

**GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING  
DECEMBER 5, 2011, 3:00 P.M.  
MUSC-318**

**PRESENT:** Dr. Allison Sekuler (Chair), Ms. S. Baschiera (Secretary), Dr. P. Baxter, Dr. A. Campos, Dr. T. Chamberlain, Dr. A. Chen, Dr. D. Goellnicht, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. A. Holloway, Mr. J. Jaskolka, Mr. R. Khokhar, Dr. J. McDermid, Ms. S. McGuire, Dr. L. Platt, Mr. P. Self, Dr. E. Service, Dr. C. Sinding, Dr. D. Welch, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Assistant Secretary)

**BY INVITATION:** Mr. W. Waycoff, Ms. J. Tunnicliffe

**REGRETS:** Dr. P. Bennett, Dr. N. Charupat, Dr. S. Fast, Ms. B. Gordon, Dr. P. Graefe, Dr. A. Guarne, Dr. K. Kanagaretnam, Dr. L. Magee, Dr. H. Sheardown, Mr. J. Trzeciak

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**Minutes of meeting**

On a motion by Dr. Welch, seconded by Dr. Chamberlain, Graduate Council approved the minutes of the meeting of October 25, 2011.

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

Dr. Sekuler reported on her November 2011 trip to China for the annual Ph.D. recruitment workshops. Her group interviewed 300 students who are potential recipients of China Scholarship Council (CSC) fellowships. Dr. Sekuler noted some changes in applying for a CSC fellowship: (a) Master's students wishing to pursue doctoral studies are now eligible to apply; and (b) post-doctoral students at international universities are now permitted by the Chinese government to stay for a longer period of time at their host university. Her group also visited Chinese universities. Dr. Sekuler noted that at Peking University, students who travel abroad on short-term visits to conduct research are also provided funding.

Dr. Sekuler also reported on the following events/activities:

- There were 50 attendees at the November 16<sup>th</sup> *Best Practices Lunch*. The topic was "Forward with Integrity: A Letter to the McMaster Community," which was President Deane's letter concerning the priorities and principles that will assist the development of the university; in particular, the role of the McMaster community in enhancing graduate studies at the University.
- The next forum to discuss the "Forward with Integrity: A Letter to the McMaster University" document will be held on December 16, 2011. The forum will provide graduate students the opportunity to respond to the document and engage in discussions with President Deane, Dr. Sekuler and the President of the Graduate Students Association.

- The “Dine with the Dean” event on December 13, 2011 will have Mr. Terry Cooke from the Hamilton Community Foundation as guest speaker. The discussion will focus on community engagement.
- The next *Best Practices Lunch* on December 15, 2011 will be a holiday lunch and discussion potpourri.
- The Master of Science in Health Sciences Education is the first new graduate program reviewed through McMaster’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP). The review went well for the program. Dr. Sekuler invites e-mail inquiries concerning IQAP.
- A task force comprising of Dr. Sekuler, Dr. J. Capone, and Ms. K. Menard as members was created to assess the development of a document concerning graduate expansion. This document will be sent to the Council of Ontario Universities.
- A briefing session was held concerning changes to the OGS structure (i.e., issues concerning the process and timing of awarding scholarships).

### **Report from the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies**

- Dr. Welch reported that the ranking process for the NSERC scholarships has been completed—108 out of 274 applications will be submitted to NSERC. He added that this is a transition year for the internal ranking committee in terms of the procedure used in evaluating the applicants.
- Dr. Hayward explained that she was involved in the preparation of the “Graduate Work Supervision Guidelines for Faculty and Students” document, which will be presented at the Graduate Council meeting today. Dr. Hayward was also involved in the IQAP review of the proposed Master of Science in Health Sciences Education program. Dr. Hayward said her Faculty is planning to develop a database for compiling information, which will be useful to departments/ programs, in terms of tracking students.
- Dr. Goellnicht said the University will hold a conference focusing on indigenous students access to graduate studies in the Spring. He also noted that the Harvey E. Longboat Graduate Scholarships will grant three awards this year. Dr. Goellnicht added that he has been interviewing tenure-track faculty members for endowed chairs.

### **Report from the Assistant Dean, Graduate Student Life and Research Training**

Mr. Self reported that the University is currently in the process of posting the graduate valedictorian speeches on its website. In regards to the relocation of the Phoenix, he said completion time has changed from end December 2011 to end January 2012. The current location will be open for business until the completion of the new site.

### **Report from the Associate Graduate Registrar**

Ms. Baschiera reported that email notifications will be sent to departments/programs informing them that the online grades system will go live beginning today. The email notifications will include instructions/guidelines on the use of the system. Ms. Baschiera said there will be more training sessions

in future for program users. Ms. Baschiera explained that the majority of departments/programs are now using the electronic reference system on SynApps. She described the one important feature of the system, which is the ability to customize the form according to the needs of the department.

