

GRADUATE COUNCIL

Monday, January 19, 2004, 2:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, Gilmour Hall 111

PRESENT: Dean F.L. Hall (Chair), Dean V. Baba, Mr. R. Bashir, Mr. M. Bliemel, Dean D. Capson, Dr. D. Clark, Dr. J. Clark, Dean L. Finsten, Dr. M. George, Dr. A. Herring, Dr. S. Porter, Dean N. Rahimieh, Dean C. Richards, Mr. J. Scime (Secretary), Dr. M. Stein, Dr. G. Steiner, Dr. C. Swartz, Dr. W. Sword, Dr. J. Valliant, Mr. P. Waldron, Dr. E. Werstiuk, Dr. J.C. Wilson, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Recording Secretary)

BY INVITATION: Dr. T. Davidson, Dr. H. DeBruin, Dr. M. Law, Dr. M. Wong

REGRETS: Dr. N. Agarwal, Dr. S. Elliott, Dr. M. Gauvreau, Dr. W. Taylor, Dr. C. Wilson, Dr. C. Woodward, Dr. J. Xu

I. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of September 25 were approved, on a motion by Dean Rahimieh, seconded by Dean Richards with minor correction: under *Business Arising*, paragraph 1, line three, the word *following* was changed to *pending*.

At this point, Dr. Porter introduced Dr. Janet Clark, who replaced Dr. Kurt Richardson as one of the Divinity College representatives to Graduate Council.

The minutes of the meeting of October 16 were approved on a motion by Dr. Steiner, seconded by Dr. Werstiuk, with the addition of the names of Drs. G. Steiner and J.C. Wilson to the list of those present at the meeting.

II. BUSINESS ARISING

In reference to the minutes of October 16, 2003, Dean Hall circulated the full report of the November 1 enrolment. The report indicated a total of 2263 full time registered students which is more than a 10% increase from the year before.

Dean Hall indicated that the School of Graduate Studies report to UPC is not on the SGS website yet – he will make it available in the next day or so. He added that the members are welcome to make any suggestions or comments to further improve the SGS website.

Auditing of Courses

In reference to the minutes of October 16, 2003, Dean Hall initiated discussion on auditing of courses in order to hear the views of the members. Section 2.1.5 of the graduate calendar states that “*graduate courses are not normally open to “auditors” who attend a course without the usual qualifications and without seeking academic credit*”. There is no clear indication on the

calendar whether registered graduate students are allowed to audit courses. Mr. Bliemel commented that several students in the Faculty of Business expressed concern about this matter.

Dean Baba and Dr. Porter both agreed that registered graduate students need to audit courses in order to enhance their knowledge. However, Mr. Waldron stated that this issue not only involves attendance in the course, but that the audited course should also be noted on the student's transcript. Dean Baba agreed that having a notation on the transcript for the audited courses seems sensible.

Dr. Swartz commented that a specific guideline concerning course auditing would help control the number of students in a class. It would also be beneficial for departments to know the number of students attending a class. He added that a student auditing a course should actively participate in the course (i.e. through class presentations) to demonstrate the student's involvement.

Dean Baba suggested that the undergraduate course audit regulations can be used as a reference in creating the procedure for auditing graduate courses. Dr. Porter commented that Graduate Council should be cautious to impose any audit rules but rather leave the matter at the discretion of individual supervisors.

Dean Hall said that he did not anticipate having an immediate solution but rather expected a few members to meet and discuss the issue. He requested Dean Baba and Mr. Bliemel to initiate the task of developing a specific proposal, which would then be considered at the next meeting of the Executive Committee of Graduate Council. Dean Baba concurred and added that he will involve his program directors in the discussion. Any suggestions from the members should be passed onto Dean Baba.

Result of email ballot

Mr. Scime reported the result of the email ballot for the following proposals:

- a) Procedure for the Admission of Aboriginal Students for OT/PT – approved (one opposed, out of 16)
- b) Proposed Changes to the M.Sc. Admission Requirement for Nursing – approved unanimously
- c) Proposed Changes to the M.Sc. and Ph.D. Course Requirements for Nursing – approved unanimously

Mr. Scime indicated that Dr. Herring was concerned about the use of email ballot. Dean Hall commented that this took place while he was away. Dean Hall added that an email ballot was used since the items were straightforward and would likely not draw a quorum for a Graduate Council meeting. Dr. Herring explained that she finds it informative to discuss the agenda first before the approval process takes place. She commented that there is no chance for a discussion if an email ballot is used and that this should not become a common practice.

III. DEAN'S REPORT

Dean Hall reported that during his trip to Australia, he had informative and interesting meetings with the graduate deans of the University of Melbourne and the Australian National University. He noted that graduate studies work is different at each university. At the University of Melbourne, new faculty members are given support on how to effectively supervise graduate students. Dean Hall believes this procedure could be adapted at McMaster. Dean Hall would be pleased to hear from any member who is aware of other good methods/systems relating to graduate studies at other universities.

