Graduate Education Council  
Meeting of Monday, May 21, 2012  
1:00 - 3:00 pm, 433 Johnston Hall  
Minutes

Present: Richard Brundage, Belinda Cheung (staff), Kathleen Conklin, Shawn Curley, Jigna Desai, Vicki Field (staff), Kimi Johnson, Ameeta Kelekar, Mike Kilgore, Joe Konstan, Ann Masten, Tim Salo, Henning Schroeder, Fran Vavrus, Char Voight (staff), Pamela Weisenhorn

Guest: Louis Quast, Brianne Keeney, Gillian Roehrig, Nita Krevans

For action

The minutes and notes from the April 24 GEC meeting were approved unanimously.

For discussion and action

1. Proposals for new, changed and discontinued academic programs:
   a. Proposal to add a new interdisciplinary minor in Integrative Leadership for the master’s and doctoral degrees (Louis Quast): The subcommittee included Dick Brundage, Jigna Desai, and Pamela Weisenhorn. Brundage presented the subcommittee’s recommendation that the proposal move forward in the development process. The committee members did have questions and comments that would need to be addressed in a revised proposal. Henning Schroeder suggested that Louis and Dick (and/or the entire subcommittee) meet and discuss further the proposal feedback process, and then bring a revised proposal back to the GEC.

   b. Proposal to add a subplan in STEM Education for the Ph.D. degree in Education, Curriculum and Instruction (Gillian Roehrig): Kathleen Conklin reported on behalf of the subcommittee, which also included John Goodge and Kimi Johnson. The subcommittee members all basically agreed on their impressions of the proposal. In concept, the subcommittee is very supportive of the proposal and recognize the importance of STEM Education, but have a lot of questions. They did not understand the basic goals and how the restructuring proposed would impact the U’s emphasis in this area. More information was needed in order to be able to evaluate the proposal on its merit.

   Brianne Keeney, representing the proposal on behalf of the authors, stated that the policy for adding, revising, or discontinuing academic plans was not clear with regard to what level of detail should be included in the proposal. If the proposers had known what was expected in terms of specific information, they could have provided it. GEC members also agreed that they did not have enough information to evaluate the proposal on its merits. The decision was made that the GEC will develop guidelines and criteria related to program proposal review so that both the proposal authors and the GEC subcommittee members understand what the expectations are in the future. This will include making several “model” proposals available to guide others in proposal development. The subcommittees reviewing proposals will provide their feedback to the proposers, with the full GEC reviewing a revised proposal once this has been done. GEC members emphasized that guidelines would be helpful but must not make the process cumbersome, as some found it to be under the former P&R Council structure.
Graduate School staff will also draft something that will outline the roles and responsibilities of the GEC and the vice provost and dean of graduate education, respectively.

c. Proposal to modify credits for the Ph.D. degree in Integrated Biosciences: Shawn Curley presented on behalf of the subcommittee that also included Ameeta Kelekar and Tim Salo. The proposal is asking to reduce the required credits from 32 to 26 (refer to page 4 of proposal). Curley detailed what the reduced credits represent in terms of previously required coursework. The program wants to reduce the credits because: 1) the courses being dropped were deemed non-essential as program-wide requirements, 2) the high course loads had become a barrier to participation in the program because they prevented students from beginning research earlier, which is what students wanted. The only other issues related to the all-University status of the program.

After discussion, the proposal passed unanimously, with the understanding that there be a cautionary note about the wisdom of eliminating lab rotations as a requirement. GEC members also expressed the need to develop a process and criteria for evaluating similar proposals, as there may be many in the fall related to the new policy on credit requirements. This would also include clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of the GEC in the review process versus the vice provost and dean.

d. Proposal to discontinue the minor in Family Policy for the master’s and doctoral degrees. Kathleen Conklin presented this proposal on behalf of the review subcommittee. The subcommittee has no issues with it. There is clear support from the individuals who will be affected. The subcommittee recommends the proposal be accepted. A vote was called and the proposal was approved unanimously.

2. Proposed changes in GEC bylaws: The GEC reviewed language that Vicki Field has developed to address the two issues listed below:
   a. Filling vacancies in GEC membership
   b. Ex officio, non-voting members representing the Twin Cities Deans’ Council and Academic Health Center

GEC members unanimously approved the proposed changes, with one small amendment: “one-year” terms will be changed to “one-year renewable terms.” This leaves the decision with the Dean’s Council and the AHC to determine how long a person would serve. They may choose to reappoint the same individual for multiple one-year terms.

For information

1. Updates:
   ▪ Graduate School Academic Grievance Officer and Academic Grievance Committee membership: Joe Konstan has agreed to serve as the committee chair. We now need approximately 5-7 additional GEC members to serve with Joe. There should be at least one student on the committee. Members must be drawn from the GEC. We would draw people from the pool of committee members to review cases as they come up.
Update on NSF Fellows. We now have 81 NSF Fellows. Fewer than 10 of these are new students. The majority of the fellowships went to existing students.

2012 Best Dissertation awards: A list of the award winners was distributed to GEC members for their information.

Update on the recent Twin Cities Deans’ Council discussion: ??

2. Update from the Graduate Education Policy Review Committee (Nita Krevans): Krevans updated the GEC on the degree progress and completion policies. The policies will be posted for a 30-day comment period, but Krevans is currently in negotiations with FCC on the issue of adding a 6-month time limit for submitting the Plan A master’s thesis or dissertation. After the degree progress and completion policies are through the public comment period, their implementation date will be January 2013. The fellowships policy has been to PAC and will go to PPC on June 5. In addition, the committee has at least two existing policies where changes will be needed: Course Numbering, and Grading and Transcripts. Krevans reviewed the issues with these last two policies, and stated that she would keep the GEC informed.

There will be a memorandum from the committee to the Provost outlining the remaining issues and questions (e.g., who checks to make sure that the minor DGS has signed degree plan?). Krevans also shared with the GEC that a random survey of degree plans for one 5-day period by GSSP found that 6 out of 34 submitted during this time frame needed to be returned to correct significant errors.

For discussion

3. Joint Ph.D. degrees: A question has arisen related to policy and joint degrees. Krevans explained the issue and reported the Policy Review Committee’s recommendation that no, you should not be able to get two separate Ph.D.s with the same set of coursework and one dissertation. There are many options for students in such situations, which Krevans outlined. The GEC was unanimous in its vote in favor of upholding current policy – you cannot award two degrees for the same set of coursework and a single dissertation. However, there is complexity in the issues raised, and the Council will take this up for future discussion.

4. Council of Graduate Students’ Resolution on Timely Review of Ph.D. Programs Identified as “Need Reassessment”: Tim Salo reminded people of the resolution and the discussion at the last GEC meeting. It was agreed that Schroeder should have the right and obligation to identify poorly performing programs. Graduate students and faculty in the program should be involved in this process. The GEC approved the resolution unanimously.

5. Results of the 2012-2013 Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship competition and preliminary plan for next year: discussion deferred to the June meeting