

UC DAVIS GRADUATE COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 12, 2007

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Room 203 Mrak Hall

ATTENDEES: Nicole Baumgarth, Anne Britt, Abhinav Bhushan, Hector Cuevas, Mari Golub, Peggy Farnham, Matthew Farrens, Jeffery Gibeling, Rachael Goodhue, Jack Gunion, Annik Hirshen, Lynette Hunter, Cathy Jurado, Andre Knoesen, Tonya Kuhl, Hans-Georg Mueller, Lenora Timm

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Thomas Aguilar, Steven Albrecht, Toby Beauchamp, Ed Caswell-Chen, James Hodgson, Walter Leal, Martha Macri, Rita Mehta, Jeffrey Schank, Yuhang Shi

GUEST: Laura Bartley (PSA Representative)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. **Graduate Council Chair** – Chair Jack Gunion informed the Council that he would be discussing items from his “Thoughts from the Chair” document (Attachment 3.1) later in the meeting.
- B. **Graduate Studies Dean** – The Dean of Graduate Studies, Jeffery Gibeling, provided information on the items below.
 1. **Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) Annual Meeting.** Dean Gibeling attended the CGS Annual Meeting in early December. He recapped three issues that he felt should be of interest to Graduate Council members.
 - a. **Dissertation Award.** The 2007 CGS / UMI Distinguished Dissertation Award in Biological and Life Sciences was given to a former UC Davis graduate student, Cristobal Uauy. Dr. Uauy received his Ph.D. in Genetics from UC Davis earlier this year. His research centers around improving the nutritional content of wheat.
 - b. **CGS Ph.D. Completion Project.** CGS is continuing its study of retention and completion rates for Ph.D. students. Dean Gibeling said that UC Davis has completion rates that are similar to national averages, but wants to improve our campus’ rates, and to understand the dynamics related to graduate student retention. Additional data from the CGS project should be available in January or February.
 - c. **NRC (National Research Council) Assessment of Research Doctorates.** The NRC is compiling data supplied by Ph.D.-granting research institutions from across the United States. During the data collection process, the University of California’s Council of Graduate Deans provided the NRC with substantial and useful feedback. The NRC hopes to present its findings in late Spring 2008.
 2. **University of California Budget.** Since the State of California is facing a larger than expected deficit, the University of California will probably be facing some funding cuts. Dean Gibeling thanked the Graduate Council for its support last month of his 2008-09 Graduate Student Support Priorities proposal. He hopes to hear back from the UC Davis Provost in early January, regarding funding available for items in the proposal.
 3. **Campus Academic Planning Process.** Dean Gibeling told the Council that the campus is in the midst of its Academic Planning process. He encourages members of the Council to participate in the planning process via their home departments. He will also be encouraging faculty members in graduate groups to provide input from their unique perspectives.

- C. **Graduate Studies Associate Dean for Programs.** No report.
- D. **Graduate Studies Associate Dean for Students.** Associate Dean for Students, Lenora Timm, said that she noticed a recurring theme in her contacts with graduate students: students are unhappy with the mentoring they receive. Associate Dean Timm suggested that this may be a factor that contributes to problems in graduate student retention.

The Council members discussed various aspects of student mentoring, and suggested ways in which mentoring could be improved. They also discussed possible rewards for good faculty mentors. Other Council members believe that poor mentoring is personality issue, and that training and/or awards for graduate student mentors may not be necessary.

Chair Gunion suggested that Council members give their ideas about this subject to the Chair of the Support & Welfare Committee, Anne Britt. Chair Britt can discuss this with her Committee, and bring recommendations back to the full Council.

- E. **CCGA – Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs.** CCGA representative, Matthew Farrens, informed the Council that the CCGA spent a considerable amount of time discussing the NRT (non-resident tuition) fee process.

- F. **GSA – Graduate Student Association.** No report.

