

Tuesday September 15th at 9:30 am via Zoom

Present: Dr. D. Welch (Chair), Dr. K. Hassanein, Dr. J. Gillett, Dr. M. Thompson, Dr. A. Hicks, Dr. S. Hanna, Dr. M. Horn, Dr. A. Shi, Dr. A. Roddick, Dr. S. Bannerman, Ms. C. Seilor, Dr. S. Raha, Dr. W. Farmer, Dr. J.P. Xu, Dr. J. Kish, Dr. J. Shedden, Dr. L. Thabane, Dr. M. Dion, Dr. D. Mountain, Ms. S. Zakaria, Ms. S. Mederios Ms. S. Baschiera (Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary), Ms. C. Bryce (Assistant Graduate Secretary),

I. Minutes of the meeting of June 9th, 2020

It was duly moved and seconded, **‘that Graduate Council approve the minutes of the meeting of June 9th, 2020.’**

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 opened the meeting by describing the responsibilities of Graduate Council and from where the Council derives its powers. He also welcomed Dr. Audrey Hicks to her role as Acting Associate Dean for the Faculty of Science and then reported on the following items:

- The approval of the Master of Public Policy program;
- Recruitment and enrolment numbers, noting a dip in the number of students enrolling in the fall and that they still expect to hit caps in terms of funding;
- The announcement that the winter 2021 term will be online, noting that as with the fall, a small number of programs will be allowed to conduct work on campus;
- A special arrangement for graduate students to allow students who need a room with reliable internet to defend their theses on campus;
- The graduate thesis completion space in the library, with well-spaced tables that students can book for hours at a time;
- Continued restrictions on international student arrivals for students who did not have a permit in effect by March 18th, noting that when this changes, McMaster has quarantine space available for students when they are able to arrive;
- Modifications by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada that would benefit international students, including splitting the study permit process in two and a modification to the allowable amount of online course work as it relates to the post-graduate work permit;
- The issue of not being able to employ or provide employment income to students who have not been able to come to the country;

- Work on SMA 3 is progressing after being put on hold earlier in the year when Covid first became an issue;
- Modifications to tri-agency scholarships and OCGS for students who were unable to make progress earlier in the year;
- Internal changes to help students complete and not pay additional tuition and fees where possible.

Council members discussed the logistics related to international graduate student arrival, including those unable to receive a study permit.

IV. Report from the Graduate Associate Deans

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

- The border restrictions have hit engineering quite hard, highlighting issues around ESL testing and funding issues;
- VPN use for students behind vigorous firewalls allowing them to participate in courses;
- Work the Engineering Graduate Studies Society had been doing to prepare for the fall, including organizing a conference with a system the Faculty had purchased;
- The upcoming Graduate Fair with other institutions used to elevate the importance of graduate studies to undergraduate students;
- A training program for incoming TAs modified to be delivered online, including how to give online tutorials and how to handle grading aspect and student meetings online.

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

- A successful virtual welcoming program put together by the graduate student society within the Faculty;
- Work with the Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour department on reconfiguring committees;
- Production of a document that outlines how the Faculty will deal with systemic racism and how to support BIPOC faculty and students, in complement to McMaster's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion action items, and involving input from students, faculty and staff.

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

- The new Master of Public Policy and efforts to get ready for an intake in May;
- A review of how graduate students are funded, including the different sources and ways that the Faculty can better support.

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

- The Faculty has provided some additional financial support to Ph.D. students who were affected by delays to research progress;
- A reminder to faculty members about the new research plagiarism checking policy and its implementation in the upcoming academic year.

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

- Stable enrollment in business programs;
- The implementation of additional support to Ph.D. students;
- Additional online support from the Faculty to assist faculty members delivery courses online;
- Rooms available for faculty to deliver courses from if they need to;
- A survey of faculty and students to ensure that learning experiences are positive and improve where they can;
- New opportunities being online has provided, including a collaboration with Queens University around course offerings.

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

- Student engagement in the Faculty, particularly through the Student Ambassadors Program and the expansion of the Health Sciences Graduate Student Federation;
- An online grant writing workshop;
- An online Graduate Fair on October 28;
- Bookable space in the health sciences library with limited capacity;
- Health Sciences students on campus through the summer, particularly in programs with clinical skills training, noting they've had a lot of experience in safely managing on campus work;
- The continuation of the return to research plan;
- Admission deferrals;
- Two new grad programs starting in September the M.Sc. in Psychotherapy and Global Health PhD

Council members discussed the work on the Microcredential Academy in the Faculty of Engineering.

V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

Ms. Baschiera reported on the following items:

- The new deferred admissions process and the related impacts on enrollment numbers;
- The approval process for October 15th extension for time to completion and the intersection with online convocation ceremony timing and the November 1st government count;
- Grade submission;
- A survey being sent to students to see where they are studying;
- Students cards for those students residing in Ontario have been mailed out;
- The completion of the annual enrollment audit;
- Demos for the new admissions software.

VI. Changes to Scholarships

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

The motion was **carried**.

VII. Covid Curriculum Updates

Dr. Welch noted that some programs had had to make some temporary adjustments earlier in the year and the items were being brought to Graduate Council and Senate for information, so members were aware.

Ms. Bryce noted that the tuition arrangement referenced in Health Sciences package applied to occupational therapy and physiotherapy students whose placements had been impacted.

VIII. Graduate Calendar Administrative Section Update – 2.5.5

Ms. Bryce explained that it used to be the case that the School of Graduate Studies was required to collect study permits but that requirement had changed, and the current calendar needed updating accordingly, which had been done with Dr. Welch's approval. Ms. Baschiera noted that there are other offices at McMaster that need the permits, and the language in the calendar reflects that. SGS will retrain them if they're presented in the office but it is not longer formally required.

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

Dr. Hanna noted that all changes were for information and highlighted a new course from the Public Health program related to infectious disease that was particularly timely.