Welch confirmed this was the case. He also said there should be clarity on whether they're just selecting the external or the external and chair. Dr. Hassanein responded that that will be included in the process, they have to select external and have the option of nominating a chair.

A council member said that she remembered a particularly nasty external report and in that case the report was sent to associate dean first. She asked if there is going to be a pause before it's shared widely as there have been cases where the reports were absolutely unprofessional. Dr. Hassanein said that they can continue the same practice. He believed that currently a negative report doesn't preclude a defence from going forward if the supervisory committee chooses to do so.

The council member said that they just wanted to make sure that such reports don't get sent blind. Dr. Welch said that the report is still received by SGS and the Academic Services Officer will look at it at the time. They will review and if there is something that is way off scale it will be identified at that point.

Ms. Baschiera noted that external reports are coming in 9 days late, generally, and they're hoping that faculty to faculty engagement will improve that rate. The student will also now have a decision point if the report hasn't been submitted in time.

Dr. Welch provided another example of a situation with a UK reviewer where data was not in appropriate format in their view and they were intending to stop the report until a data conversion was made. In that case they said no, that's unreasonable and they changed externals.

Dr. Welch noted that there would have to be an e-ballot before formal approval but that there has been a lot of consultation and it has come to a very workable form. He thanked Dr. Hassenein and the working group members and he hoped the new process was shortly approved.

There was no vote due to lack of quorum.

### **XIII. Graduate Calendar Administrative Section Changes**

Dr. Welch explained that every year they put together a package of changes that need to be made in the graduate calendar. They need to provide policy changes that improve the situation and student experience and clarity. He also noted that they track the changes at the provincial and federal level in terms of employment standards and human rights issues. He said that each program is going to be sent a collection of notes about what had changed this year.

He went over the list of changes which included:

- A change to the sessional dates to note the date that students have to initiate the defence, rather than date to submit pre-defence thesis. He noted an unclear sentence was also removed.

- New programs added to the list of those offered at McMaster

- A statement about document retention was added.

- Section 2.1.2 a statement added to the effect that in no case does successful completion of a Master's degree guarantee admission to a Ph.D. and the language was adjusted to note that students are encouraged to transfer prior to the start of the next term, rather than just fall term. This is a reflection of the change to the way the province is counting students.

- The Section on transfer to Ph.D. was adjusted as above, regarding the wording around the time to transfer.

- Section 2.5.3 was adjusted to clarify the 505 rules and some additional text was added to note what happens if student approaches or exceeds this limit.

- Section 2.5.7 Leaves of Absence was heavily modified. Dr. Welch noted that this was largely due to changes the province had made. He noted that there was a hand out of the section distributed, with further edits to the parenting leave section made subsequent to the circulation of materials for the meeting. Parenting leave has been made into its own section with changes therein to show that its



compliant with ESA. The remainder of other types of leave no longer intersect with parenting leave. He noted that the section now includes the provincial definitions of parenthood.

-The vacation section was adjusted to be more clear as it relates to the employment contract.

- With respect to 2.6.1 Dr. Welch noted that two years ago a chart was removed, and it was no longer clear why. They're bringing the chart back so that people have an example of how the calculations are done.

- Section 2.7 was changed to note that the supervisory committee must be declared within the first 12 months of study, to note that committee members are assumed to continue their participation on student committees unless otherwise replaced and to clarify the timing for supervisory committee meetings (this had stated September-August and has been changed from December-November).

-Section 2.8 includes a minor adjustment related to the proposed thesis process changes.

-Section 3.6 was adjusted to clarify how full-time students who switch to part-time and vice versa works.

-Section 4.3 was adjusted related to the proposed thesis process changes and to remove an inaccurate reference to the submission timeline for a thesis.

-Section 5.1 was adjusted to remove references to discounted tuition for international students.

-In Section 5.2.1 references to scholarships were changed to bursaries and a line that those funds were applied to tuition was removed to reflect current process

-Section 5.2.2 was adjusted to note how monies owing will appear on a students' account

-Section 6.1. Academic and Research Integrity was modified to include issues with applicants.

Dr. Hassanein said that section 2.5.7 on leaves of absence states that a leave of on up to one year is permitted and asked if they need to add language for the cases where the leave is beyond that period of time. Dr. Welch responded that in the section there is a reference to a special leave to be approved by the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies which could be used in those cases. One year is still the standard amount. He noted that the parenting leave is a different amount. The parenting leave amount used to be in agreement with a one-year leave but now there is a distinction between leaves for parenting and otherwise. Dr. Hayward said that there are rare exceptions related to equity and inclusion but thought that the wording is good for what rules are generally in place.

Dr. Thompson said that an additional change to the calendar was necessary, noting that in 6.6 it says that in those instances where an NDA has been signed they have to alert the Vice-Provost and Dean. He said that that is not the normal practice and should include language about MILO. Dr. Welch agreed and

suggested that they change it to align with the current practice. He noted that student interests are being looked a after but not in the same way as ten years ago.

There was no vote due to lack of quorum.