- G. **PSA – Postdoctoral Scholars Association.** PSA Chair Abhinav Bushhan said that attendance was good at the most recent PSA meeting. The most important issues for postdoctoral scholars appear to be:

1. Leave of Absence benefits (sick leave, maternity leave, vacation).
2. Finance-related issues, including Social Security, and deferred compensation, especially 403b plans and the like. Neither the PSA representative nor GC members were certain regarding eligibility of postdocs for deferred compensation/403b programs.
3. International visas.
4. Health benefits.
5. Salaries for postdoctoral scholars, in comparison to salaries for GSRs (graduate student researchers).

Dean Gibeling mentioned that postdoctoral scholars *did* receive a salary increase. However the increase applies to standard postdoc salary titles only. If a student has a job title that is not one of the standard titles, then the student may not receive a salary increase. All new postdoctoral scholars are getting the new, approved job titles. In addition, the salary increases are not retroactive. If a student signed a postdoc contract for the academic year, he/she will receive the salary specified in the contract. The salary increase will apply to future contracts.

The Council briefly discussed the problem of enforcing postdoctoral appointment policies across campus. Dean Gibeling is planning a pilot project to delegate the postdoctoral appointment process to the academic school and college deans. The hope is that the academic deans will be better able to monitor the process.

Further discussion of health benefits and such for postdoctoral appointees ensued, with general agreement that GC needed to better inform itself and the postdocs as to what the existing policies are.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. **Academic Planning & Development Committee (APD).** APD Committee Chair, Hans-Georg Mueller, gave the Council an update on last week's APD meeting. The Chair of the Academic Senate, Linda Bisson, gave a presentation about a survey being conducted by the University of California Office of the President (UCOP). UCOP is asking for input regarding the future of graduate education at the University of California. Chair Bisson would like to submit our campus' ideas and suggestions to OP before the end of Winter Quarter 2008.

APD Chair Mueller said that his committee held a preliminary discussion at its meeting last week. APD members will collect ideas before its next meeting in early January, and will consolidate them at the January meeting. Last year's Chair of APD, Nicole Baumgarth, said that one of the foundations for the discussion will be the report prepared last year by APD, titled "Overcoming Challenges to Graduate Education at UC Davis".

Council Chair Gunion indicated that he would like the Council to propose hard-nosed recommendations that Academic Senate Chair Bisson will believe in, and will feel excited about carrying forward to OP. Professor Baumgarth said that the ideas should be strong, big and bold.

All ideas and recommendations should be forwarded to APD Chair Mueller early in January.

- B. **Administrative Committee.** No meeting has yet been arranged for this committee.
- C. **Bylaws Committee.** No report.
- D. **Courses Committee.** The Chair of the Courses Committee, Rachael Goodhue, said that the committee has 60 courses in the queue for review and approval. The courses have been distributed to committee members, who will be completing their evaluations in the next week.
- E. **Educational Policy Committee (EPC).** EPC Chair, Peggy Farnham, reported that her committee submitted two items for the consent calendar of today's Graduate Council meeting. In addition, two additional sets of degree requirement changes were reviewed at the EPC's recent meeting.
- F. **Program Review Committee (PRC).** PRC Chair, Andre Knoesen, reported on several topics:
1. **Geography Graduate Program Review.** PRC Chair Knoesen provided background information about the review of the Geography graduate program. It appears that the final report of the *ad hoc* committee that was charged with reviewing the program has stalled. The chair of the *ad hoc* committee is ill and unable to draft the report.

After discussing additional aspects of the review, it was determined that the final report of the *ad hoc* committee should consist of two components: (a) a report submitted by the external reviewer involved in the review of the Geography graduate program, and (b) comments by each of the remaining two members of the *ad hoc* committee on the external reviewer's report. This represents a deviation from the normal graduate program review procedure. The Council voted unanimously to allow this deviation for the Geography review.
 2. **2008-09 Graduate Program Reviews.** The reviews scheduled to take place next academic year have been launched.
 3. **Comparative Pathology Graduate Program Review.** PRC Chair Knoesen noted that a request by Comparative Pathology for a delay in its graduate program review is on today's agenda as a discussion item.
 4. **Reviews of ORUs (Organized Research Units).** Chair Knoesen met with the Office of Research to discuss the process for including Graduate Council's input in the reviews of

Organized Research Units. (See the Graduate Council Agenda for November 14, 2007; Attachment IX.) The Office of Research has agreed to address each of the five points raised in the letter of Knoesen to Gunion, October 15, 2007 (see Attachment X, November Council agenda). Graduate Council Chair Gunion hopes that a satisfactory outcome will be available for a future meeting of the Council.

