



MEMORANDUM

To: Executive Committee of Faculty Council (November 4, 2014)
Faculty Council (November 25, 2014)

From: Professor Peter Herman
Chair, Examinations Committee

Date: November 5, 2014

Re: **Graduation with High Honours**

REPORT CLASSIFICATION

This is a major policy matter that will be considered by the Executive Committee for endorsing and forwarding to Faculty Council for vote as a regular motion (requiring a simple majority of members present and voting to carry).

BACKGROUND

Currently, undergraduate students with a cumulative year 2-4 average of at least 79.5 percent are recognized with honours upon their graduation. In the past three years, approximately 35 percent of the Faculty's undergraduates have graduated with honours. This rather large portion of honours standing is reflective of the increasing calibre of Engineering's students, but also misses the opportunity for our Faculty to recognize our most outstanding students.

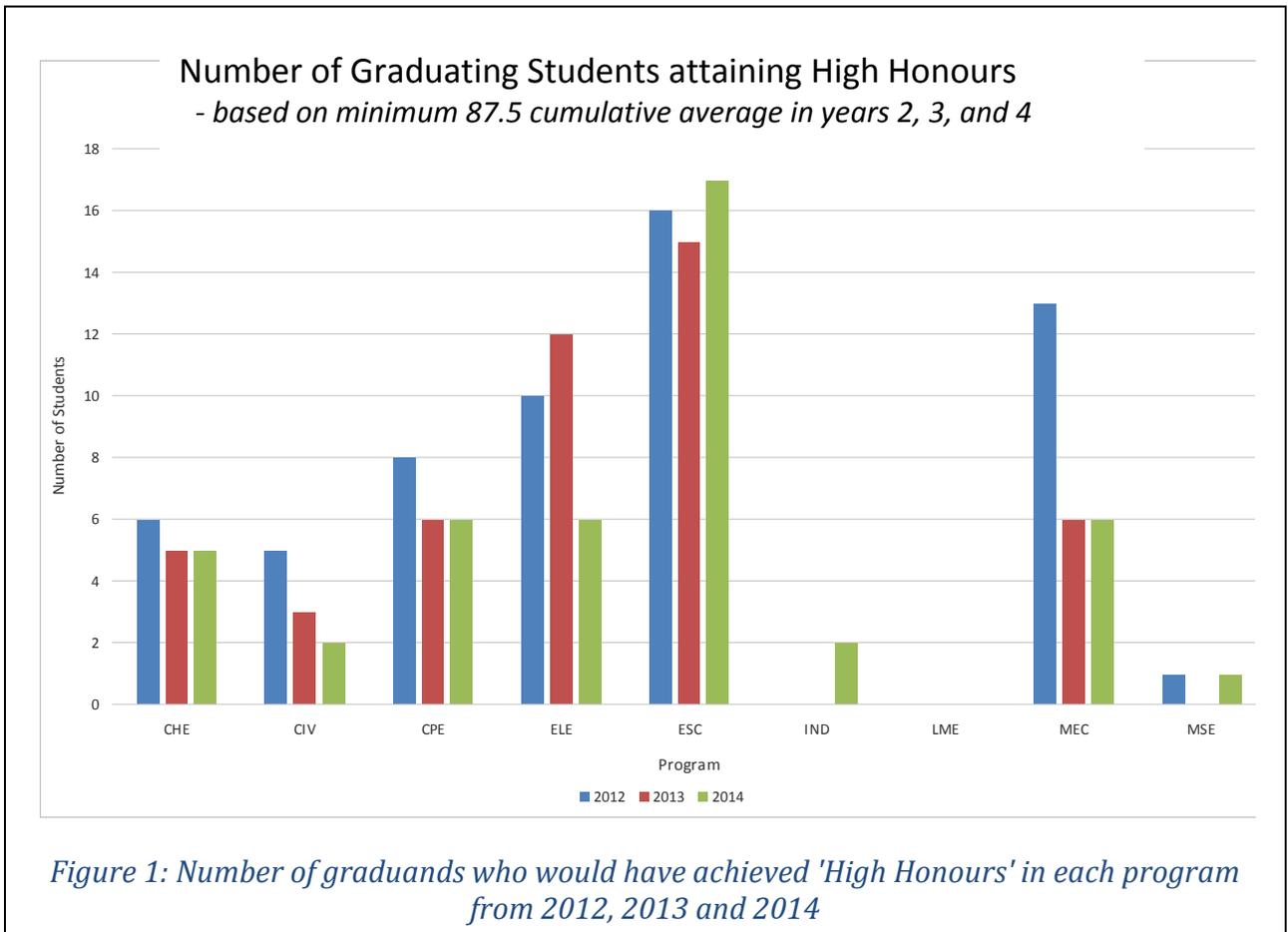
RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Examinations recommends the creation of a new degree citation to be introduced for the June 2015 convocation. The citation, "High Honours," will recognize the Faculty's top students: graduates who have achieved a cumulative year 2-4 average of at least 87.50 percent. This second tier of high distinction is common in other Faculties within the University of Toronto, e.g. "With High Distinction" in the [Faculty of Arts and Science](#) is achieved with a cumulative GPA of 3.50 relative to "With Distinction" being awarded to the tier with a cumulative GPA of 3.20 to 3.49.

PROCESS AND CONSULTATION

The Committee reviewed and analysed the honours data from graduating years 2012-14. Committee Members discussed several options to identify the top-tier students, aiming to recognize the top 5 percent of graduates. One approach considered setting a threshold at the top 5 percent of graduates across all the programs, with additional variations including selection of the top 5 percent of graduates in each program and the top 5 percent of graduates in each program with a threshold minimum cut-off grade. However, establishing a relative threshold to encompass 5 percent of the graduating class (Faculty or program) is not a stable position, posing challenges in administration as student marks can be adjusted for a number of reasons after the graduation date, and therefore requiring an adjustment of “High Honours” status post graduation. Further, a 5 percent threshold setting is not currently in practice within the university.

Figure 1 presents data showing the number of students in each program during 2012, 2013 and 2014 who graduated with an average meeting or exceeding 87.50 percent. This average of 87.50 percent encompasses approximately 5 percent of the total graduating class, which has been consistent over the past three years. Hence, a cumulative average of 87.50 percent



or higher over years 2, 3 and 4 is recommended to Council to recognize the proposed new standing of "High Honours". This threshold would ensure a wide representation of students in all departments in the Faculty and appropriately recognize exceptional success in their field of study.

MOTION

THAT the new degree citation of "Graduation with High Honours" be created for undergraduates who graduate with minimum year 2-4 cumulative average of at least 87.50 percent. Accordingly, the citation of "Graduation with Honours" would be capped to an average below 87.50 (i.e. 79.50 to 87.49 range).