

**GRADUATE COUNCIL  
NOVEMBER 15, 2004, 10:00 A.M.  
Council Chambers, Gilmour Hall 111**

**PRESENT:** Dean F.L. Hall (Chair), Dr. N. Agarwal, Mr. L. Ariano, Dr. C. Blimkie, Dr. G. Bone, Dr. L. Chan, Ms. N. Chhinzer, Dr. D. Clark, Dr. J. Clark, Ms. K. Espiritu, Dr. C. Ingram, Ms. C-Y Lin, Dr. G. Luke, Dr. S. Porter, Dean C. Richards, Mr. J. Scime (Secretary), Dr. M. Stein, Dr. G. Steiner, Dr. C. Swartz, Dr. J. Valliant, Dean D. Welch, Dr. C. Woodward, Dr. D. Wright, Dr. J. Xu, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Recording Secretary)

**BY INVITATION:** Dr. C. Cuneo, Dr. A. Sekuler

**REGRETS:** Ms. V. D'Costa, Dean L. Finsten, Dr. A. Herring, Mr. T. Hoare, Dean N. Rahimieh

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In response to a query as to whether Graduate Council meetings are open to the public, Dean Hall consulted the University Secretary and was informed that although Graduate Council is not named in Article VIII of the Senate By-laws, its provisions apply to the Council. Article VIII directs Graduate Council to conduct its meetings in public and make its meeting records publicly available.

**I. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of October 25, 2004 were approved on a motion by Dr. Luke, seconded by Dr. Wright with the following revisions. page 5, last paragraph, first sentence was revised to read: *Dr. Wright commented that graduate students who hold internal scholarships, and desire to take parental/maternity leave, are left in a situation whereby, if they choose to take such leave, they forfeit their entire income. Since MUFA and the University have embraced the principle of assisting faculty members who take parental/maternity leave (in the form of Supplementary Unemployment Benefits) he suggested the University consider ways to extend limited support to their graduate students finding themselves in a similar situation.*

**II. BUSINESS ARISING**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

**III. DEAN'S REPORT**

Dean Hall reported the status of the graduate programs that were submitted to OCGS for approval. There is no information yet from OCGS concerning the MBA/Ph.D. in Business Administration or the M.Sc./Ph.D. in Human Biodynamics. Two consultants have already been identified for the M.A. in French. Two consultants have to be identified for the M.Sc./Ph.D. in Geology. The M.A. in Cultural Studies and Critical Theory—which was approved by Graduate Council in the spring—is on the meeting agenda of Section II OCGS Appraisals Committee. The M.Eng. in the combined B.Eng./M.Eng. in Biomedical Engineering is on the November 29<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda of Section IV OCGS Appraisals Committee. The Ph.D. in Social Work

document—which is pending submission to OCGS—still requires internal approval. Graduate Council approved, in principle, the Ph.D. in Social Work; however, the proposal must be resubmitted to Graduate Council for discussion of program details. There is no urgency in approving the Ph.D. in Social Work because the department must first hire two additional faculty members before the document is submitted to OCGS. The M.A. in Economic Policy and the M.A. in Digital Society will be discussed at the Senate meeting next week. Upon Senate approval, the two programs will be submitted to OCGS.

The M.A.Sc./M.Sc./Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering was approved by Senate on November 10; however, the document for submission to OCGS is not yet ready. The M.Sc./Ph.D. in Computational Engineering and Science is on the agenda of the November 30<sup>th</sup> Science GCPC meeting and the December 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineering GCPC meeting. The M.Sc./Ph.D. in Chemical Biology is also on the agenda of the Science GCPC meeting on November 30, 2004. The M.Eng. portions of the combined B.Eng./M.Eng. in Manufacturing and the combined B.Eng./M.Eng. in Design received internal approval; however, the documents for submission to OCGS are not ready. The Periodic Appraisal of the M.Sc./Ph.D. in Biochemistry resulted in a classification of Good Quality at the OCGS meeting on November 5, 2004. The M.A./Ph.D. in Classics Periodic Appraisal was submitted to OCGS in April 2004—the consultants have already been identified. The M.A./Ph.D. in Classics submission was delayed because the chair of the Department of Classics was appointed Acting Dean of Humanities. The programs in Medical Sciences and Religious Studies are expected to receive OCGS approval this month.