G. Support & Welfare Committee (S&W).

1. **Childbirth Leave Accommodations.** Anne Britt, Chair of the S&W Committee, distributed a copy UC Berkeley's policy on "Childbirth Accommodations for Research Doctoral Students", effective Fall Semester 2007. She initiated a discussion about how we might develop a policy similar to this for UC Davis. Some key points in the discussion were:
 - a. The policy would provide six weeks of funding.
 - b. The funding would come from the same source that pays the student.
 - c. In terms of workload, a replacement could not be hired for the student's employment position unless a specific deadline was eminent.
 - d. Fee waivers are not available for partial appointments.
 - e. UC Berkeley's policy covers only doctoral researchers. UC Davis has a higher proportion of master's students. A decision would need to be made about whether students in terminal master's degree programs would be covered.
 - f. Since the actual amount of money that would be paid out is relatively small, perhaps a central fund could be established to cover the costs.

Chair Britt asked the Council members to provide her with any comments they have about the potential policy.

2. **APM 710, 711 and 080.** The Academic Senate asked for comments about changes to three sections in the Academic Personnel Manual: 710, dealing with leaves of absence/sick leave; 711, dealing with reasonable accommodation for academic appointees with disabilities; and 080, dealing with medical separation. Because it is unclear whether or not these sections apply to postdoctoral scholars, Chair Britt suggested that specific statements should be made up-front in each of the section that they do *not* apply to postdoctoral scholars. Chair Britt will prepare appropriate wording for these statements and send them to GC Chair Gunion, who will notify the Academic Senate.

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. **No Consent Items were moved to Discussion/Action.**
- B. **Agricultural & Environmental Chemistry – Degree Requirement Changes.** Approved by the Graduate Council after a brief discussion.
- C. **Mathematics – Degree Requirement Changes.** GC Chair Gunion will provide a few small changes to EPC Chair Farnham. The requirements are considered approved contingent on these changes.

DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

- A. **Minutes from October 8, 2007 Meeting.** The minutes were approved.
- B. **Minutes from November 14, 2007 Meeting.** These minutes will be available at the next meeting of the Graduate Council.

- C. **Comparative Pathology – Request for Delay in Program Review.** The graduate program in Comparative Pathology has requested a one to two year extension for the initiation of its Program Review. The Graduate Council agreed that – due to the serious illnesses cited in the letter from the Comparative Pathology Executive Committee, an extension of one year will be granted.
- D. **Dissertation Plans A/B/C – Changes to DDR 520.** Last year, the Council’s Educational Policy Committee proposed changes to Davis Divisional Regulation 520, which deals with Ph.D. dissertations and final examinations. The EPC revised the regulation to make the formatting more consistent and to clarify the wording. No changes to content were proposed. This year’s Graduate Council decided to reexamine the changes, before submitting them to the Representative Assembly for approval. After a brief discussion, the Council agreed to modify DDR 520, Section (C)(3) as shown below:

~~DDR 520 (C)(3). Not later than three weeks before the proposed date of the final oral examination under Plan A (see (4) below) or not~~ **Not** later than three weeks before the end of the quarter in which the degree is to be conferred, ~~under Plan B or Plan C~~ the candidate shall file with the Dean of Graduate Studies one copy of the dissertation (the original if typewritten) approved by the committee in charge. An abstract of the dissertation must be filed by the same date. ~~The Administrative Committee of the Graduate Council may, in special cases under Plan A, authorize the taking of the final oral examination before the dissertation is completed. (Am. 02/25/05)~~

The GC voted unanimously to approve the changes to the wording, and to forward the entire revised document to the Representative Assembly. Professor Jeff Schank, who is a member of the Educational Policy Committee, will attend the assembly meeting to answer any questions that might arise.

