

UC DAVIS GRADUATE COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Room 203 Mrak Hall

ATTENDEES: Thomas Aguilar, Nicole Baumgarth, Toby Beauchamp, Hector Cuevas, Peggy Farnham, Jeffery Gibeling, Jack Gunion, Annik Hirshen, Cathy Jurado, Andre Knoesen, Martha Macri, Jeffrey Schank

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Steven Albrecht, Abhinav Bhushan, Anne Britt, Ed Caswell-Chen, Matthew Farrens, Mari Golub, Rachael Goodhue, James Hodgson, Lynette Hunter, Tonya Kuhl, Walter Leal, Rita Mehta, Hans-Georg Mueller, Lenora Timm, Yuhang Shi

The Graduate Council meeting began at 3:09 p.m. Because a quorum of Council members was not present, official business could not be transacted. However, announcements were made and unofficial discussions took place. [A quorum of Graduate Council members consists of at least seven of the twelve Academic Senate-appointed faculty members on the Council. The CCGA (Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs) representative and the Dean-Graduate Studies are *ex officio* members.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. **Graduate Council Chair** – Chair Jack Gunion brought up several topics for discussion: the “Draft ORU Policy”, the “MOU about ORUs”, and the “Exception for an External Member on QE Committees”. See below for details on the discussions.
- B. **Graduate Studies Dean** – Dean Jeffery Gibeling briefly discussed the impact of state budget cuts on graduate education at UC Davis. Student support money has thus far been protected, but the Office of Graduate Studies will need to trim 7% from its total budget. Dean Gibeling may bring potential cutback scenarios to the Council for its consideration.
- C. **Graduate Studies Associate Dean for Programs.** No report.
- D. **Graduate Studies Associate Dean for Students.** No report.
- E. **CCGA – Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs.** No report.
- F. **GSADC – Graduate Student Assistant to the Dean & Chancellor.** No report.
- G. **GSA – Graduate Student Association.** No report.
- H. **PSA – Postdoctoral Scholars Association.** No report.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. **Academic Planning & Development Committee (APD).** The APD will be holding meetings in the coming week.

B. **Administrative Committee.** Chair Gunion reported that the Administrative Committee decided a number of cases. In addition, Chair Gunion brought up a question about Ph.D. qualifying examinations that was raised by the Physics graduate program. At a recent QE, only three of five QE committee members were present at the student's oral examination. The partial committee submitted a "Pass" vote to the Office of Graduate Studies. However, Graduate Council policy states that all members of a QE committee must be present for the examination:

If a ... Ph.D. Qualifying Examination is given in oral format, it is the responsibility of all members of the committee to be in attendance for the entire examination. Unanticipated or unavoidable absence will be explained in detail by the Chair in the report on the outcome of the examination and a specific plan for completion of the examination within 72 hours by all members of the committee will be detailed. ("Guidelines for Service on Advanced Degree Committees")

Council members discussed the rationale for the "all present" policy, acknowledging that it is unfair to the student to hold the exam without all members present, and that having all committee members present is important for an interactive exchange of ideas. Chair Gunion wondered if graduate program staff should be better educated on this policy. Cathy Jurado, Director of Student Services for the Office of Graduate Studies, said that the policy for conducting a qualifying examination is provided to the chair of the QE committee, to the graduate student and to the graduate program staff person prior to examinations.

- C. **Bylaws Committee.** Bylaws Committee Chair Walter Leal said that a meeting was scheduled for the upcoming week.
- D. **Courses Committee.** The Chair of the Courses Committee, Rachael Goodhue, reported that course proposals had been distributed to committee members for evaluation.
- E. **Educational Policy Committee (EPC).** EPC Chair Peggy Farnham reported that the committee has a lot of items under consideration.
- F. **Program Review Committee (PRC).** PRC Chair Andre Knoesen reported that a number of reviews are under way.
- G. **Support & Welfare Committee (S&W).** S&W Chair Anne Britt reported that the committee has completed its review of fellowship requests.