#### **IV. GUARANTEED MINIMUM SUPPORT LEVELS**

Dean Hall explained that currently McMaster does not have a guaranteed minimum funding level for graduate students. When McMaster's Plan for Graduate Education was established in late 2000, the University did not have enough funding to establish a guarantee. As a result, the University set a target of providing at least \$15,500 for each Ph.D. student. Dean Hall then drew attention to his memorandum, which recommends setting the level of \$17,000 as a guarantee for all Ph.D. students commencing in September 2005. The document was also distributed to department chairs and directors for comments. In response to a query, Dean Hall replied that the University of Toronto guarantees funding between \$12,000 and \$15,000 plus tuition and fees, while the University of Western Ontario provides \$17,000 (tuition and fees included). Dean Hall said that most of the students in Social Sciences and in the Department of Computing and Software are currently below \$17,000. Due to the new faculty members in the Department of Computing and Software, Dean Hall said it is difficult for the department to achieve this level. Dr. Ingram commented that the proposal is not applicable to Nursing students because many of them do not receive any form of funding.

In response to Ms. Lin, Dean Hall said the recommendation also applies to international students. In response to a query regarding the advantages of the two ways of describing support levels, Dean Hall stated that U of T's procedure enables students to calculate approximately what they will have to live on. Dr. Sekuler noted that departments would be responsible for the increase—she inquired where the additional funding would come from to cover the differential for visa student fees. Dean Hall responded that the Faculties of Science and Social Sciences provide tuition bursaries for this purpose. Dr. Agarwal added that the Faculty of Business also provides

tuition bursaries for its Ph.D. program. In response to Dr. D. Clark, Dean Hall said the information regarding how many universities are adopting this practice and how support levels are advertised are currently not available. He noted that the University of Western Ontario is rethinking its procedure. Dean Richards thought that it is a viable proposal; however, he commented that due to the nature of some programs and the needs of students, departments should be given flexibility in advertising their support levels. Dean Hall noted that at the U of T, the Faculty of Arts was the first faculty to advertise; however its Faculty of Health Sciences is still not involved in the process. Dr. D. Clark suggested adding “normally” to the statement to provide some form of flexibility. Dr. D. Clark was also concerned about placing too high an importance on the financial aspect of student admission—he believes there are other incentives (i.e., quality of the program) besides financial issues that motivate graduate students to enrol in a particular program. Ms. Chhiner pointed out that students consider the financial aspect a significant factor in choosing a program, and that students who have small incomes rely primarily on University funding to pay for their living expenses. Ms. K. Espiritu said that this is not always the case, since Ph.D. students—for example some of those in the Department of English—consider the variety of courses offered and the faculty composition of a department as the deciding factors in their choice of university.

Upon Dean Hall’s suggestion straw votes were conducted to address the issues.

Issue #1: Implementation of an internal policy to set a guaranteed level of support for graduate students, with the exception of Nursing and HRM programs.

Result of the straw vote: 18 in favour, 1 opposed

Issue #2: Advertise the level of support. “Advertise” means it would appear on the School of Graduate Studies website and the departments’ websites as well.

Result of the straw vote:

(a) Advertise the floor – 0 in favour

(b) Advertise the range – 7 in favour

(c) Don’t advertise- 11 in favour

Issue#3: If a range is advertised, which one should be adopted, total income, or income plus fees?

Dr. Sekuler inquired whether departments will receive additional funding if the tuition fee increases. Dean Hall responded that he has been discussing the issue with the budget committee, but so far he has not been successful. If the tuition fee rises, it is not guaranteed that graduate scholarship funds will also increase.

Dr. Steiner said departments should provide information on graduate students’ income as well as other payments to students that are not yet reflected on the payroll, to avoid any confusion.

