

Tuesday September 18th at 9:30 am in Council Chambers (GH-111)

Present: Dr. M. Thompson (Chair), Dr. J. Gillett, Dr. S. Raha, Dr. P. Swett, Mr. S. Peter, Ms. D. Jones, Ms. S. Oikawa, Dr. A. Sills, Ms. S. Ramsammy, Dr. J. Carette, Dr. M-A Letendre, Dr. N. McLaughlin, Dr. S. Bannerman, Dr. I Marwah, Dr. I Bruce, Dr. J. Shedden, Dr. E. Grodek, Dr. B. Doble, Dr. L. Wiebe, Dr. L. Chan, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. B. Gupta, Ms. S. Baschiera (Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary), Ms. C. Bryce (Assistant Graduate Secretary)

Regrets: Dr. K. Hassanein

By Invitation: Ms. A. Thyret-Kidd, Dr. E. Aspenlieder, Dr. L. Goff

I. Minutes of the meeting of June 12th, 2018

It was duly moved and seconded **‘that Graduate Council approve the minutes of the meeting of June 12th’**.

II. Business arising

There was no business arising.

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

Dr. Thompson reported on the following items:

- The change in Provincial government may delay the processing of new programs awaiting approval by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU);
- The situation concerning Saudi Arabian students, noting that it will continue to evolve. The majority of students have been withdrawn in good standing, which would allow them to resume their studies if permitted by their government;
- An adhoc committee struck by the Quality Council on Experiential Learning in relation to the Strategic Mandate Agreement was being led by McMaster and will be tabling its recommendations on metrics to quantify this learning later this fall; and
- Graduate student enrollment: as of September 4, the total number was 3918, up from 3790 the previous year. He noted a potential cause for concern as the gain was in Master’s and there had been a slight dip in the overall Ph.D s.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

Dr. Gupta (Faculty of Science) reported on the following items:

- Enrollment and Recruitment initiatives; and
- Experiential Learning Initiative and the need to package these experiences in such a way that students are able to access experiential learning opportunities.

Dr. Hayward (Faculty of Health Sciences) reported on the following items:

- The development of an orientation package for new graduate program leaders;
- The Faculty is waiting on a decision from the MTCU about funding for two new programs;
- The work being done within the Faculty to increase guidance for course instructors, noting that students often feel that feedback isn't timely enough in the graduate courses they're taking; and
- The efforts within the Faculty to improve indigenous student recruitment to graduate programs.

Dr. Swett (Faculty of Humanities) reported on the following item:

- Humanities will be the first Faculty to participate in the new Faculty review policy instituted by the new Provost as Dean Cruikshank is stepping down.

Dr. Gillet (Faculty of Social Sciences) reported on the following items:

- The Faculty is exploring the idea of professional M.A. programs;
- A pilot project within the Faculty to explore experiential education through a research internship in the areas of methods and community-based research;
- A collaborative effort across programs and units, particularly at the graduate administrator level, to make administration work more straightforward; and
- A strategy to see where post-doc fellows fit in and to help bridge some connections.

There was no report from Drs. Hranilovic (Faculty of Engineering) and Hassanein (Faculty of Business).

V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

Ms. Baschiera reported, with respect to Mosaic, that there had been work done in the School of Graduate Studies on the 9.2 upgrade as well as the admissions module as Dr. Thompson had mentioned. The 9.2 change will involve a full system upgrade to a new version which will hopefully provide some new opportunities with new functionality. As a result of the upgrade, there will be a two-day shut down of system in October and on the Records side, they're trying to get everything ready ahead of that.

She noted that they are also looking at a process review in Records and are hoping to share new initiatives as they come over this year. They are hoping to exploit new functionality in Mosaic and work with organizational development to improve experience and turn around.

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

There was no report.

VII. Graduate Calendar – Change to Sections 2.5.7 Leave of Absence and 2.5.8 Parental Leave

Dr. Thompson explained that Graduate Council had approved changes to the parental leave section of the calendar so it better reflected partner institutions and closer aligned to employment standards. He noted that the calendar is not required to align to employment standards, but they wanted to give maximum opportunity to students taking this leave. It was pointed out at last meeting that there was one portion

that was repeated in two different sections and that they would also see a change in wording. Additionally, there were a number of questions about what the 61/63 weeks meant, so that was replaced with language noting the length of the leave in terms, as 61 weeks is basically one year plus one term.

