

**Graduate Academic Council  
2007 – 2008**

Minutes of the Council meeting of December 19, 2007  
Approved by the Council on February 21, 2008

In attendance: J. Baronner (staff), J. Bartow (staff), F. Bolton (staff), S. Friedman (Chair), H. Horton,  
L. Kranich, M. Pryse, S. Saleh, L. Scoville

Slightly late: J. McLaughlin, C. Robbins, M. Tse

Guests: Steven Doellefeld and Kimberly Van Orman from the Institute for Teaching, Learning and  
Academic Leadership

Unable to attend: S. Chinnam; G. Denbeaux; A. Pomerantz; D. Truchan

1. Minutes of the GAC meeting of 10/18/07 were considered, amended (Dean's Report) and approved (6-0-2). Two members abstained due to their inability to attend the 10-18-07 meeting.
2. Dean's Report – M. Pryse
  - Dean Pryse mentioned that the dissertation research fellowship awards are going well. She mentioned that by the end of the fiscal year in June, the \$50,000 funds will be depleted. Jon Bartow mentioned that we probably had 12-13 candidates prior to 12/19/07 and should reach 26-30 individuals by the end of today.
  - We have 260 new doctoral students enrolled. Of those, 180 are being funded, although some may have been previously self-funded from last year. Before Claribel Martinez completed her internship with Dr. Pryse, she completed an internal study of GRE scores for the previous five years. The study contains a much easier-to-read format. Also completed were admission and yields for the last two years. Statistics for 2007 will be completed soon.
  - We are beginning an internal study of doctoral program quality. In the meantime, the NRC Study should be available sometime in the spring.
  - Doctoral program directors and deans met with Dean Pryse to discuss of items of interest.
  - Dean Pryse announced a number of improvements in doctoral stipend funding. Stipends have increased during the last two years. No new incoming doctoral student will receive less than \$12,000 for the 2008-2009 academic year. A review will be made of those 2007-2008 doctoral students receiving less than \$10,000 a year and their funding amount for next year. It is believed to be a very small number. These students will be raised to \$10,000 for 2008-2009. In addition, using one-time money, students who are currently funded and achieve candidacy by the end of their funding eligibility will be eligible to be considered for one year of "extended year" funding.
  - Dean Pryse requested Associate Dean Horton provide an update on the Graduate Ombuds Program. Associate Dean Horton reported that he has contacted three individuals to serve on the Ombuds Committee and is waiting responses. Once the Ombuds Committee is formed, it will meet to propose new Ombudspersons, since we currently have only one.
  - Associate Dean Horton also updated the Council on PSM (Professional Science Masters). He mentioned that PSM is a national initiative, and SUNY Central has received funding. The proposal has been completed via an interested group of faculty from Forensic Biology, Biodiversity Conservation & Policy, and Computer Science. Hayward believes we have a good proposal and that funding will be forthcoming sometime in the spring.
  - Jon Bartow mentioned that the Graduate Bulletin will be reformatted to become more interactive with other campus websites. Our goal is to provide our users with improved information by linking to/from

other units with the Bulletin rather than maintaining two separate locations. Implementation will hopefully take place before the next GAC meeting.

3. Chair's Report – S. Friedman

Chair Friedman mentioned two items from last year's GAC meetings have been approved by the Senate: (1) Latin American, Caribbean & U.S. Latino Studies name change, and (2) School of Education – Department of Educational Theory and Practice's request for program revisions to the MS in General Educational Studies. Also, the Senate was informed of mandating TOEFL scores to 550.

4. Committees

A. Committee on Curriculum & Instruction – F. Bolton for A. Pomerantz

Florie Bolton summarized the report (attached to the end of these minutes) and mentioned the Committee discussed three items: (1) Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies' request for program revisions to the MA degree program; (2) Department of History's request to create a new track MA in History and Media; and (3) Department of Communication's request for program revisions to the MA degree program. Due a few Committee concerns, Professor Griffith will return to LACS to discuss the Committee's questions and follow up with a revised proposal at a later date. Action on the History Department's request was tabled pending further clarification from the department whether the request is for a new track within the MA in History degree or for a new MA in History and Media degree. The Committee approved the Department of Communication's proposal. A question was raised regarding minimum credit amounts required by the State for a master's degree. 30 are the minimum. The Council accepted the Committee's report by a vote of 6-0-0 and in doing so approved the one recommendation contained therein.

B. Committee on Admissions & Academic Standing – L. Scoville

Dr. Scoville reported that at the previous Admissions & Academic Standing meeting, two student dismissal cases were discussed. Since further clarification from departments were required, the case reviews are still pending.

5. New Business

The Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures has requested a permanent waiver of the full-time study in residence requirement for doctoral programs in Spanish and French. Jon Bartow gave a brief history of a campus-wide study in residency for Ph.D. programs in the mid to late 90's. Perhaps 10 of 15 programs chose to permanently drop a residency requirement. Since that time, some departments have petitioned GAC to also discontinue the residency requirement. The Council voted 8-0-0 to accept and approve LLC's request.