IV. NEW PROGRAMS

- a) M.Eng. degree in the combined B.Eng/M.Eng Biomedical Engineering Program

Dean Hall referred to the document on the combined B.Eng/M.Eng program in Biomedical Engineering. Although the issues raised at the September 25 meeting are now reflected in the revised document, Dr. Wong welcomed any other inquiries from the members.

Dr. Herring moved, and Dean Rahimieh seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the M.Eng. degree in the combined B.Eng/M.Eng Biomedical Engineering Program.”

In response to Dean Richards, Dr. Wong replied that double counting of courses should be allowed if students were to start in the fifth year. Otherwise, the students would end up taking extra load. Dr. Wong added that OCGS allows this practice. It also serves as an encouragement for students.

Dean Hall said that the university does not currently have a program that permits this practice. He explained that according to OCGS by-laws, when a combined degree is offered there should be some advantage that a student gains from the program. In this case, the advantage is to permit students to double count courses.

In response to Dr. Steiner's inquiry about admission, Dr. Wong indicated that this is an integrated program and admission will only be restricted to those who started in the B.Eng. portion of the program.

Dean Hall inquired whether the department will provide financial support in the fifth year as it does in the regular master's program. Dr. Wong replied that students will not be supported since it is a separate program.

Dean Baba inquired why the word '*combined*' and not '*joint*' is used for this program. Dean Hall explained that the OCGS by-law states that the word '*joint*' is used when a program is conducted across two universities.

Dr. Capson inquired as to what would happen if a student, who already took a 600-level course, suddenly decides to leave. Will the 600-level course be relabelled as 400? Dr. Wong said that it would remain as a 600-level course. However, Dr. Steiner commented that if the student gets a C (which is a passing grade in the undergrad program) the course should be relabelled to 400 in order to complete the undergraduate degree.

In response to Dean Hall's inquiry as to whether the department would be accepting all students who are eligible, Dr. Wong replied that any student meeting the requirements would be admitted. This will not impose on the resources of the department as only about half of the students would meet the requirements.

Dr. Werstiuk questioned the rationale of the program. Dr. Wong explained that this is a valuable program for students who want to get a degree within a period of five years. The combined program is geared towards providing students with broad career opportunities in biological sciences, engineering, and medical sciences, including entry to medical schools. Currently, no such program is available in the Faculty of Engineering.

In response to Mr. Waldron's inquiry concerning the research project, Dr. Wong stated that although there has been no formal discussion to date, the project work would conform to the policies of the School of Graduate Studies.

The motion was **carried** with 12 in favour, 1 opposed and 7 abstentions.

b) M.Sc. in Rehabilitation Science - Course Based - Distance Education

Dr. Law presented the proposal, which is a course-based, distance education Master's degree within the Rehabilitation Science Master's program. The program will help practising occupational therapists and physiotherapists upgrade their qualifications in Canada and worldwide. The program will be jointly undertaken with the University of British Columbia. The proposed Master's degree has a preliminary requirement where students participate in a residential four-day workshop. The students are expected to complete the program within a period of 3-5 years.

In response to Dr. Clark's inquiry about the program's resources (which must be described in detail for the OCGS submission), Dr. Law assured him that the OCGS guidelines were followed in the preparation of the report. The School of Rehabilitation Science will also provide technology support.

Dean Hall referred to the listed on-line courses and inquired why the UBC courses were not on the list. Dr. Law explained that the UBC courses for the diploma program are the same courses that would be used for this Master's program. Faculty members from UBC, who will be teaching the courses, are currently being recommended for faculty appointments at McMaster.

In response to Dr. Werstiuk's inquiry whether there will be any face-to-face student/faculty contact, Dr. Law explained that there will be conference calls, online discussion sessions or video conferencing for purposes of evaluation. Dean Richards added that the preliminary

requirement of the program, which is participation in a four-day residential workshop, satisfies the OCGS demand to address the issue of student/faculty contact.

Dr. Werstiuk inquired whether the faculty resources are adequate. Dr. Law replied that they will be hiring new faculty members two years from now and that there are adequate financial resources for additional faculty.

Dean Richards moved, and Mr. Waldron seconded,

"that Graduate Council approve the proposed M.Sc. in Rehabilitation Science - Course Based - Distance Education."

The motion was carried unanimously.

V. COMPOSITION OF SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE FOR CANADA GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS CIHR - MASTER'S COMPETITION

CIHR announced in January that they would be holding a scholarship competition for Master's students. The deadline to submit applications is March 1. Ten applicants are allocated for our university. Dean Richards sought members' views with regards to the composition of the scholarship committee. He suggested using the existing NSERC scholarship committee for this purpose.

