

GRADUATE COUNCIL
MAY 29, 2012, 2:00 p.m.
MUSC-311/313

PRESENT: Dr. A. Sekuler (Chair), Ms. S. Baschiera (Secretary), Dr. A. Campos, Dr. T. Chamberlain, Dr. N. Charupat, Dr. D. Goellnicht, Ms. B. Gordon, Dr. P. Graefe, Dr. C. Hayward, Dr. A. Holloway, Mr. J. Jaskolka, Dr. K. Kanagaretnam, Ms. V. Lewis, Ms. S. McGuire, Mr. P. Self, Dr. H. Sheardown, Dr. C. Sinding, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Assistant Secretary)

REGRETS: Dr. P. Baxter, Dr. P. Bennett, Dr. A. Chen, Dr. S. Crosta, Dr. A. Guarné, Dr. L. Magee, Dr. E. Service, Dr. D. Welch

With approval from the members, Graduate Council revised the order of the agenda for discussion.

I. 2012 Spring Graduands

Dr. Sekuler reviewed the list of the 2012 Spring Graduands for the Faculties of Business, Engineering, Health Sciences (Nursing), Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences.

Dr. Goellnicht moved, and Dr. Campos seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the list of the 2012 Spring Graduands, with amendments/corrections to be made as necessary by the Associate Graduate Registrar.”

The motion was carried.

II. New Graduate Scholarships

Dr. Sekuler briefly discussed the following graduate scholarships for Council approval.

- The Dr. John A. Hansuld Ontario Graduate Scholarship
- The Dr. Jordan Page Harshman Bursary
- The Drs. Jolie Ringash and Glen Bandiera Renaissance Award
- The David L. Sackett Scholarship

Dr. Sekuler explained that the Drs. Jolie Ringash and Glen Bandiera Renaissance Award will provide funding not only for graduate students from all faculties and programs, but for undergraduate students and professionals as well. The recipient of the award will engage in self-directed experiential learning for 4-12 months outside his/her chosen program of study, either locally or overseas. Applications for the scholarship will take place in September 2012. Dr. Sekuler is a member of the advisory board for this award and any inquiries can be forwarded to her.

Dr. Holloway moved, and Dr. Hayward seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the Dr. John A. Hansuld Ontario Graduate Scholarship, the Dr. John Page Harshman Bursary, the Drs. Jolie Ringash and Glen Bandiera Renaissance Award, and the David L. Sackett Scholarship, as described in the document.”

The motion was carried.

III. Parenting Leave Policy

Dr. Sheardown reviewed the proposal and remarked that the document was created (using the *Employment Standards Act* guidelines) as a parenting leave policy for students. This document was also created to differentiate the parenting leave policy for students from the parenting leave policy for employees. She explained that a parenting leave consists of a pregnancy leave and a parental leave: the pregnancy leave is funded through CUPE and TA sources, while funding for the parental leave comes from the School of Graduate Studies. She added that the policy applies only to full-time graduate students. Dr. Sheardown further explained that funding from the School of Graduate Studies for the parental leave is up to eight months, for a maximum total of \$3000 (\$750 per month). Dr. Sheardown added that several discussions were held with McMaster’s employee labour relations group to ensure the policy is accurate.

A member commented that the maximum financial support of \$3000 from the School of Graduate Studies may change overtime due to inflation. It was then suggested that adding a statement regarding this issue would preclude the proposal from going back to Graduate Council just to have the change in figures approved. There was a general response that any future revisions to the policy should be reviewed and approved by Graduate Council. Dr. Sheardown noted that the policy may need revisions in future because of the undergoing changes to the Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS) program guidelines (i.e., OGS leaves of absence policy).

Dr. Sheardown moved, and Dr. Chamberlain seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed Parenting Leave Policy, as outlined in the document.”

Under the heading, “Combination with Other Forms of Financial Support,” paragraph two was replaced with *“If the parent of the child for whom the Parenting Leave is being taken is eligible to receive parental support from CIHR, NSERC, or SSHRC for the leave at any time during the Parenting leave, the parent is not eligible for financial support under McMaster’s Parenting Leave Policy.”*

There was also a comment that the document should be revised for typographical and grammatical corrections.

The motion was carried, subject to the amendments mentioned above.

IV. Proposed changes for the 2012-2013 Graduate Calendar

Ms. Baschiera presented the proposed changes to sections 2.1.7 – Visiting Students, and 2.1.8 – Exchange Students for the 2012-2013 Graduate Calendar. Revisions to Section 2.1.7 are meant to clarify the qualifications of a visiting student. For Section 2.1.8, the proposed changes are as follows: (a) exchange students are not assessed incidental or course fees; and (b) they are allowed to take a full course load at McMaster as long as they are also registered for a full course load at their home university.

