

# GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

**ATTENDEES:** Buckpitt, Degnan, Farnham, Friesner, Gibeling, Gunion, Goodhue, Knoesen, Martin, Nincic, O'Donnell, Schank, Singleton, Stimson, Stott, Weare

**NOT IN ATTENDANCE:** Hodgson, May, Tassone, Watts

**GUESTS:** Cuevas (OGS), Timm (OGS)

Meeting began at 3:30 p.m.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Chair Gunion** discussed the Chair Notes which included: confidentiality of meetings, and updates on a few business/action items from Academic Senate.

**Dean Gibeling** announced that the budget is still uncertain at this time, and that while he doesn't expect any significant new investments in graduate education, he does expect previous commitments to be preserved. The Dean commented that student support is still expected to be protected, but there are some students and researches that have been subject to state agency stop-work orders and it has been difficult to reinstate or find other funding sources. The Dean announced that the Office of Graduate Studies has recently hired Janet Berry to the Director of Development position in the Office of Graduate Studies.

**Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) Representative Knoesen** announced that CCGA discussed funding to graduate education and prioritized fees, stipends, and tuition. CCGA recommends that each campus Dean report to their Graduate Council about the allocation of funds. School of Nursing proposal was discussed and it will be recommended that the school proceed and a meeting will occur in March. The proposal for the graduate programs is being prepared now.

**The Graduate Student Association (GSA) Representative Singleton** announced that Chair James Hodgson is stepping down from the position, and that Vice Chair Singleton will be taking on the Chair duties until the special election occurs on February 4.

**The Postdoctoral Scholar Association (PSA) Representative Friesner** announced that the handbook is still in process awaiting information from the Office of Graduate Studies.

**Associate Deans Timm and Caswell-Chen** (absent) announced that postdoctoral scholars are now represented by UAW and negotiations are underway.

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Academic Planning and Development** (Knoesen)  
No new announcements.
- **Administrative** (Gunion)  
No new announcements.
- **Bylaws** (Caswell-Chen)  
No new announcements.

- **Courses** (Goodhue)  
No new announcements.
- **Educational Policy** (Farnham)  
No new announcements.
- **Program Review** (Buckpitt)  
Chair Buckpitt announced that all reviews, but one, scheduled, and that the Program Review Closure Committee has new members and is starting work.
- **Support and Welfare** (Martin)  
Chair Martin announced that the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award nominations are underway, and the deadline is January 26, 2009. Information can be found at  
<http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/gradcouncil/ogta/2009%20Call%20for%20Nominations%20-%20Outstanding%20Graduate%20Student%20Teaching%20Award2.pdf>

## CONSENT ITEMS

- A. **Minutes of the Graduate Council meetings of December 3 and 8** were approved by consent.
- B. **English affiliation with the DE in Native American Studies** was approved by consent.
- C. **Cover letter to accompany all academic plan responses to Academic Senate** by consent.
- D. **MOU table for new Graduate Groups (to be presented to Executive Council)** was approved by consent. *This item is part of the 2007-08 APD Committee's Report on Graduate Education.*
- E. **Neuroscience bylaws** were approved by consent.

## DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

- **Responses to Academic Senate re: Academic Plans**  
Council members were assigned particular plans to review regarding issues related to graduate education. Each member will prepare a draft response to Academic Senate.
  - **School of Law (Weare)**  
Professor Weare presented to Council that the plan contains only brief information regarding the academic degree programs that Graduate Council has authority over: Master of Laws and LL.M. Due to the void of information, Graduate Council was unable to evaluate the merits of this degree program and any future plans with regard to their impact on graduate education.
- **Proposal for an Integrative BS/MS Chemistry (Farnham)**  
**SPECIAL GUESTS: Professor Neil Schore and Professor Jacquelyn Gervay-Hague attended to answer questions regarding the proposal.**  
At the previous Graduate Council meeting it was discussed that there was only one graded course required in this proposal, which did not seem to meet standards for an MS degree. Council and Professors Schore and Gervay-Hague agreed to modify the proposal to require at least 3 units per quarter be graded research units; this way, students are graded and evaluated, but their time is spent in the lab

learning the research skills this degree program is designed for. Council also agreed that the program should only be allowed to admit students for the Fall 2009 and Fall 2010 cycles; for admissions after that date, the Chemistry Program should have proposed and gained approval for a new graduate degree program in Pharmaceutical Chemistry (which the Council felt was more appropriately named).

