

**GRADUATE COUNCIL
MAY 21, 2009, 10:00 A.M.
MUSC-311/313**

PRESENT: Dr. A. Sekuler (Chair). Dr. P. Baxter, Dr. M. Boda, Dr. R. Cain, Dr. N. Charupat, Dr. S. Crosta, Dr. K. Dalnoki-Veress, Dr. T. Fetner, Dr. D. Goellnicht, Dr. M. Hatton, Dr. B. Kaczynski, Dr. M. Kliffer, Miss H. Kuiper, Dr. A. Montazemi, Dr. C. Richards, Mr. J. Scime, Dr. J. West-Mays, Dr. D. Welch, Mr. K. Viers, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Assistant Secretary)

I. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of April 16, 2009 were approved on a motion by Dr. Welch, seconded by Dr. Hatton with one correction. “*Dean of Engineering*” on page 2, line 4 was replaced with “*Faculty of Engineering Graduate Admissions and Study Committee.*”

II. Business Arising

There was no business arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

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

a) OCGS Appraisals

Dr. Sekuler reported that consultants site visits for OCGS periodic reviews were recently held for Anthropology (M.A., Ph.D.), Geography (M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D.), and Chemistry (M.Sc., Ph.D.). She added that there are two upcoming site visits for periodic reviews: June 1-2, Chemical Engineering (M.A.Sc., M.Eng., Ph.D.); and June 23-24, Mathematics (M.Sc., Ph.D.). Dr. Sekuler further said that OCGS is in the process of scheduling consultants to appraise the following programs: M.Sc. Statistics (periodic appraisal), M.Sc. Global Health (standard appraisal), and M.A. Health Management (standard appraisal). Dr. Sekuler explained that OCGS, not the School of Graduate Studies, has control over who the consultants will be and when site visits are scheduled. Dr. Sekuler said she received reports from three site visits, and she hopes to get the final recommendation in June from OCGS appraisal committees concerning two periodic appraisals: Mechanical Engineering (M.Sc., Ph.D.), Electrical and Computer Engineering (M.A.Sc., M. Eng., Ph.D.); and standard appraisals for Computer Science (M. Eng.), and Mechatronics (M. Eng.).

b) 2009-2010 External Scholarships

Dr. Sekuler reported that at a reception she attended in Ottawa, the federal government has awarded eight McMaster University students with the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships. Dr. Sekuler explained that the Vanier is a prestigious program that awards 500 international and Canadian doctoral students with three-year scholarships. The Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) program is administered by Canada’s three research granting councils: the

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

Dr. Sekuler then turned to the result of the 2009-2010 external scholarships competition and briefly explained each one.

Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS):

- Total number of applications submitted by McMaster: 724 (270 Master's, 389 Ph.D., 65 Master's/PhD visa students)
- Total number of scholarship recipients: 261 (114 Master's, 144 PhD, 3 Master's/PhD visa students)

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC):

- Total number of applications submitted by McMaster: 115 (66 Master's, 49 Ph.D.)
- Total number of scholarship recipients: 83
 - 47 CGS Master's
 - 2 PGS Master's
 - 9 CGS Doctoral (up to 2 years)
 - 6 CGS Doctoral (up to 3 years)
 - 8 PGS Doctoral (up to 2 years)
 - 11 PGS Doctoral (up to 3 years)

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC):

SSHRC Master's

- Total number of applications submitted by McMaster: 20
- Number of recommended alternate candidates submitted to SSHRC: 5
- Number of CGS Master's Scholarships Awarded: 20

SSHRC Ph.D.

- Total number of applications submitted by McMaster: 56
- Total number of scholarship recipients: 32

Dr. Sekuler thanked those who were involved in the ranking of the scholarships.

c) Graduate expansion

Dr. Sekuler said the total number of graduate applications received by McMaster is up by 523 from last year. She further said the number of acceptances of domestic students for admission to graduate studies is higher this year than last year: Social Sciences was up by 100, Engineering by 40, Science by 20, and Humanities by 15.

IV. 2009 Spring Graduands

Dr. Sekuler presented the list of the 2009 Spring Graduands for Council approval.