### **New Graduate Scholarships**

Mr. Self briefly discussed the following new graduate scholarships:

- The Appleton Family Graduate Bursary
- The Richard Nino MBA Scholarship
- The Margaret Zavitz Academic Grant
- The William Coleman Fund

Dr. Chen moved, and Dr. Welch seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the new graduate scholarships mentioned above, as described in the document.”**

In the terms of reference for the Appleton Family Graduate Bursary, a member inquired about the phrase, “demonstrates financial need”; more specifically, whether or not students are eligible for the bursary when they are beyond funding level. Mr. Self explained that time limit is a qualifier—students who are in term 14 are eligible because they are no longer receiving funding from their program.

One member commented that the terms of reference for the William Coleman Fund are quite vague and may cause some potential issues. Dr. Sekuler explained that the Department of Political Science decides who gets the award and the result will be forwarded to the School of Graduate Studies. She commented that perhaps the terms of reference of this scholarship should be clearly worded in the offer of admission letter that is sent to the recipient of this award.

The motion was carried.

### **Graduate Work Supervision Guidelines for Faculty and Students**

Dr. Hayward reviewed the proposed “Graduate Work Supervision Guidelines for Faculty and Students.” According to Dr. Hayward, the objective of the document is to provide suggestions for developing appropriate student-supervisor relations. Dr. Hayward explained that she is not asking approval of the document at this time, but rather seeking comments/suggestions from the Council. The Council members reviewed the document and made comments and suggestions. There was a comment that in the proposed document, students should be made aware of the academic accommodation policy at McMaster. Should the Council members have further suggestions or revisions to the document, they should email them to Dr. Hayward. In response to a question regarding the dissemination of the document, Dr. Sekuler suggested incorporating the document in the Graduate Calendar. A member

commented that the document can be included in the package for new students. There was a suggestion that it can be part of the orientation program for incoming students. In addition, Dr. Sekuler suggested sending the document electronically to department chairs, graduate advisors and administrators to further ensure its circulation to students. A member suggested including the document in the offer of admission letter. Dr. Hayward thanked the Council members for their suggestions. Dr. Hayward will present a revised document at the January 2012 meeting of Graduate Council.

### **Graduate Scholarship Allocations**

Dr. Sekuler explained that she is currently working with the Faculty Deans to develop a new system for allocating graduate scholarships to departments/programs. She stated that the current system has its merits, as it is helpful in promoting growth to some areas. However, the current system has some restrictions as well, such as: difficulty determining the allocation due to funds coming from several sources; lack of awareness from individual Faculties concerning the initial allocation; inability to disseminate scholarship allocation information to departments in a timely manner; and the existence of vast differences in the process that results in some departments being short-funded. Dr. Sekuler said the new system that will be developed should be simple, transparent and clear in addressing the mission and goals of the University. She stated there should be accountability in the use of the resources; and that Faculty Deans should have input in the allocation of the funds. She added that Faculty Deans should have complete flexibility when they assess the needs and priorities of their departments/programs. Dr. Sekuler will update the Council as the project develops.

### **Withholding Publication of Theses**

Dr. Sekuler explained that a proposal to revise the process involved in withholding theses publication has been submitted to Graduate Council. The proposed change is part of Section 2.7.3 (Microfilming and Publication of Theses at McMaster University) of the Graduate Calendar. Dr. Sekuler summarized the proposed changes: the section title will be changed to "Electronic Publication of Theses"; the language will be simplified; the need to publish theses in other formats will be added as a legitimate reason to postpone publication; the initial postponement request will be automatic and at the discretion of the student rather than initially requiring approval from the AVP and Dean of Graduate Studies, and the maximum publication postponement time will be increased to 2 years. Ms. Baschiera assured the Council that the proposal aligns with the procedures of other universities in terms of theses publication.

Dr. Welch moved, and Dr. McDermid seconded,

**"that Graduate Council approve the proposed revision to Section 2.7.3 of the Graduate Calendar, as described in the document."**

A member expressed concern that the 2-year postponement may be an issue should the student fail to be in contact with the supervisor. The member suggested involving the supervisor in the second postponement request. Ms. Baschiera responded that the School of Graduate Studies will keep track of all postponement requests and will inform the supervisor when the postponement request is nearing its deadline. Dr. Sekuler said this matter would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis (e.g., if there is a patent issue involved).

The motion was carried.

### **Other Business**

A member raised the issue concerning data collected by a student for his/her thesis. Should the student be unable to continue with the thesis, a question arose as to who may access the collected data. Dr. Welch commented that Section 6.4 – Ownership of Student Work in the Graduate Calendar addresses this issue.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.