

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

ATTENDEES: Buckpitt, Degnan, Farnham, Gibeling, Gunion, Goodhue, Holmes, Knoesen, Nincic, Schank, Stimson

NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Friesner, Holmes, Hurley, Martin, May, O'Donnell, Singleton, Stott Weare

GUESTS: E. Caswell-Chen (OGS), H. Cuevas (OGS), C. Jurado (OGS), L. Timm (OGS)

Meeting began at 9:35 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Gunion reminded the Council that annual report drafts from the subcommittees were due June 30 and that the Executive Council would be reviewing the Council recommendation on MOU's.

Associate Dean Timm announced that the Graduate Student Retention Taskforce received 1,800 responses to the PhD retention survey (roughly 53% of the doctoral population). Virtually all programs were represented in the respondents. An analysis of the data will begin this summer and results are expected in the fall or winter.

Associate Dean Timm also brought to the attention of Council a recurring issue she sees in her position and requested Council's assistance. Many dissertation/thesis committees are not responding to students in a reasonable amount of time. This leads to much anxiety and stress for the students, many of whom fear retaliation for questioning their committee.

In 1974, the Graduate Council adopted a policy stating that reading committee members are expected to read and comment on a thesis or dissertation within four weeks. Upon failure of a committee member to comply with the 4 week deadline, the Graduate Adviser may reconstitute the committee which will then be conveyed to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval. However, this policy does not apply to summer periods for faculty holding 9 month appointments. It is expected that the graduate students, with cooperation of the faculty, will coordinate the time lines for presentation of the dissertation to the reading committee in a manner such that all members of the reading committee can fulfill their responsibilities within the prescribed 4 week limit. In the case of a student who returns to campus following a lapse in registration or extended period on filing fee status and wishes to complete a thesis or dissertation, the reading committee should meet with the student to review the status of the work and determine an appropriate time line for completion.¹

Council had the following recommendations and questions regarding this issue:

- When committee appointment letters are sent [**NOTE: OGS no longer sends appt. letters**], could expectations on 4 week response time be included? Perhaps the department chair of the faculty could be copied on the letter with the

¹ From "Guidelines for Service on Advanced Degree Committees" - GC1998-01
<http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/gradcouncil/Policy%20Service%20on%20Advanced%20Degree%20Committees%20revised%2010-2006.pdf>

- expectation that the department chair will have the authority to follow up with faculty who are not responding appropriately.
- Could Graduate Council write a strong policy about response time? The Guidelines are just that—guidelines—so perhaps a policy is in order?
 - Students should communicate with their committees by email so there is an established trail of communication and dates for the record. This would allow for students to change out the committee members (although it does become more complicated if the non-responsive faculty is the committee chair).
 - Should students also copy their advisor on communications to the committee so the advisor is informed if there is a problem?
 - What rights does a student have? (There was nothing about this in the Graduate Student Bill of Rights Council reviewed recently.)
 - Council affirmed that students do need protection from retaliation from particularly difficult faculty.

Council will consider the issue in the fall.

Associate Dean Caswell-Chen announced that negotiations on the postdoctoral union contract were still underway, and that any faculty with particular knowledge of postdoc issues are encouraged to serve on an advisory committee. There was concern expressed by the Council that thoughtful consideration on the goals of postdocs should be part of the negotiations. Namely, that if work limitations were placed on the series, then that would restrict the career advancement opportunities for postdocs, and if the costs of hiring postdocs became unreasonable, that fewer postdoc positions would be available.

Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) Representative Knoesen announced that CCGA considered the consolidation of the BMB & CDB programs at their last meeting of June 2. CCGA found that the resulting consolidation of two existing degrees into one degree with two tracks, signals a significant enough change that it is viewed as a new degree program that requires a full CCGA review. The proposal that was submitted is essentially what is needed to proceed, although the proposers need to examine it carefully to ensure that all the elements in it are what is required for CCGA to review it as a new program proposal. The suggestion by CCGA chair is to administratively merge the two programs and maintain the old programs for now while having CCGA review the new program proposal. In the Chair's opinion, the expectation is that it might be a quick review due to the strength of both programs, but we would have to wait for the reviewers to make that decision. **[see discussion below for further comments]**

(CCGA has voted to approve the PhD in Communications)

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Academic Planning and Development** (Knoesen)
APD has developed sample MOU's for graduate groups/programs.
- **Administrative** (Gunion)
There has been just one recent request for a blanket QE exception.
- **Bylaws** (Caswell-Chen)
There may be just a couple more bylaws documents in the queue.
- **Courses** (Goodhue)
The School of Nursing has submitted courses recently, but Courses is still keeping up with the reviews.