Result of the straw vote for Issue #3

\$12,000-15,000 plus tuition fee- 7 in favour

At least \$17,000 including tuition fee - 12 in favour

Issue #4: What level of funding? Given the discussion already about level of support, Dean Hall requested members to keep their hands up at each support level until they thought the level was too high. All hands stayed up through 15,000, 15,500, 16,000, 16,500, 17,000, and 17,500; but almost all came down at 18,000.

Result for Issue #4: support level of \$17,500

## **V. CURRICULUM REVISIONS (Faculty of Health Sciences)**

Dean Richards explained that the M.Sc. (OT) and M.Sc. (PT) programs recommended increasing the TOEFL requirement for admission to 600 on the written test and 250 on the computer-based version. The proposal hopes to address the issue concerning ESL students who have significant problems with oral and written communication.

Dean Richards moved, and Dr. Woodward seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the change in the TOEFL requirement for the M.Sc. (OT) and M.Sc. (PT) programs, as outlined in the attached document.”**

The motion was carried.

The Rehabilitation Science Program recommended the approval of the calendar copy of its new on-line course-based M.Sc. Program and the change in the thesis-based M.Sc. course requirement, as outlined in the attachment.

Dean Richards moved, and Dr. Luke seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposed curriculum changes for the Rehabilitation Science Program as outlined in the attachment.”**

The motion was carried.

Dean Richards then briefly discussed the remaining curriculum changes for the Faculty of Health Sciences for Graduate Council information.

## **VI. SCHOLARSHIPS**

Referring to the list of scholarships, Mr. Scime informed the Council that the following scholarships have been retracted: The Robert John Morris Graduate Studies Bursary, and The Hamilton Utilities Corporation Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy Graduate Scholarship.

The following scholarships were recommended for approval: The Scotiabank Ontario Graduate Scholarships in Medical Sciences, The Dr. Denis Shaw Memorial Award, The Ellen Louks Fairclough Graduate Scholarship in Political Science, The United Empire Loyalists (Hamilton Branch) Scholarship, and The John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport Bursary.

The description for the Ellen Louks Fairclough Graduate Scholarship in Political Science was revised to read: “*Established in 2004 to commemorate the life of ..*”

Dr. Bone moved, and Dr. Luke seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the following scholarships: The Scotiabank Ontario Graduate Scholarships in Medical Sciences, The Dr. Denis Shaw Memorial Award, The Ellen Louks Fairclough Graduate Scholarship in Political Science (with the change in the description), The United Empire Loyalists (Hamilton Branch) Scholarship, and The John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport Bursary.”**

The motion was carried.

## **VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

Dean Hall circulated a document describing the goals/objectives of the School of Graduate Studies in *Refining Directions*. The document will also be presented to the UPC. Dean Hall discussed the *Initiatives* relating to the four objectives as outlined in the document. Referring to *Initiatives* in Objective 1, Dean Hall noted that the first quantitative quality indicator to be distributed is the result of the Ph.D. exit survey conducted among successful Ph.D. students. Dean Hall expects the result of the survey to be posted on the SGS website before the end of the year. Referring to *Initiatives* on page 3, Dean Hall said the OCGS workshops he conducts with departments provide him the opportunity to discuss their plans concerning graduate enrolment expansion. Drawing attention to *Objectives* on page 3, Dean Hall wondered if it is sensible to identify at the University level where the growth in graduate enrolment should occur. Dr. Luke thought it might be interpreted negatively if departments are instructed to focus their graduate expansion in a specific area. Dean Hall said if an internal policy on minimum funding is in place, then perhaps departments can provide information on how funds are utilized. Dean Hall then referred to *Initiatives* on page 4, which is the development of new graduate programs. Dr. D. Clark commented that closure of graduate programs should also be addressed. There are numerous graduate programs that are not successful and considering closure across the province. Dr. D. Clark believes it would help OCGS if universities become more involved with program closures.

Dean Hall thanked the members for their comments. There was no other business. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.