CONSENT ITEMS

No Consent Items were on the agenda.

DISCUSSION ITEMS (No actions taken due to lack of quorum)

- A. **Graduate Student Diversity at the University of California.** Dean Gibeling was scheduled to present the results of a study conducted by a systemwide "work group on diversity in graduate and professional schools". The results of the study had been presented to the UC Regents earlier in the week. Since this is an important topic and since the Council did not have a quorum, Dean Gibeling suggested that his presentation be rescheduled for the April Graduate Council meeting.

B. **Long-range Graduate Enrollment Planning at UC Davis.** Dean Gibeling presented details of the recently-completed Long Range Enrollment Plan. Some of the key points in the Enrollment Plan are:

1. The California State legislature asked the University for an enrollment plan extending to the 2020-2021 academic year.
2. Individual enrollment plans prepared by each of the UC campuses were rolled together into the final plan.
3. UC Davis' approach to estimating the number of graduate students in 2020-2021 was to target the graduate student number as **20% of the undergraduate student number**. Since the undergraduate enrollment in 2020-2021 is expected to be 31,000 students, the **graduate enrollment would be 6,250 students**.
4. In an effort to more systematically determine the number of graduate students expected in 2020-2021, Dean Gibeling surveyed the graduate program chairs, asking each to determine the future "right size" for his/her graduate program, given certain considerations and constraints. Some programs projected significant growth, and a few expected to shrink. All together, the graduate program chairs projected the future student population to be between 6,200 and the high 6,000s. **This confirms the 20% target mentioned above.**
5. Faculty identified the following determinants and challenges in making their "right size" projections. (The number in parentheses is the percent of faculty who reported the determinant/challenge):
 - i. Faculty FTE (65%)
 - ii. Faculty/student ratios (49%)
 - iii. Space (41%)
 - iv. Student support
 - v. Competing for and recruiting students (32%)
 - vi. NRT costs
 - vii. Course sizes
 - viii. Core course availability
6. Dean Gibeling added an important note on the historical growth in the number of graduate students at UC Davis. **Growth was rapid in the years 2000-2003, when the campus was investing in graduate student support.** In 2004, when student fees increased, the growth slowed.

A discussion by Council member ensued. A question was asked about what the graduate student enrollment number might be if it was based on the number of faculty available to mentor students. Dean Gibeling replied that – with the current number of approximately 1,400 non-retired senate faculty members, and estimating four graduate students per faculty member – the campus could support 5,600 graduate students. Adding emeriti faculty members and other non-senate faculty members to the mix would indicate that the campus could support the 6,250 projected graduate students.

Professor Nicole Baumgarth said she was glad that graduate programs provided thoughtful projections for their growth, rather than automatically indicating that they wanted to "grow significantly". Professor Baumgarth also raised the issue of financial support for graduate

students, in light of the fact that the state budget shows no growth. She asked if it would be possible to increase “block grants” to support the student growth.

Dean Gibeling suggested several ways that he anticipated growth in graduate student financial support, including outside philanthropy, getting other campus academic deans “on board”, tapping additional monies brought in by new faculty and new training grants, and helping graduate students write their own proposals for fellowships. He also expressed his hopes that the Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies will be able to make a case to the state for supporting graduate education. Dean Gibeling noted that other states are looking at graduate education as an “investment in the future”.

- C. **Exception for an External Member on the QE Committee.** Chair Gunion raised a question about the Graduate Council policy of having an “external member” on Ph.D. qualifying examination committees. An external committee member is one who is not affiliated with the graduate program in which the student is getting his/her degree. Current Graduate Council policy indicates that a graduate program may request a “blanket exception” to the policy if it has an acceptable justification for the exception, such as that the membership of a large group/program is not dominated by any single academic department, but instead draws a super-majority of its members from many different units.

Chair Gunion told the Council that he believes external members serve primarily as “quality control” for QE committees, to provide an outside perspective as to the competence of a student’s answers and to the quality of the questions posed by the QE committee members.