- **Educational Policy** (Farnham)
There are very few leftover EPC items to be taken up next fall; EPC has been very productive this year.
- **Program Review** (Buckpitt)
Two program reviews could not be completed in time for this last Council meeting—Genetics and Plant Biology. These will need to be presented to Council in the fall. Additionally, two reviews remain open from previous years—Geography and Nutritional Biology.
- **Support and Welfare** (Martin)
n/a

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. **Minutes of the Graduate Council meeting of May 20, 2009** were approved by consent.
- B. **Budget Requests to the Provost and the TOEFL Recommendation** were moved from discussion to consent and approved by consent.
- C. **Responses to the Academic Senate regarding the Listing of Remote/Online Courses and the Proposed UC Seminar Network** were approved by consent.
- D. Revised bylaws for the **Animal Behavior Graduate Group, the Chemical Engineering and Materials Science and Engineering Graduate Programs, and the Dramatic Art MFA program** were approved (with minor revisions) by consent.
- E. Revised degree requirements for the **Animal Behavior Graduate Group, Economics Graduate Program, and Political Science Graduate Program** were approved (with minor revisions) by consent.
- F. **Program Review Initiations for Anthropology, Applied Science Engineering, Biological Systems Engineering, Communication (M.A.-only), Geology, Political Science, Population Biology, Sociology, Soils and Biogeochemistry, Transportation Technology Policy, and the Designated Emphasis in Native American Studies** were approved by consent.
- G. **Program Review Closures for the Animal Behavior Graduate Group, DE in Classics, Economics Graduate Program, Human Development Graduate Group, Plant Pathology Graduate Program, and Spanish Graduate Program** were approved by consent.

DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

- **University Writing Program Proposal on Graduate Writing.**
Professor Chris Thaiss, University Writing Program presented a proposal to:
 1. Change the official charge of the UWP to include service to graduate students
 2. Request an increase in funding to provide service to graduate students

Graduate Council was strongly supportive of this revision, and agreed that there was great value in writing instruction across the curriculum. Council affirmed that UWP has provided a beneficial service to graduate students in collaboration with the Office of Graduate Studies and as such, UWP should be recognized for its contributions to graduate education.

While a budget request was included in the proposal, the Graduate Council cannot distribute funds, and so Council requests that the Deans and Provost seriously consider shared funding of this initiative.

In addition, the Council requested the following revision be made to the proposal:

Revision to Appendix B

3rd paragraph: In collaboration with the ~~Graduate Council and the~~ office of the Dean of Graduate Studies...

4th paragraph: ~~In addition, the UWP will administer the interdisciplinary Designated Emphasis in Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies; it will offer graduate courses and dissertation direction appropriate to the discipline of rhetoric and composition. Besides these academic courses, the~~ The University Writing Program...

MOTION TO APPROVE the revised charge for the UWP as presented with the above mentioned revision

MOTION PASSED: unanimously

- **Program Review Report for the Graduate Program in Physics.**
Chair Gunion recused himself from the presentation and discussion, and Vice Chair Knoesen assumed the Chair.

Professor Ann Orel presented the Graduate Program in Physics Program Review Report. (*PRC Liaison and Ad Hoc Committee Chair Professor Alex Navrotsky could not attend.*) Highlights from the PRC report indicate that overall this is a strong graduate program which has improved substantially since the last review. Faculty size has increased by 40% and many of the recruitments have attracted scholars with international reputations. The quality of the graduate students attracted to the program has improved substantially. The added cost of international students is a serious problem for the Physics graduate program since, in comparison to other programs in science, qualifying exams are often taken late in the program. Weaknesses of the program include the fact that extramural funding per faculty is relatively low, and space for the program is currently inadequate and not properly maintained. Interactions among the students in between students and faculty outside of their own group appear problematic. Although collegiality among the faculty appears good the lack of interactions among the various subdisciplines leads to little sense of community. The courses taken by students in the first two years are appropriate to the training, but certainly could be improved. Council discussed recommendation #4 from the PRC report which indicates that international students are treated differently than domestic students regarding the timing of the preliminary exam. Council affirmed that all students should be treated equally in practice as well as on paper.

Council also discussed that the current faculty defined "Physics" somewhat traditionally and narrowly resulting in an absence of more contemporary areas (such as laser physics, etc.). This also results in the lack of collaboration/interaction with other graduate programs.

MOTION TO ROUTE THE PRC REPORT VIA EMAIL FOR APPROVAL after some corrections are made

MOTION PASSED: unanimously

- **Program Review Report for the Graduate Group in Linguistics.**
Associate Dean Timm recused herself from the presentation and discussion.