**MOTION TO APPROVE** contingent on revisions to graded courses, and for two admission cycles

**MOTION PASSED:** unanimously

- **Response to Academic Senate: Consultation request from the ORU for the Institute for Data Analysis and Visualization (IDAV) (Buckpitt/Knoesen)**

PRC Chair Buckpitt and APD Chair Knoesen presented their findings regarding the decision to cut funding to the IDAV. According to the IDAV web page, the ORU currently has 6 faculty, 6 staff, 5 postdocs, 32 graduate students and 2 visitors. Graduate Council reviewed the IDAV 5-year report submitted to OVCR in 2006 when the review process of the IDAV was initiated. Council has been informed by the Director of the IDAV that the next phase of the review, the appointment of an external review committee, never took place. Council discussed that the IDAV 5-year report is very positive and points to substantial new funding that one Graduate Council member has confirmed is now firmly in place for a number of the projects. Several sources of information also indicate that significant populations of the IDAV graduate students have been significantly impacted by the loss of funding for IDAV, especially the loss of their offices. They have apparently had to resort to working together in coffee shops (and so forth) as no contingency plans were in place to house them and the research equipment. All IDAV students have lost common seminars. The Graduate Council Program Review Committee briefly looked at the IDAV document and concluded that they could not give input on the matter without further information. PRC members agreed that the campus should rely on the normal and established ORU review process to determine whether this should remain an open ORU. Council was generally concerned that proper protocol be followed for any actions involving the ORUs. Graduate Council as a whole was particularly focused on the failure to follow existing ORU review procedures. Questions that were raised include:

- Given that IDAV's 5-year report was submitted to OVCR in 2006, why was there no follow through on the external committee and final report?
- Was it necessary to completely eliminate funding for IDAV? Was there not some intermediate path that would have prevented the apparently severe impact on the graduate students in IDAV?
- Should the reduction in overall ORU funding not have been spread over several or all of the ORUs, at least temporarily while some more rigorous evaluation process took place?

From a broader perspective, the abrupt closure of an ORU can be expected to have serious effects on graduate students and graduate education. First, students from different departments, who are co-located in an ORU, will lose the interdisciplinary environment which contributes to the progress of their research. Second, an ORU is often an important draw to outstanding new graduate students who will see in it something which makes a campus stand out. Third, interdisciplinary centers can also give graduate students an edge in applying for

fellowships. **Graduate Council is concerned that the lack of a rigorous review procedure prior to the closure of IDAV prevented a proper assessment of these effects.**

Based on the information obtained by Graduate Council in this and previous matters that pertain to ORUs, Graduate Council was concerned about how OVCR is conducting reviews of ORUs and, as in this case, the basis on which decisions are made and subsequently justified. Council suggested that the Academic Senate insist on transparency and accountability of how OVCR chooses to administer ORUs at Davis. Council also recommended against abrupt terminations of an ORU without taking steps to ensure that graduate students concerns are addressed. In the particular case of IDAV, Graduate Council as a whole agreed that without a proper review it is hard to judge either the negative impacts of the action to abruptly terminate IDAV funding or the benefits (especially to graduate students) that might have resulted from continuing such funding at various possible levels.

**MOTION TO APPROVE** response to Academic Senate

**MOTION PASSED:** unanimously

- **MAE Name Change from Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering to Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (Gunion/Knoesen)**

MAE provided separate proposals for their name change request to both Graduate Council (graduate program name change) and the Academic Senate (undergraduate and department name change). Council responded to MAE after reviewing the proposal at the December 3, 2008 meeting; Council forwarded that response to the Academic Senate. Senate requested clarification on Council's response.

Graduate Council agreed that the proposals signal a fundamental change in the nature of the graduate program. In addition, Graduate Council found that graduate degrees in the MAE Department at UC Davis with a significant component of Aerospace Engineering would require substantial new resources and modifications of the curriculum that are not yet in place. Further, as regards the graduate component of the program, Graduate Council found that the changes that are immediately possible without additional resources are inadequate to prepare graduate students in the area of aerospace. Graduate believes this to be supported not only by the letter from the external reviewer Professor MacCormack from the 2008-2009 program review, but also by the program's own statements as summarized in the attachments

With regard to the undergraduate program, Professor MacCormack is also of the opinion that, at the time of the review, the undergraduate curriculum did not support an emphasis in aerospace. After reviewing the changes listed that are needed for the undergraduate curriculum as part of the name change proposal, Graduate Council found that the changes would be marginal for a proper undergraduate aerospace curriculum (certainly not comparable to that found at their comparison institutions).

In the opinion of Graduate Council, this redirection of effort and resources into aerospace appears well-justified on many grounds. However, Council affirmed there is simply insufficient academic content and resources, including FTE, in the Aerospace program at the graduate level to support a name change for the graduate program. Council affirmed that the name change for the graduate program at this time would be like having the "cart before the horse". Graduate

Council was very concerned that the reputation of the program (and the campus) might suffer if the name change is granted prematurely.

**MOTION TO APPROVE** response to Academic Senate

**MOTION PASSED:** unanimously

- **Bylaw Revisions:**
  - **Health Informatics** bylaws were approved with some minor wording changes.
  - **Mathematics** bylaws were revised to clarify membership, student roles, and some minor wording changes. Council requested to see revised bylaws at the next meeting for a second review.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.