

Tuesday January 21st at 9:30 am in Council Chambers (GH-111)

Present: Dr. D. Welch (Chair), Dr. K. Hassanein, Dr. S. Hanna, Dr. M. Horn, Dr. J. Gillett, Dr. M. Thompson, Dr. B. Gupta, Dr. C. Kwan, Dr. L. Chan, Dr. D. Mountain, Dr. J. Kish, Dr. I. Bruce, Dr. S. Dickson, Dr. L. Thabane, Dr. S. Pope, Dr. S. Bannerman, Dr. M. Stroinska, Dr. J. Shedden, Dr. N. Tan, Dr. N. McLaughlin, Dr. M.A. Letendre, Mr. M. Lightsone, Ms. J. de Lange, Ms. L. Greville, Ms. S. Zakaria, Ms. C. Lopez, Ms. C. Bryce (Assistant Graduate Secretary),

Regrets: Ms. V. Lewis, Dr. S. Raha, Dr. J. West-Mays, Dr. J. Xu

Attendees: Ms. N. Taylor, Dr. C. van der Linden

I. Minutes of the meeting of November 19th, 2019

It was duly moved and seconded, **'that Graduate Council approve the minutes of the meeting of November 19th, 2019.'**

The motion was **carried**.

II. Business arising

There was no business arising.

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

Dr. Welch reported on the following items:

- McMaster has submitted the proposed third Strategic Mandate Agreement to the MTCU who will review and request adjustments, the expectation is that the agreement will be finalized sometime in March;
- The inaugural international graduate student coordinator has been hired away to a different position in the student success centre;
- The graduate admissions project underway and they are very close to picking a vendor to dramatically improve the current system and process;
- The Iranian students lost in a plane crash, noting that they were working on impactful research in Automotive Research Centre. He mentioned the powerful memorial service that had already been held and noted that McMaster will be celebrating the students' lives and contributions in various ways going forward.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

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

- The research plenary, noting that they were planning to increase the prestige of the awards;
- The plan to strike a working group to discuss rubrics and grading for group work.

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

- An open house for undergraduate students interested in pursuing graduate studies in science;
- An alumni social event, noting that senior students tend to benefit the most and can ask questions of alumni.

Dr. Thompson (Faculty of Engineering) reported on the following items:

- Engineering also has an undergraduate coffee house, intending to get students to think about graduate studies which they've found is a good opportunity for undergraduate students to meet faculty members that are beginning to think and look for research partners;
- Further work on the discussion of microcredentials, noting that the Secretariat is working to pull committee together and that McMaster needs a definition before they can utilize them.

Drs. Gillet, Horn and Hassanein had no report.

V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

There was no report.

VI. New Program Proposal

Dr. Gillet presented the proposal, introducing Dr. van der Linden, and noting that the proposed program is a one-year professional masters to be offered out of the Faculty of Social Sciences, in collaboration with Business and Humanities. He explained that while most programs are run out of a department or an institute this program will be run out of the Faculty office, in collaboration with departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences as well as Business and Humanities.

Council members discussed the potential for perceived overlap between this and the Master of Engineering and Public Policy within the Faculty of Engineering. Dr. Thompson noted that he saw a distinct difference between the two, despite a recent proposal to change the admission requirements for the program from Engineering and noted that there should be additional discussion to ensure differentiation could be clearly articulated.

Council members discussed the timing for admission and whether competence would be required as part of their admission requirements. Dr. van der Linden said that they're expecting students to be building technical skills within the program, developing graduates with the ability to be public policy leaders who can speak to teams that have expertise in certain areas and that all students to be would have completed their undergraduate requirements before starting the program in May.

In response to a question Dr. Gillet confirmed the program would not be funded by the ministry.

In response to a question about the sustainability of a skills development lab, which would require industry experts, Dr. van der Linden noted that the relationships would require consistent maintenance but that they had had many discussion with different levels of government and private companies and there was a lot of interest and recognized need for students with the skills the program would provide. Council members discussed the approval process for a new program.

In response to a question Dr. van der Linden explained that the zero-unit course was required and not a microcredential.

It was duly moved and seconded, **‘that Graduate Council approve the proposed new program as described in the document.’**

The motion was **carried**.

VII. Faculty of Engineering Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Thompson noted that there are bringing forward for information and number of new courses and cancellations. The first item for approval was a reduction in course requirements for the Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering. The second item for approval was a change from Materials Science and Engineering – after an IQAP review noting that their M.Sc. and M.A.Sc. were essentially identical, the program proposed discontinuing (being fully closed once students enrolled have completed) the M.Sc. and renaming the M.A.Sc. to Materials Science and Engineering.

It was duly moved and seconded, **‘that Graduate Council approve the changes proposed by the Faculty of Engineering as described in the documents.’**

The motion was **carried**.