Dr. Richards moved, and Dr. Welch seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the list of the 2009 Spring Graduands for the Faculties of Business, Engineering, Health Sciences (Nursing), Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences, with amendments/corrections to be made as necessary by the Graduate Registrar.”

The motion was carried.

V. Policy on Graduate Course Outlines

Dr. Hatton reviewed the proposed *Policy on Graduate Course Outlines* document. After the discussion, the Council suggested the following items: (1) course outlines should include the Academic Integrity Policy; (2) course outlines should be made available to departments and /or programs one week before the course commences, and available to students before or at the first course meeting; (3) the department/program has the right to change the method of assessment of the course due to unforeseen circumstances, such as illness of the instructor, etc.; and (4) the department/program is responsible for keeping the course outline up to date, and a copy should be kept on file for a minimum of one year.

Dr. Hatton moved, and Dr. Richards seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed *Policy on Graduate Course Outlines*, subject to the amendments proposed by the members.”

The motion was carried.

Guidelines for Graduate Course Instructors

Dr. Hatton then discussed the *Guidelines for Graduate Course Instructors* document; and he added that the two documents are the results of the suggestion of Graduate Council to create a “policy document” for course outlines, and a “guidelines document” for instructors teaching graduate courses. One member commented that since seminars are structured in various ways, there might be instances in which providing students with several academic performance evaluations either before or after the “drop” date would be inappropriate. To solve the issue, Dr. Hatton suggested including a statement that the responsibility lies on the instructor to assess the student’s academic performance, by whatever means he/she considers appropriate, before the “drop” date. Another issue brought up by a member was the difficulty of some excellent students, for whatever reasons, to participate in seminar discussions. The member feels that although marks are earned, students should not be penalized for non-participation in seminar discussions unless the student demonstrates a willful refusal to participate. In response to a question, Dr. Sekuler said there is a plan in the future to create a template for course outlines. After the discussion, the Council decided to defer further discussion of the document until the next meeting of Graduate Council.

VI. Policy on Retention of Examination Papers and Other Graded Materials

VII. Policy on Access to Final Examinations

Dr. Sekuler referred to the above two policies. She explained that these documents were approved at the meeting of Senate on May 13, 2009. These are presented to Graduate Council for information.

VIII. Policy for Keeping Records of Graduate Student Oral Examinations

Dr. Sekuler referred the members to the document and asked for comments/suggestions. After the discussion, the Council made the following comments: (1) the document should define what an oral examination is, i.e., formal assessment in the presence of one or two examiners in a private setting; (2) replace the first paragraph of the policy with the following: *When an oral examination is part of the assessment process for a graduate course, an audio or video recording must be made if there are fewer than three examiners.* (3) the policy is not meant to apply to instances of class presentation or participation; (4) the document should clearly state that recordings of Master’s and Ph.D. oral theses examinations are not required.

Dr. Welch moved, and Dr. Richards seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed *Policy for Keeping Records of Graduate Student Oral Examinations*, subject to the amendments proposed by the members.”

The motion was carried.

IX. Qualifications of a Supervisor

Dr. Sekuler proposed a plan to develop a structured process that determines how, and whether or not, faculty members qualify for graduate supervision. Ideally, she would like to have a list of faculty members who—according to a set of criteria established by the University—are eligible to serve as primary supervisors. The rationale for the proposal stems from the fact that over the past several years, diverse categories of professors have been created to meet the University’s various needs, i.e., CLAs who have become part of the MUFA group, teaching professors, adjuncts, and sessionals. Dr. Sekuler is concerned that without establishing specific qualifications regarding who is eligible to supervise graduate students, the University might give the impression that any faculty member can serve as primary supervisor. There was a comment that tenured professors are expected to engage in graduate supervision and other faculty members such as teaching professors and CAWAR (Continuing Appointment Without Annual Review) faculty should be assessed on a case by case basis. Dr. Richards explained that in the Faculty of Health Sciences, faculty members who are interested in graduate supervision must be assessed by a sub-committee and then approved through the Faculty of Health Sciences Graduate Policy and Curriculum Council. After thanking the members for their input, Dr. Sekuler said this issue will be further discussed at future meetings of Graduate Council.

There was no other business, and the meeting adjourned at 12 noon.