PRC Liaison and Ad Hoc Committee Chair Professor Rosemarie Kraft presented the PRC report for the Graduate Group in Linguistics. Highlights from the PRC report indicate that the applied track of the program (M.A. and Ph.D.) is flourishing. The program of study for both the Ph.D. emphasis in SLAD and the M.A. emphasis in TESOL is well thought out. The LGG faculty members have an impressive array of research interests and most seem to work well together. They are actively publishing and are successful in bringing in large amounts of outside grants. They have a supportive work environment. The LGG as an administrative unit works well. This reflects well on the current and past Chairs and Graduate Advisors of the LGG and to the dedicated staff members.

Despite the strengths of this relatively new PhD program (2004), there appear to be several areas of concern: The traditional linguistics area of focus titled "structural/theoretical" emphasis appears to lack focus, resources, and transparency; there is a lack of graduate course offerings in the traditional linguistic areas. In addition, the phonetics lab is not only off campus and isolated but is neither up-to-date, nor functional and the recording equipment available to students is inadequate. Also, the process of funding students needs attention; there is a need for more consistent research support for students, and more consistent mentoring and advising for students (particularly for the first year Ph.D. students). Communication with LGG faculty outside of the Linguistics Department needs to be improved; and there is a need for a computational linguist.

Recommendation 8 of the previous review stated that a phonetics lab needed to be created. Currently, there is a lab attached to Linguistic Department's Professor Orhan Orgun's office but neither the space nor the lab itself seems to be adequate. Located off campus above the USU Credit Union, the office and lab is isolated from any other academic space. In addition, there are several faculty who state that it is not a properly equipped laboratory. The external reviewer stated that "Although the space and the computers seem adequate to the task, the lab is not yet functional."

Council discussed and concurred with the report recommendation that the phonetics lab should be made functional and accessible.

Graduate Council discussed recommendation #5 and questioned why the recommendation was for LGG to hire faculty following student interest in certain areas instead of admitting students interested in their current direction? Professor Kraft stated that the external reviewer strongly believed that the program would keep contemporary by following student interest.

Council also discussed recommendation #4 which indicates that the traditional linguistics area of focus titled "structural/theoretical" emphasis appears to lack focus, resources, and transparency and there is a lack of graduate course offerings in the traditional linguistic areas. Council questioned whether students were getting the training they needed in this area and stated that LGG should decide what direction they are heading towards: do they want to focus on both the applied track and the theoretical track, or should they drop the theoretical track and focus entirely on their flourishing applied track? At the moment, there seems to be less course offerings for the theoretical track and students are not receiving the training they need to excel in this area. Council concurred that LGG needs to decide to either fully develop the theoretical track (including offering courses regularly) or drop the

track altogether. Council also affirmed that it needs to review the degree requirements and would vote to drop the track if LGG did not act in a reasonable amount of time. Council will not close the program review until the situation is rectified.

MOTION TO APPROVE the PRC report and transmit it to the Group

MOTION PASSED: unanimously

- **Program Review Report for the Graduate Group in Pharmacology and Toxicology.**

PRC Chair Buckpitt recused himself from the presentation and discussion.

PRC Liaison and Ad Hoc Committee Chair Professor Trish Berger presented the PRC report for the Pharmacology and Toxicology Graduate Group. Highlights from the PRC report indicate that overall, the PTX graduate group, particularly the toxicology emphasis, appears strong and the national reputation is clearly that of an excellent program, as also noted by the external reviewer. Student and faculty morale seems good and students in general are happy with their mentors and their situation. Faculty represent a very broad and nearly unique set of expertise and their research programs are well supported by extramural grants. The quality of applicants to the program and those chosen is also consistently high. A number of faculty commented on the overall high quality of students that are in the program and some also stated that they think this is the best graduate program they are associated with. The low faculty response rate to the questionnaire might therefore be a reflection of the fact that the faculty view PTX as strong and that they had no serious concerns. The Chair, Alan Buckpitt, is highly respected by his colleagues, there is no concern that an effective Chair can be found when his current second term expires and thus there are no concerns about the continued administration of the program.

Some of the weaknesses identified in the report include that a small number of clearly distressed students were present at the meetings and this is of some concern. Those students felt that their graduate advisors offered no real benefit to them, as they were "too close" to the mentor with whom they might experience problems. All students seemed entirely unaware that members of the dissertation committee could also be faculty that they could turn to in times of crisis, but again these faculty were often close to their faculty mentor.