Dr. Herring commented that the SHHRC committee should also be used as there are many students in Humanities and Social Sciences who will be interested to apply. Dean Hall indicated that there was a discussion about this issue before, where it was suggested to have one representative from the Humanities and Social Sciences, one from Science and Life Sciences and two from Health Sciences.

Dean Finsten commented that CIHR should clarify whether it will still accept applicants who already applied to other scholarship competitions. Mr. Scime thought that it is an implied assumption that students who applied to NSERC or SSHRC may not apply to CIHR.

Dean Richards moved, and Dr. Werstiuk seconded,

"that Graduate Council approve the composition of the scholarship committee for the Canada Graduate Scholarships CIHR as five members (1 from Engineering, 2 from Health Sciences, 1 from Science and 1 from Social Sciences)."

The motion was carried.

VI. RAISE TOEFL REQUIREMENT IN FACULTY OF SCIENCE FROM 550 TO 580

Mr. Scime reported that the Faculty of Science has requested to raise its TOEFL requirement from 550 to 580. Mr. Scime noted that Math and Statistics thought that 580 is too high.

Dr. Capson moved, and Dr. Valliant seconded,

"that Graduate Council approve the proposal to raise the Faculty of Science TOEFL requirement from 550 to 580."

The motion was carried with one opposed and one abstention.

VII. REFINING DIRECTIONS / COMPLETION RATES AND TIMES

In reference to the *Refining Directions* document, specifically *Targets I* and *II* statements pertaining to graduate education, Dean Hall opened the discussion concerning completion rates and completion times of graduate studies at McMaster.

Dean Hall referred to three documents: (1) the CAGS report regarding the study of ten universities in Canada from four divisions (Social Sciences, Physical Science and Engineering combined, Life Sciences, and Humanities). The report raised the issue of loss of time in the completion of graduate studies degrees; (2) Report on graduate students who drop out of the PhD programs; and (3) Report on the results for students who entered PhD from Sept 1995-August 1998 comparing the McMaster cohort and the G10 cohort.

Several comments were made:

- Referring to Report 3, Dean Hall commented that McMaster's engineering program was better than the G10 cohort. Dean Hall added that he would like to have a target of an 80% completion rate. Dean Baba thought 80% is rather ambitious since motivations of PhD students are different from field to field. Dean Hall explained that he is looking at a 10% improvement at present, and a move to 80% over the next five years.
- Referring to Report 3, Dr. Clark suggested that a similar report should be prepared where results are broken down into specific graduate programs within a faculty. Dr. Clark added that the report should be widely publicized. Dean Hall agreed that such a report would be useful and should be sent to departments for information. He added that it should also be put on the SGS website. Dean Hall noted that figures for Master's students would also be useful and should be made available.
- Dean Rahimieh said that any information sent to departments should be shared with the faculty deans as well. Dean Rahimieh added that she would be interested to know the progress of her Faculty as compared to other universities.
- Mr. Bliemel commented that statistics on availability of jobs, including academic jobs, could be helpful as well. In the 90s there were not as many jobs as in 2000 -- this could be an encouragement for students to continue with their studies.

- In response to Mr. Bliemel's inquiry regarding exit surveys, Dean Hall replied that SGS is conducting exit surveys for those students who successfully completed their degrees. There is a plan in the future to conduct exit surveys for students who leave and do not re-register.
- In response to Dr. Valliant's inquiry about the *Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Report* form that was recently revised, Dean Finsten said the revision was made with the objective of identifying and solving problems efficiently. For example, the addition of a marginal rating to the form showed that there were more ratings that were not “satisfactory”.
- Dean Baba mentioned a document (prepared by a former OCGS executive) that proposed to increase the number of graduate faculty members in order to attain a program’s goal. He added that the proposal might be a useful indicator with regards to the issue at hand. Dean Hall agreed with Dean Baba – he noted that the lack of faculty renewal at McMaster in 1992-96 resulted in a lower number of new admissions.
- Given that there are more females in Social Sciences and Humanities than other faculties, Dr. Herring suggested that an analysis by gender would be valuable to see if there is a gender-difference concerning completion time. Dean Hall replied that in some areas of Report 1 there is a passing reference to gender issues. Dr. Herring added that it would also be useful to have a report stipulating what McMaster graduate programs offer to students in terms of childcare and care giving support.
- Dean Baba indicated that a report about funding issues would also be beneficial (i.e. statistics of faculty members with research grants in relation to Ph.D. completion rates, students who do not have access to funding and have to get additional jobs).

Dean Hall thanked everyone for their comments and requested them to bring the information to the attention of their departments and initiate discussions. He added that this issue would be discussed further in the future.

There was no other business. The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.