Dr. Chamberlain moved, and Dr. Hayward seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed revisions to sections 2.1.7 – Visiting Students and 2.1.8 – Exchange Students for the 2012-2013 Graduate Calendar.”

A member commented that the statement in Section 2.1.7, *“They are not (and will not be) enrolled in a degree program at McMaster.”* seems to imply that the student can never apply as a Ph.D. student at McMaster. The Council suggested revising the statement to *“While they are visiting students, they will not be enrolled in a degree program at McMaster.”*

The motion was carried, subject to the amendment mentioned above.

The proposed courses, SGS #302 – Visiting Student Research and SGS #303 – Visiting Student Internship were reviewed. Ms. Baschiera explained that SGS #302 is a course for out-of-province and international students who conduct research at McMaster as part of their studies at their home university, whereas SGS #303 is for out-of-province and international students who conduct research at McMaster as part of their studies at their home university with support from government programs and other scholarships. SGS #302 and #303 are not-for-credit courses and enrolment is by permission only.

Dr. Goellnicht moved, and Dr. Charupat seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed courses, SGS #302 – Visiting Student Research and SGS #303 – Visiting Student Internship, as described in the documents.”

The motion was carried.

A revision to SGS #301 – English for Academic Purpose was also proposed. Ms. Baschiera reviewed the proposed changes which require students in the course to submit an IELTS or TOEFL within the minimum range specified by individual programs; and clarify that a pass in this course is granted to students who receive 80% or higher in the coursework and attend 90% of the classes.

Dr. Holloway moved, and Dr. Campos seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed revisions to SGS #301 – English for Academic Purposes, as outlined in the document.”

The motion was carried.

Dr. Sheardown reviewed the following proposed changes to sections of the graduate calendar for the 2012-2013 edition:

- Section 2.4.7 – Appeals and Petitions for Special Consideration

The proposed change will make it clear that a *Petition for Special Consideration* should be promptly submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in cases where the graduate student acknowledges that McMaster’s rules/regulations have been fairly applied, but he/she is requesting for an exception because of special circumstances such as medical/personal/family reasons.

A member noted that the terms *Associate Chair* and *Graduate Chair* are used interchangeably in the graduate calendar when referring to the faculty member who is in charge of graduate studies in the department. For consistency, the member suggested that perhaps it would be best to use only one of the terms (Associate Chair or Graduate Chair) in the calendar. Dr. Sekuler suggested discussing the issue at future meetings of Graduate Council.

-Section 4.3 – Examinations (Ph.D. comprehensive examination)

A statement was added indicating that a second failure in the comprehensive examination will require the student to withdraw from the program by the beginning of the following month.

-Section 4.4 – Thesis (Ph.D.)

A statement was included to clarify that in the case of sandwich theses, “mature scholarship” specifically includes substantial and significant contributions to the composition of text in papers with multiple authors.

Under the heading, “Selection of the Examining Committee,” the addition of the statement, “*In unusual situations where the supervisor is not available to participate in the defense for an extended period, the program Chair may designate a different faculty member to serve on the examining committee in place of the supervisor.*”

-Section 6.3 – Appeal Procedures

The proposed changes will make it clear that before a formal appeal is sought, the student is encouraged to communicate informally first with the instructor, the chair of the supervisory committee, the chair of the department, and/or the Graduate Studies associate dean. In addition, the student is advised to speak with the University Secretary before submitting an appeal application. A member commented that the proposed change seems to suggest that the student can choose to approach informally any one of the listed authorities in any order (i.e.,

instructor, supervisory committee chair, department chair, Graduate Studies associate dean). Another member wondered when a conflict of interest arises if the student decides to approach informally the Graduate Studies associate dean first and then later on the appeal issue is brought back to the attention of the Graduate Studies associate dean. There was a comment that students must be given flexibility in terms of whom to approach informally among the authorities listed in the document. It was noted that the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies normally contact the instructor or department chair first before handling any student grievance. In addition, there was a general comment that it is the responsibility of these authorities to decide the best course of action to take in this situation.

Ms. Gordon briefly reviewed the following proposed changes to sections of the graduate calendar for the 2012-2013 edition:

-Section 5.2.1 – Financial Support for Full-time Students

The proposed changes describe in detail McMaster's financial support to full-time graduate students. After the discussion, Graduate Council suggested revising the third sentence in paragraph three to *"The award of a TA may vary but should not exceed 10 hours per week, plus three hours of training per term. TA funding is contingent on fulfillment of the employment obligations and maintaining satisfactory work performance, as stated in the letter of offer or employment contract."* The statement, *"No exceptions totalling 505 hours or more in a single academic year will be approved."* was also included.

-Section 5.2.2 – Financial Payments to Graduate Students

This new section was created to explain in detail how financial support (i.e., employment income, graduate/department or research scholarships, internal scholarships and bursaries, and external awards) is distributed to graduate students.