- E. **Non-Responsive Programs – Timeline for Submissions.** This agenda item will be held over to the January meeting of the Graduate Council.
- F. **Postdoctoral Scholar Issues.** Chair Gunion and other Council members raised several issues related to postdoctoral scholars. (1) Should a separate Graduate Council committee be set up to handle postdoctoral scholar issues? Dean Gibeling replied that the Council’s “Student Support & Welfare Committee” was renamed “Support & Welfare Committee” for that very reason. The PSA (Postdoctoral Student Association) agreed to channel topics and problems to the S&W Committee for consideration. (2) Should the Council provide help to international postdoctoral scholars with Visa issues? The Council agreed that - for legal reasons – this would not be a good idea. (3) Could the Council address the issue of providing teaching opportunities for postdoctoral scholars who have an interest in obtaining this experience? Chair Gunion suggested that the S&W Committee could look into this.
- G. **Delegation of GC Authority to Professional Graduate Programs.** Dean Gibeling directed the Council members to page 10 of Attachment 3.1, “Thoughts from the Chair”. The chart lists all of the graduate degrees that UC Davis is authorized to offer (e.g. M.A., Ph.D., M.D.), and identifies the organizational units that have authority over the following five processes: admissions, graduation, course approval, curriculum approval, and program review. Though the Academic Senate has ultimate authority over academic matters on campus, it has delegated some of its authority to the Graduate Council, which in turn, has delegated the processes to Graduate Studies. Dean Gibeling and Chair Gunion are concerned that some of the lines of authority are not clear, especially for professional graduate programs (e.g. L.L.M., M.P.H.).

According to the UC systemwide Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA), the lines of authority for professional graduate programs are as follows:

CCGA explicitly states its willingness to let Divisional Graduate Councils delegate their oversight responsibilities to professional schools offering the specific degrees of the M.D.,

D.D.S., D.V.M., Pharm.D., and J.D. Graduate Council should base their delegation on the existence of rigorous and effective parallel review structures within the exempted professional schools. (CCGA Handbook, Appendix J, "Role of CCGA in the Review of Professional Degrees", August 15, 1995.)

However, for all other professional graduate degrees besides those specifically stated above, the Divisional Graduate Councils retain oversight authority. The one exception to this is authority for courses in graduate professional schools. According to the CCGA Handbook Appendix cited above:

Thus, UCRJ [University of California Rules & Jurisdiction] took the position that graduate professional schools retain their own authority over course approvals and grading policies, but are otherwise subject to the same Senate oversight as any other graduate program.

The UC Davis Graduate Council agreed that Dean Gibeling and Chair Gunion should work to clarify the lines of authority for the campus' graduate professional programs. If the Council has not specifically delegated authority for graduate processes to the professional graduate programs, then they still fall under the jurisdiction of the Council.

- H. **Information Technology Road Map.** The Graduate Council decided not to opine on this topic.
- I. **UC Undergraduate Mission Statement.** The Council agreed that this document does not impact graduate education, but that it may be appropriate to develop a comparable "UC Graduate Mission Statement".
- J. **Proposal to Revise the Winter Schedule.** The Academic Senate asked for comments regarding the UC systemwide "Recommendations for the Instructional Orientation Dates: Winter Quarter 2010 and Winter Quarter 2011". In order to standardize instruction calendars across the UC system, UC Davis has been asked to change its Winter Quarter calendars for 2010 and 2011 to make the orientation date the same as the instruction start date. Chair Gunion feels that this change will give faculty no time to prepare for their classes prior to the beginning of instruction, specifically when graduate student assistants are involved. Since these changes will help to create a common UC calendar, they will most probably be implemented. Chair Gunion decided that he will provide his thoughts to the Academic Senate none-the-less.
- K. **Ecology – Degree Requirement Changes.** One last-minute item was added to the Action/Discussion agenda of the Council: a request by the Ecology graduate program for changes to its degree requirements. The Council agreed to approve the changes to the requirements as submitted.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:17 p.m.