VIII. Faculty of Business Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Hassanein presented items from three areas for approval. The first was a change to calendar copy from Health Management, providing clarity between the full-time and part-time options in terms of courses required. The second item was related to the Blended Learning Part-Time MBA and included a change in course requirements and calendar copy. The program proposed moving three units from term 8 to term 9, cleaning up some of the discrepancies in the title of the integration project, and the addition of blended learning electives. The final item was changes from professional accountancy. They proposed a change to admission requirements and their grading scale both changes were intended to bring the program in line with SGS requirements.

Council member discussed how the blended learning courses were offered.

It was duly moved and seconded, **‘that Graduate Council approve the changes proposed by the Faculty of Business as described in the documents.’**

The motion was **carried**.

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

Dr. Gillet introduced the changes. The first were from Anthropology and involved the addition of a mandatory professional development course. The department of Economics proposed changes to their available comprehensive fields, to align with faculty expertise and the introduction of a research paper in collaboration with a faculty member. He noted that this fit with the discipline and is a standard practice in comparator programs. The third change from Economics was the addition of an active researcher milestone which would require students to demonstrate on an ongoing basis active engagement in the department. In response to questions, the program has provided a clear plan for students, advisors and the graduate chair to ensure flexibility and consistency. Labour Studies proposed calendar copy changes to clarify the MRP versus the thesis and to provide a clear description in light of their relatively new Ph.D.

program. The final change was a calendar copy change from Social Work, including an adjustment around practicum planning and adding information about their second graduate diploma also being available for advanced credit.

Council members discussed the evaluation of the professional development workshop.

It was duly moved and seconded, **‘that Graduate Council approve the changes proposed by the Faculty of Social Science as described in the documents.’**

The motion was **carried**.

X. Research Plagiarism Checking Policy

Dr. Thompson presented the item, noting that it had been presented to graduate council twice before for consultation and changes had been made accordingly. The policy would also be sent to Undergraduate Council as it does interact with undergraduate students engaged in research.

In response to a question from a council member about submissions to conferences, Dr. Thompson noted that the policy is a recommendation not a requirement and is meant to guide users in best practices. Dr. Welch noted that theses were required to be submitted before submission to an external.

Council members discussed the potential for training and communication about appropriate use of the tool, including a website and the need to clearly indicate to supervisors how this interacts with the academic integrity office.

A council noted a typo – a word was singular when it should have been plural.

Council members discussed the language around the requirement that theses be submitted and whether the language was clear enough. Dr. Welch noted that there will need to be language in the Graduate Calendar about it and Dr. Thompson noted that the language is as recommended by the Secretariat’s office.

In response to a question about past theses, Dr. Thompson said that this would only apply going forward. Council members discussed the role of the supervisor in determining the threshold of similarity

In response to a question Dr. Thompson confirmed that his understanding is that the tool can handle material in French.

It was duly moved and seconded, ‘that Graduate Council approve the policy as set out in the document.’

The motion was **carried**.

XI. Scholarship Committee Membership

It was duly moved and seconded, **‘that Graduate Council approve the Scholarship Committee membership as set out in the document.’**

The motion was **carried**.

XII. New Scholarship

It was duly moved and seconded, **‘that Graduate Council approve the new scholarship as set out in the document.’**

The motion was **carried**.

XIII. 3 Minute Thesis Update

Ms. Taylor provided an update, noting that the competition is taking place on March 18th and 19th. Registration is open until March 2nd at noon. In the competition graduate students in a thesis or MRP program explain the breadth and significance of their research to a non-specialist audience in three minutes. The winner goes on to the provincial competition and an information session was held in advance of the competition.

XIV. Additional Business – Discussion of Thesis Submission Grace Period

Mr. Lightstone opened the discussion, noting that currently if a student doesn’t submit their final thesis they are still considered to be enrolled in the university and every month past expected completion date they pay tuition. There is a grace period in the month of September, but this is not granted at the end of January or May. The Engineering Graduate Society is interested in having a grace period at the end of those semesters. There is a lot happening against those students in the month of December, which makes it difficult to submit their thesis on time, including a black-out period during which you can’t book a thesis defence and TA duties in this time. He noted there are a lot of reasons to give students extra time, including mental health and financial issues.

Dr. Welch provided noted that the issues involved are fairly complex and provided some context about the impetus for the grace period in September, noting that it used to be a single person coordinating all thesis defences and that there was difficult scheduling a defence in the summer time. The downstream effect of being unable to scheduled defences in August was the additional consideration in September. He noted that the landscape is different now and there are different possibilities about how it might be managed going forward and this was a good time for discussion.

Council members discussed the issue, including stress and financial challenges as well as the volume of defences in September, noting that it is by far the busiest month for defences.

Dr. Welch discussed changes to process and timelines around supervisory deadlines, which used to happen around the same time as defence deadlines and noted the importance of considering why this had been done in the past, what form it should take going forward and continued discussion.

XV. Other Business

Dr. Hanna asked if there is periodically an initiative to review small scholarships with an eye to amalgamating where appropriate and possible to leverage larger scholarships. Dr. Welch responded that there is now a threshold among for what needs approval to be a scholarship, otherwise it is considered a donation. He was happy to put together a discussion with advancement and the associate deans to discuss.

There being no other business, the meeting was concluded.