-Section 8.0 – Graduate Scholarships, Bursaries and Other Awards

Ms. Gordon explained that Section 8.0 was completely revised and the following sections were removed from the graduate calendar: (1) list of fellowships and scholarships tenable at the University; (2) list of fellowships and scholarships awarded by the University; medals and prizes; and travel bursaries. The scholarship awards are now listed on the School of Graduate Studies website. Ms. Gordon then discussed the following new/revised sections in the graduate calendar which provide details about the scholarship support at McMaster.

Section 8.1 – Overview

- Section 8.1.1 – General Regulations
- Section 8.1.2 – Value and Duration of Award

Section 8.2 – Graduate Scholarships

- Section 8.2.1 – Internal Scholarships and Bursaries
- Section 8.2.2 – External Awards Tenable at the University

Section 8.3 – Funding Application Deadlines

After the discussion, the Council suggested revising Section 8.1.2 – Value and Duration of Award, since the description is unclear and confusing. Reviewing the document for some minor grammatical corrections was also suggested.

Dr. Holloway moved, and Dr. Goellnicht seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the revisions of the following sections of the Graduate Calendar for the 2012-2013 edition: sections 2.4.7; 4.3; 4.4; 5.2.1; 5.2.2; 6.3; 8.1.1; 8.1.2; 8.2.1; 8.2.2; and 8.3.”

The motion was carried, subject to the amendments mentioned above.

V. Calendar copy: Biochemistry

Dr. Hayward reviewed the proposed calendar copy for the Biochemistry graduate programs.

Dr. Hayward moved, and Dr. Holloway seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed calendar copy for the Biochemistry graduate programs.”

After a brief discussion, the Council suggested revising the statement, *“The candidate must complete, with at least B- standing, at least one full graduate course (or two half-courses), which must include at least one 700-level half-course in Biochemistry”* to clarify that Master’s students in Biochemistry are required to take one full 700-level courses, or two 700-level half courses. The statement was replaced with *“The candidate must complete, with at least B- standing, at least one full, 700-level graduate course (or two half-courses), which must include at least one half, 700-level graduate course in Biochemistry.”*

The motion was carried, subject to the amendment mentioned above.

Dr. Hayward will inform Biochemistry of the revision.

VI. Calendar copy: Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy programs

There was also a proposal to revise the calendar copy descriptions for the Occupational Therapy and the Physiotherapy programs.

Dr. Hayward moved, and Dr. Chamberlain seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes to the calendar copy descriptions for the Occupational Therapy and the Physiotherapy programs, as outlined in the documents.”

The motion was carried.

VII. Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses

A proposal to revise the *Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses* was submitted involving the addition of a statement concerning the student's role in the scholarly composition of the text in articles submitted as components of a sandwich thesis.

Dr. Goellnicht moved, and Dr. Campos seconded,

“that Graduate Council approve the proposed revision to the *Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses*, as outlined in the document.”

The motion was carried.

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

Dr. Sekuler reported that the following programs underwent Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) reviews: Master of Finance, MBA, Neuroscience, and Astrobiology. The Master of Finance and the Astrobiology programs will then be forwarded to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council). In terms of graduate expansion, Dr. Sekuler said McMaster still has remaining graduate space allocations to be filled. She commented that the University should use all of its graduate spaces this year, since it is not guaranteed how the spaces will be allocated next year. Dr. Sekuler reported that applications from international students have increased at McMaster; however, due to the lack of additional government funding, it is quite difficult to increase enrolment for these students. With regards to changes to the Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS) program, Dr. Sekuler said the proposal of the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) to transfer OGS administration to universities is still pending approval. With the coming changes, Dr. Sekuler said universities may have control over the competition deadline dates in the future. She added that awards for international students may also increase.

IX. Report from the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies

Dr. Goellnicht said he is currently looking at ways to develop best practices in supporting McMaster's aboriginal students at the graduate level. He announced that the McMaster Indigenous Graduate Students (MIGS) will hold a health forum on June 1, 2012 at the Mills Library. Dr. Sheardown said she is involved in organizing a separate NSERC workshop for post-doctoral students sometime in August 2012. Dr. Hayward reported that the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Plenary held on May 8-10, 2012 was a success. Dr. Hayward added that the *Graduate Student Evaluation of Faculty* document needs more changes and the group in charge of this project is working on the revisions.

X. Report from the Assistant Dean, Graduate Student Life and Research Training

Mr. Self reported that McMaster teamed up with Volunteer Hamilton and organized a pilot program involving a 4-week, half-day sessions with participation from 11 McMaster graduate students and 9 community members. The program's topics are leadership and resources for volunteer activities. Mr. Self said the University will review the program and see if the sessions were beneficial to the participants. Mr. Self announced that Graduate Students Day is scheduled for September 5, 2012—the same day that the School of Graduate Studies' Welcome Event for Graduate Students will be held.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.