It was duly moved and seconded **‘that Graduate Council approve the changes as noted in the document, effective immediately.’**

The motion was carried.

VIII. Scholarship Committee

Dr. Thompson noted that the list presented was members from all faculties which populate the Scholarship Committee. Ms. Bryce noted that there had been a minor change from the original list distributed as Dr. Banakdarpour from Computing and Software would be replaced with Dr. Hassan Ashtian from Computing and Software.

It was duly moved and seconded, **‘that Graduate Council approve the Scholarships Committee as set out in the document, with the minor change noted.’** The motion was withdrawn.

Committee members discussed the names on the list, noting a potential issue with participation and a missing scholarship. Dr. Thompson said further clarification was needed and proposed an e-ballot.

It was duly moved and seconded, **‘that Graduate Council review and approve the list via e-ballot.’**

The motion was carried.

IX. IQAP Audit

Dr. Thompson explained that the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) is being audited by Quality Council and invited Ms. Baschiera to provide more information. Ms. Baschiera introduced Lori Goff and Erin Aspenlieder from the MacPherson Institute. She noted that McMaster is governed by a quality assurance process that they must adhere to, with cyclical reviews every 8 years for programs. One part of this governance is that the institutional process must be reviewed. The programs associated with the audit are not under review, just the process associated with the programs.

Dr. Goff explained that they had been preparing for the audit for three years and that Quality Council schedules all universities to be audited. To prepare they’ve met with other universities, auditors and had gone to several meetings that Quality Council had put on around audit preparations. Quality Council had selected 9 programs to be reviewed and McMaster had no say in which programs were chosen. The programs they’ve selected fall into three categories. The first is related to the cyclical review of existing programs; the programs selected for this category were Nursing (combined), History (combined), UNENE M.Eng. and Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Film Studies. The second category is the policy governing new program approvals; the programs selected for this category were Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization (Bachelors and Master’s degree), Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience and in the category of an expedited new program review, the graduate diploma in Professional Accountancy. The third category to be reviewed is program modifications and in this area the programs selected were the Ph.D. in Business Administration and M.A. in Sociology. She noted that they had been in touch with all the Deans and are currently working on reaching out to the Chairs of the programs noted. The auditors

will be meeting with people from each of those programs. They have some materials that they are preparing for programs and senior administrators. The audit is three days in length– November 28th to 30th and there will be a meeting with the Quality Assurance Committee (which includes three members of Graduate Council), as well as the Chair.

X. Working Groups of Graduate Council

Dr. Thompson explained that Graduate Council normally forms working groups at the start of each academic year. Ms. Baschiera introduced the three priorities:

- A Cotutelle working group to examine international partnerships and opportunities for joint degrees in place of dual degrees;
- A working group that will make recommendations to enhance student-supervisor relationships, informed by best practices across the Ontario and Canadian university landscape and increased awareness of student mental health; and,
- A review of graduate program structures, supported by Ms. Andrea Thyrett-Kidd from the Provost's Office, with the intention of ensuring that policies, regulations, and fee structures also facilitate the increase in course-based Master's degrees.

Dr. Thompson invited members to volunteer to serve on the working groups and in response to a question, confirmed that non-Graduate Council members would only be considered once all members indicated their willingness to serve.

XI. Minimum Remuneration

Dr. Thompson noted that he expected this topic to be recurring over the next few meetings. There have been a few discussions proposing that McMaster changes their current minimum graduate student remuneration from \$17,500 to tuition plus a value. The number that had been proposed and had been discussed with most faculties was tuition plus \$13,500. They believe that every program is at a point where they could manage that. He noted that they hadn't looked at this value since 2003. \$17,500 was approved back then and hasn't been changed since.

A member commented that this was something that they'd been looking into with the Graduate Students Association and that she hoped to have more to bring at the next meeting.

Dr. Thompson encouraged members to have an open discussion at Graduate Council and to go back to their faculties and discuss there as well.