Regarding other recommendations in the PRC report, Council affirmed that it may be true that graduate student fees and non-resident tuition costs are prohibitive, but that recommendation #11 in the PRC report to "eliminate the fees for resident and non-resident students" was an unfeasible goal. Therefore, Council does not support recommendation #11.

Council was also distressed to find that continued deficiencies in course offerings in advanced pharmacology and an advanced course in pharmacokinetics were present, a continuing concern from previous reviews. There is a great uncertainty as to the future role of the new Medical Pharmacology hires that would benefit the graduate group. While the toxicology area was very good, Council affirmed that a true program and training in pharmacology was absent. Council stated that there should be "truth in advertising" and that after numerous reviews where this is a major concern, the problem needs to be dealt with now. If the Group does not

address this issue by either fully developing the pharmacology program, or dropping pharmacology from its name, then Council will suspend admissions to the program altogether. The program review will not close until this issue is resolved.

In its transmittal letter to the Group, the Group should be given until November 1 to indicate what direction they are going in, and should also submit a progress report by March 1, 2010. In March 2010, Council will decide whether to close admissions to the program for Fall 2011. An updated progress report will be required by March 1, 2011.

Council requests that the Dean of Graduate Studies initiate conversations the relevant Deans, the Provost, and the Chairs of Pharmacology and Internal Medicine regarding the pharmacology issue, in order to assist the Group in gathering the information needed to make their decision on the direction of the program.

MOTION TO APPROVE the PRC report and transmit it to the Group indicating the dates above

MOTION PASSED: unanimously

- **WALK-ON ITEM: BMB/CDB Consolidation & CCGA decision to request a full review of new program proposal.**

Concern was expressed by the Council that there would be no value added to the CCGA review, and that especially in this era of diminishing resources, a “make work” decision is unreasonable. Council also expressed that CCGA must view all Council processes as thorough and that by objecting to the CCGA decision, Davis may appear as not respecting process and procedures. Overall, Council expressed disappointment in the decision by CCGA. Council will await a formal letter from CCGA, but discussed that the groups could merge administratively (having one Chair, one set of committees, one set of degree requirements, one set of bylaws, etc.) until the consolidation or new program proposal was approved.

MOTION TO APPROVE the administrative merger and thereby, the bylaws and the degree requirements from the consolidation proposal to be used by the separate groups of BMB & CDB until CCGA approves the consolidation

MOTION PASSED: unanimously

MOTION TO APPROVE the writing of a “memo of disappointment” to CCGA, the Chair of the Davis Divisional Academic Senate and the Chair of the Systemwide Senate. Memo should include that the faculty and Graduate Council worked diligently and thoroughly to approve this consolidation, and that there was a very strong and compelling justification for the consolidation. The Memo should also state that this action was recommended to the programs during the last program review, and this additional review creates an unnecessary delay in the process.

MOTION PASSED: unanimously

- **Summer meeting date.**

Chair Gunion and Dean Gibeling discussed that due to the unsure budget situation, it may become necessary to schedule a summer meeting if Council’s consultation is needed.

- **Budget Requests to the Provost and the TOEFL Recommendation were moved to Consent items.**

- **Response to Academic Senate: Agricultural and Natural Resources Review**

Graduate Council reviewed the PRC recommendation on reconsidering the Cooperative Extension Specialist (CES) as an approved title for membership in graduate programs (see Council Policy on Membership in Graduate Programs—GC1998-02). Council believes there are currently adequate means of participation by CES's. While Graduate Council policy² specifically prohibits CES's from membership in graduate programs/groups, they can apply for membership if they are appointed in a teaching capacity, such as a Lecturer without Salary. This membership requirement is based on the CES series specifications which do not include instruction.

In 2007, Council discussed this issue and concluded that making the CES title eligible for membership in graduate programs/groups would result in two-tiered memberships – those who can be major professors as well as participate in administration of the program (instructional titles), and those who just do administration (CES's who do not instruct). At that time, the Council decided not to alter the current policy and felt that all members of a graduate program/group should be full participants and that no one should be a member solely to serve in an administrative capacity.

MOTION TO APPROVE to continue to uphold this decision

MOTION PASSED: unanimously

- **Geography Graduate Group—program review and degree requirements.**

Council discussed the progress of the open program review of the Geography Graduate Group and affirmed that the cap on admissions would remain in effect until Council has reviewed the EPC recommendation on the degree requirements, and the PRC recommendation on the closure of the program review.

MOTION TO APPROVE the continuance of the admissions cap

MOTION PASSED: unanimously

- **Oversight of Graduate Professional Degrees was removed from the agenda** as there is no new information yet.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

² http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/gradcouncil/Membership_in_Graduate_Programs2006.pdf