

Tuesday May 19th at 9:30 am via Zoom

Present: Dr. D. Welch (Chair), Dr. K. Hassanein, Dr. J. Gillett, Dr. M. Thompson, Dr. B. Gupta, Dr. S. Hanna, Dr. M. Horn, Dr. N. McLaughlin, Mr. D. Cursio, Dr. F. McNeill, Dr. I. Bruce, Dr. J.P. Xu, Dr. J. Shedden, Dr. J. West-Mays, Ms. J. de Lange, Dr. C. Kwan, Mr. L. Greville, Dr. M.-A. Letendre, Mr. M. Lighstone, Dr. S. Raha, Dr. L. Thabane, Dr. S. Bannerman, Dr. L. Chan, Dr. S. Pope, Dr. N. Tan, Mr. M. Javdan, Dr. D. Mountainm Ms. S. Baschiera (Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary), Ms. C. Bryce (Assistant Graduate Secretary),

I. Minutes of the meeting of April 21st, 2020

It was duly moved and seconded, **'that Graduate Council approve the minutes of the meeting of April 21st, with the correction to attendance noted.'**

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:

- Plans for the fall semester, noting that he expected the announcement of the plan for the term would be partially or fully online soon;
- A phased return to research on campus (expected to begin on June 1st) including the work of an advisory committee to ensure that the attempt to restart in-person research on campus is consistent with emergency legislation and the guidance from public health;
- Continued success with online Ph.D. defences;
- Limited uptake on the Winter 2020 grade change options;
- The associate deans work within their faculties to help put in place assistance to enable people to complete their degrees as planned;
- The Canadian emergency student benefit;
- The McMaster emergency fund, administered by the Student Aid Office;
- Access has been obtained to the Hathi Trust Digital Collection which will primarily benefit Humanities and Social Science students to complete research online;
- Faculty-specific letters addressing concerns related to covid-19 had been circulated or were in the process of being prepared, students with cases not covered by the letters should contact the relevant associate dean;
- Uncertainty around international student arrivals, noting that a survey was in progress from the International Office and that the institution is waiting on the decision from the federal government.

In response to a question about potential concerns around public transit use, Dr. Welch noted that in this current phase of return to research, students can decide they do not want to risk a return to campus.

Council members discussed the emergency student benefit, including the potential to be required to show that they were actively looking for work.

Council members discussed the issue of international student arrival. One member relayed the experience within his program, noting that there were two students who had received their student permits before the cut-off and one was able to come and the other was not. He reported a lot of back and forth on the letters required, that the question of in-person activities seemed particularly important and suggested that a template letter be developed to help offset administrative challenges if this is required for every international student.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

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

- The near-complete Faculty letter for social science students related to covid-19 assistance;
- A successful review for the proposed Master of Public Policy, noting they are now waiting for the report from reviewers.

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

- Defences, committee meetings are happening with no issues that he was aware of;
- Faculty memo had been released, including a financial support request form.

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

- The approval of the Microcredential Academy, noting some work still to be done, particularly around fees;
- Meeting with Urkind (the preferred choice for research plagiarism checking software) and folks from the MacPherson Institute, regarding the implementation of the software, noting that it looks like it will be incorporated into Avenue to Learn for the moment.

Dr. Hassanein (Faculty of Business) reported on the following items:

- Work on the Covid-19 Faculty letter to students;
- Planning around admissions and upcoming terms, including return to campus;
- A plan for assessing the completion of learning goals and objectives for the Business Ph.D. program.

Dr. Horn (Faculty of Humanities) reported on the following items:

- Covid-19 Faculty letter to graduate students had been released and there has been relatively little feedback so far;
- Concern about ensuring that one-year course-based M.A. students are on track to complete by August;
- Information from the return to campus committee, including room capacity arrangements required for social distancing.

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

- Graduate program leadership updates within the Faculty, noting a change for Neuroscience and Occupational Therapy as well as a re-appointment in Medical Sciences;
- A successful online IQAP review for Health Science Education and plans for rescheduling the reviews that were cancelled, with hopes for desk audits during the summer;
- The Covid-19 Faculty memo to students had been released and, related to this, the need to sort out arrangements for interdisciplinary programs;

- Preparation in programs to be online in the fall.

V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

Ms. Baschiera reported on the following items:

- Winter 2020 Grade Change uptake;
- Stabilizing enrollment for government count;
- Online convocation ceremonies;
- The expectation that there will be more uptake on the general bursary in the fall and work with the Scholarships team to plan for this;
- Training on the new forms system bolt-on, noting that the hope is that eventually some forms will automatically update in the system;
- The first virtual town hall for program staff.

VI. Faculty of Engineering Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Update

Dr. Thompson explained that the School of Engineering Practice and Technology won't be able to implement the previously-approved changes to program length for their September 2020 cohort and are instead going to wait until January 2021.

VII. Spring 2020 Graduands

It was duly moved and seconded, **'that Graduate Council approve the list of the 2020 Spring Graduands, with amendments/corrections to be made as necessary by the Associate Graduate Registrar.'**

The motion was **carried**.

VIII. New Scholarships

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

The motion was **carried**.

IX. Graduate Calendar Working Group Update

Dr. Thompson provided a brief update, noting the intention of the group was to improve and streamline the calendar, including removing redundancies and refresh information as required. The work is being done in conjunction with the Secretariat's office to ensure the calendar is compliant with existing policies. The whole document has been reviewed and now the plan is to reorganize headers, condensing sections as appropriate and ultimately present something that is easier to use.