

GRADUATE COUNCIL
OCTOBER 1, 2009, 10:00 A.M.
MUSC-311/313

PRESENT: Dr. A. Sekuler (Chair), Dr. R. Cain, Dr. D. Cassidy, Dr. D. Goellnicht, Dr. G. Kehler, Dr. N. Kevlahan, Dr. M. Kliffer, Dr. A. Knights, Ms. H. Kuiper, Dr. L. Magee, Ms. J. Merolli, Mr. J. Scime (Secretary), Dr. H. Sheardown, Dr. M. Stroinska, Dr. M. Thompson, Dr. D. Welch, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Assistant Secretary)

REGRETS: Dr. P. Baxter, Dr. C. Charupat, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. K. Kanagaretnam, Dr. J. West-Mays, Dr. T. Yoshikawa

After introductions, Dr. Sekuler announced the appointment of two new Associate Deans of Graduate Studies: Dr. Catherine Hayward (Professor in Pathology and Molecular Medicine), Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for the Faculty of Health Sciences, and Dr. Heather Sheardown (Professor in Chemical Engineering), Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for the Faculty of Engineering.

I. Report from the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies

Dr. Sekuler reported that on September 8, 2009 McMaster welcomed new graduate students at an event hosted by the School of Graduate Studies in the David Braley Athletic Centre. Of the 1300 new graduate students admitted by McMaster this year, 800 students attended the event. Dr. Sekuler said the total graduate enrolment as of September 16, 2009 is 2989, compared to 2976 last year. This year the BIU eligible students were up by 150. A full report of the November 2009 enrolment will be available at the next meeting of Graduate Council. Dr. Sekuler added that graduate program applications have increased by about 10% this year and the University now has a total graduate population of 3500.

Dr. Sekuler said several new graduate programs have commenced this year: M.Sc./Ph.D. Cognitive Science of Language, M.A. Communication and New Media, M. Eng. Computer Science, M.Eng. Mechatronics, and M.A. International Relations in Political Science. She added that next year, she expects more new programs such as: M.Sc. Global Health, M.Sc. Health Management, a Master's program in Women's and Gender Studies, Master's/PhD in Water, Environment and Health with UNU-INWEH, Ph.D. in Globalization, and possibly a graduate program in Art and Technology.

Dr. Sekuler said the structural changes within the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) is scheduled to take effect in September 2010. She said OCGS created a task force to design the assessment procedures for both undergraduate and graduate programs.

Dr. Sekuler then briefly discussed the status of the graduate programs submitted to OCGS for appraisal:

- English (M.A., Ph.D) – report submitted to OCGS on August 21, 2009

- Globalization Studies (M.A.) – the report submitted to OCGS on August 27, 2009 will be on the October 5th agenda of Appraisal Committee III.
- Social Work (M.S.W.) – report submitted to OCGS on July 3, 2009
- Philosophy (M.A.) – report submitted to OCGS on August 19, 2009; no consultants needed; report resulted in a classification of “Good Quality”
- Global Health (M.Sc.) – consultants’ site visit scheduled for November 4-5, 2009
- Management Studies Diploma – report submitted to OCGS on August 19, 2009

Dr. Sekuler reported that the School of Graduate Studies recently hired an Executive Director, Strategic Planning and Administration, who will supervise the Information Technology Manager, the Scholarships Officer, as well as the Payroll section of the School of Graduate Studies. Dr. Sekuler added that the Executive Director reports to the Graduate Registrar and the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies (for new initiatives/projects). Dr. Sekuler further explained that the School is also hiring an Information Assistant who will be attending to the front reception inquiries and a Web Developer, who will assist with redesigning the SGS website and in particular, the various online forms for graduate students and departments/programs.

Dr. Sekuler also mentioned the creation of the Task Force on Interdisciplinary Programs (TIPs) last year. The objective of TIPs (chaired by Dr. Sekuler) is to determine effective ways to evaluate and govern undergraduate and graduate interdisciplinary programs at McMaster. Dr. Sekuler said the task force conducted a survey among students, faculty members, and staff in order to gather information and suggestions concerning the current state and future of interdisciplinary programs at the University. The task force is also looking at what U.S. and other Canadian universities are doing regarding interdisciplinary programs. Dr. Sekuler invited the Council members to email the task force at tips@mcmaster.ca, should they have any suggestions on efficient ways to administer interdisciplinary programs.

II. Report from the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies

Dr. Welch explained that close to 1000 students attended the three SGS #101 sessions this year. He said the attendees were a combination of incoming and current graduate students. Turning to graduate scholarship applications, Dr. Welch said that faculty members should be vigilant and specific when writing reference letters for scholarship applications in order to provide applicants with a better chance at obtaining awards.

Dr. Goellnicht agreed with Dr. Welch, and he commented that reference letters should describe in detail the assessments of the applicants, especially for the OGS applications. Dr. Goellnicht reported as well that Social Sciences achieved a 35% growth in graduate enrolment this year. Dr. Goellnicht recalled that Graduate Council created an *ad hoc* committee last year to discuss the role of SGS concerning inclusivity and diversity issues. The *ad hoc* committee (chaired by Dr. Goellnicht) met only once last year. This year, Dr. Goellnicht will try to get the committee to be more involved in activities concerning diversity issues at the University. Dr. Goellnicht also mentioned McMaster’s plan to create a scholarship award specifically for indigenous students.

III. Graduate Scholarships

Mr. Scime presented the following graduate scholarships for Council approval:

- The Bev Bayus Ontario Graduate Scholarship
- The Jan W. deGrijs Ontario Graduate Scholarship
- Mildred Gulliver Graduate Scholarship in Infectious Diseases
- Mildred Gulliver Postdoctoral Scholarship in Infectious Diseases
- The John and Doris Puddington MBA Scholarship

Dr. Welch moved, and Dr. Kehler seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve The Bev Bayus Ontario Graduate Scholarship, The Jan W. deGrijs Ontario Graduate Scholarship, Mildred Gulliver Graduate Scholarship in Infectious Diseases, Mildred Gulliver Postdoctoral Scholarship in Infectious Diseases, and The John and Doris Puddington MBA Scholarship, as set out in the document.”

The motion was carried.

IV. Minutes of meeting

On a motion by Dr. Goellnicht, seconded by Dr. Cain, Graduate Council approved the minutes of the meeting of May 21, 2009.

V. Policy for Keeping Records of Graduate Student Oral Examination

Dr. Sekuler recalled that Graduate Council approved this document at its meeting on May 21, 2009. This item was on the agenda of the Senate meeting on June 3, 2009. However, Dr. Sekuler withdrew the document from the agenda due to some issues with FIPPA regulations. The issues have now been addressed and Dr. Sekuler presented the revised document to the Council.

Dr. Kliffer moved, and Dr. Welch seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes to the Policy for Keeping Records of Graduate Student Oral Examination, as described in the document.”

The motion was carried.

VI. Guidelines for Graduate Course Instructors

Dr. Sekuler explained that the Executive Committee of Graduate Council has reviewed the *Guidelines for Graduate Course Instructors* and revised the document at its September 24, 2009 meeting. Dr. Sekuler said the guidelines are intended to highlight best practices to help instructors plan and run successful graduate courses.

Dr. Welch moved, and Dr. Kevlahan seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the *Guidelines for Graduate Course Instructors*, as described in the document.”

The motion was **carried**.

Dr. Sekuler will present the *Guidelines* document at the next Senate meeting for information.

It was noted that because it is a guideline, the document will be updated as issues pertaining to graduate courses arise. The document will also be posted on the SGS website.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.