Dr. Hayward commented that she had attended a meeting for a committee that looked at graduate and post-doc issues. They had a discussion at their meeting in Winnipeg regarding minimum remuneration. Most universities were providing much less, and McMaster stood out as the most generous. She also noted that one of the key issues that the institution has, particularly with interdisciplinary programs, is that people in different faculties are funded in different ways and the government has not increased funding. The fear is that increasing the stipend will lead to lower Ph.D. enrollments overall. She noted that the institution needed to think about the ramifications of the decisions made and the reality of where the money comes from.

Dr. Thompson highlighted the need to be mindful that fewer students will come to McMaster because they're falling behind peer institutions. The IRA office had released a document to the U15, and McMaster was in 6th

or 7th place in what the school offers graduate students. He appreciated the pressures but said that from the student's side of things, it's getting hard to live on that amount of money with the increased cost of living.

A council member commented that one of the issues for him was that the issue affects the university to an extent that it might be hard to comprehend. He noted that for international students a supervisor must provide the entire amount for four years and that it is difficult to figure out where this money will come from. The reality is that there is not enough for international or local students to live on. They need to think about where the money will come from, given all the constraints and it is important that this be part of a coordinated plan university-wide.

Dr. Thompson reminded members that international students are now being charged the same amount as domestic at the Ph.D. level. He also noted that there had already been a substantial investment from the Provost's office to make that more manageable. He asked members to see how their faculty compares to peer institutions and to ask if McMaster is offering the best packages, attracting the best students and helping students.

A member commented that he didn't think that the number that they get funded meant much without the context of cost of living in Hamilton. He said a survey had gone out to students in his Faculty and encouraged others to do the same. He noted that the funding is not enough to live here and the numbers available on the website are outdated.

Dr. Thompson wanted to bring the topic up again next month and continue the discussion. He asked members to talk to their colleagues.

XII. Thesis Defence Update

Dr. Thompson explained that at the end of last year they were trying to add a new potential process for thesis defence that would give faculty members the ability to short cut the process that the School of Graduate Studies currently runs. In the current process the student approaches SGS, SGS takes a list of names that are approved and asks them to participate. There's a process of trying to establish the external reviewer and ultimately get the final defence all set up.

The proposed is an alternative that runs side by side with the current process. They aren't abandoning what SGS does for students, but it is not the nimblest process. An alternate process was approved by Graduate Council and allows the supervisor to find the external, get the external to review the thesis and hopefully attend the defence. It gives faculty members the chance to speed up the process, without sacrificing the arms length criteria. He wanted to remind everybody of this new process and asked Council members to remind their colleagues.

A council member commented that he thought it was an excellent change and noted the similarities with other institutions. The process moved faster, and he thought it would help students.

Ms. Baschiera noted that the additional functionality to facilitate this new process through SGS Administrative Tools had been delayed for a variety of reasons but they're hoping that that it will be available soon. She also noted that they have had quite a few folks using the new process and have had some good feedback about what works and what doesn't. They are enhancing as they go and still providing the full suite of standard services.

A council member asked who knows about the new process and who can use it. Ms. Baschiera said that all programs are welcome to. They've had a program say that they will use the new process exclusively but generally it is down to the individual supervisor.

Dr. Thompson noted that another benefit is that when an external reviewer comes to campus, the program is better able to capitalize on the expertise of the external to give a seminar, for example. With the old method, the School of Graduate Studies is the only one who knows who they are.

XIII. IQAP Final Assessment Reports

Dr. Thompson explained that the reports were provided to Graduate Council for information and asked if members had any questions or comments. He noted that the reports are sent to Quality Council after a review is done and that programs have a progress report at 18 months after their review.

XIV. New Scholarship

Dr. Thompson noted that a hard copy of a new scholarship had been distributed for members review. A council member asked about the reference to the sixth year in Ph.D. program in the document. Ms. Ramsammy responded that the Social Work department particularly wanted that phrase included. The council member asked how that worked with out of time status. Dr. Thompson responded that students can still hold an external scholarship in the 6th year of study.

It was duly moved and seconded **'that Graduate Council approve the new scholarship as described in the document.'**

The motion was carried.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.