Council members provided input on this topic: (1) In some graduate programs, the QE committee members must have a strong expertise in the areas being tested. That makes it difficult to find an external committee member with sufficient knowledge to thoroughly test the student. (2) Some programs require students to defend an outside area of research. In these instances, an external member is always a part of the examination process. (3) In graduate groups with members in a variety of departments, the external member is “built in”. There is not a need for an additional external member.

Chair Gunion agreed that exceptions to the “external member policy” might occur, and that the current process of sending exceptions to the Council’s Administrative Committee for consideration is appropriate. However, he said that he would like programs who are requesting exceptions to provide the Administrative Committee with sufficient information to assure that an “external view” is built into the QE process. He also suggested that the current policy have “clarifying language” added to it.

Dean Gibeling agreed that graduate programs should have a strong academic rationale for requesting an exception to the external member policy, and that the QE process needs to be sure students are tested on some level of “breadth” in their field of study.

Chair Gunion said that he would solicit additional input on the topic from Council members via email and would bring a draft of an updated policy to a future meeting of the Council.

- D. **Exclusion of External Members from Dept-Based Graduate Programs.** Chair Gunion referred Council members to Item #2 in his “Thoughts from the Chair” (Attachment 6.0) and to Attachment 6.1. The Physics graduate program recently submitted a proposed revision of its Bylaws which indicates that no one from outside of the Physics department is allowed to be a member of the graduate program. This conflicts with the UC Davis campus’ 1993 “Phase III” recommendation that all Ph.D. programs should develop bylaws in the manner of

graduate groups. The 1993-94 Graduate Council discussed the Phase III recommendation, but it is not clear whether a formal vote was ever taken on the matter.

Chair Gunion told Council members that the Physics department's rationale for excluding non-Physics department members is that it "does not wish to open up decisions about resource allocation, TA's and so forth to individuals from outside the Department (as would be implicit in using standard GG Bylaw structure)". Council members said that, though they understand resource allocation can be a problem, they are more concerned about the impact of the restricted membership on graduate students and the depth of their training.

Dean Gibeling explained the history of the Phase III recommendation, which was designed to allow all faculty to have access to graduate students and graduate education. He also emphasized that the inclusive bylaws approach was in line with the multi-disciplinary strengths of the campus.

Chair Gunion asked if an appeal could be made to the Council's Educational Policy Committee regarding this matter. Professor Nicole Baumgarth, vice-chair of the Council's Academic Planning & Development Committee, indicated that it, since it was related to policy, it should go to the APD.

E. **Draft ORU Policy.** Chair Gunion distributed a draft letter addressed to the Academic Senate regarding the proposed policy on Organized Research Units (see Attachment 6.2). In his draft letter, Chair Gunion expressed particular concern about section IV.E.2 of the proposed policy, which indicates that, when an ORU is reviewed, the final report "must remain confidential and must not be shared with the director, dean(s), division Academic Senate or CODVC". This would exclude the Graduate Council from access to the final report. Chair Gunion said that he would send the draft letter to Council members via email to obtain their input and approval.

F. **MOU about ORUs.** (Memorandum of Understanding between the Graduate Council and the Office of Research about the review of proposed and existing Organized Research Units)

Due to Chair Gunion's concern about the proposed ORU policy (see above), he collaborated before the Council meeting with Program Review Committee Chair Andre Knoesen to prepare a memorandum of understanding which highlights the fact that the Graduate Council wants to be involved in the review of all new proposals for ORUs and the periodic reviews of existing ORUs. A draft of the MOU and a cover letter to the Vice Chancellor-Research was distributed (see Attachment 6.3). Dean Gibeling emphasized the importance of asking the ORUs to describe the contributions they expect to make (or have made) to graduate education. He expressed hope that the MOU will be effective in that regard.

Chair Gunion said that he would send the draft letter and MOU to Council members via email for their input and approval.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:34 p.m.