6. Preparing Future Faculty Initiative

Dean Pryse summarized the history of the idea of a "future faculty program" initiative on our campus and introduced Steven Doellefeld and Kimberly Van Orman from ITLAL, who were present at the meeting to discuss progress toward such a program and to propose a new course, UNI 600, a variable credit (0-1) course that will allow ITLAL to "pilot" the first phase of the "future faculty program" during the spring semester. A "Certificate" was discussed in order to provide context for discussion of UNI 600, and it was pointed out that there are internal certificates and State-issued certificates of study. Internal certificates are available only to those already enrolled in a registered graduate program at the University at Albany. The first course in such a "Certificate" program would be a seminar in college teaching focusing on issues faced in classrooms as well as necessary techniques to become a successful teacher. The second course would be considered a future professoriate seminar and might cover topics such as understanding the tenure process, differences between institutions, the academic job market, etc. The third component would consist of workshops that are tailored to the student's plans and needs and will cover information such as an academic job search, diversity in the classroom, teaching well with technology, etc. The fourth portion would be a teaching portfolio to be used as a culminating experience for the program aiming at the skills needed for production of a portfolio document. The fifth section might include a formal mentoring component with partner institutions that includes teaching mentors, professional mentors, or both. The sixth component would include teaching with an evaluation where a certain number of teaching hours are required

culminating with an evaluation. The final section would involve a service portion where students are requested to assist in preparation or presentations within the SKILL Conference, Graduate Student Orientation, or a similar program within their department. If the course is approved for spring, we will have a captive audience to “pilot” UNI 600, anticipating a roll out of the certificate in fall. ITLAL will return to GAC in the spring semester with a formal proposal for a “certificate” program. We anticipate that 15 to 20 students would be enrolled for the first year, but the program will be designed to ramp up the numbers if more students wish to participate. The discussion included the possibility of citing a student’s completed certificate on the transcript, and ITLAL and Dean Pryse plan to pursue this possibility. A question was raised regarding course action form approvals. Departments approve courses, and the Office of Graduate Studies implements the course approvals. The Council does not customarily approve course action forms, but because UNI 600 is not being offered by a School or College, it requires GAC approval. If the course is approved today, it will be taught in the spring. Dr. Steven Doellefeld will be the instructor for the course. FTE’s for this course will go directly back to the doctoral student’s department. The Council approved the course action form for UNI 600 by a vote of 7-1-0.

7. Future Meetings

The Council’s next meeting has yet to be determined.

END OF GAC 12/19/07 MINUTES

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To: Graduate Academic Council  
From: Anita Pomerantz, Chair  
GAC Committee on Curriculum & Instruction (CC&I)  
Date: December 3, 2007  
Subject: Report and Recommendations

CC&I Members Present: G. Denbeaux, A. Pomerantz, J. Rivera-Wilson, S. Saleh, B. Thiel, and F. Bolton (staff).

Guest: Professor Glyne Griffith

Three items of business were considered.

1. College of Arts and Sciences – Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies’ request for program revisions to the MA degree program

The Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies (LACS) presently requires a MA thesis, Lcs 697, to complete its MA degree program. This program revision proposes to offer LACS’ students the option of a final comprehensive exam as an alternative capstone. Professor Griffith explained that the department has two groups of MA students: (1) teachers and other professionals who wish to enhance their employment status by obtaining a terminal MA and (2) those who wish to ultimately receive a doctoral degree to work in academia. Only those students desiring to continue their studies at the doctoral level would be required to complete the MA thesis.

LACS also proposed to reduce the total number of credits needed to complete the MA degree from 33 to 30 credits. The credit reduction would be realized by reducing the number of supporting courses required from 12 to 9 credits.

The proposal to add an alternative MA comprehensive exam capstone as well as to reduce the credit requirement raised a couple of questions concerning the number of credits assigned to the following courses: Lcs 691 (Directed Readings), Lcs 697 (Directed Master’s Project) and a desired new course Lcs 698 (MA Comprehensive Examination). Several ideas were discussed with Professor Griffith who stated that he would take the suggestions back to his department for consideration. A re-worked proposal will be submitted.

2. College of Arts and Sciences – Department of History’s request to create a new track MA in History and Media

The History Department submitted a Course Action Form which sought to formalize a concentration in History and Media with the creation of a new MA track in History and Media. However, the justification attached to the Course Action Form was entitled “Program Leading to the Master of Arts Degree in History and Media”. Therefore, it was unclear to the members of the Committee on Curriculum and Instruction whether the request was for a new track within the MA in History degree (appropriate for CC&I review) or for a new MA in History and Media degree (appropriate for GAC review). Action on the request was tabled pending clarification.

3. College of Arts and Sciences – Department of Communication’s request for program revisions to the MA degree program

Three changes were proposed by the Communication Department to its MA degree program. The first involved dropping Com 503 (Message Design and Social Influence) as one of the three core courses needed for the program. Com 502 (Communication Theory and Practice) and Com 525 (Communication Methods) are to remain as required program core courses. An additional 3 credits of supporting electives are to be taken in place of Com 503 as a required core course. It is believed that this will provide students with greater flexibility to tailor their coursework to their specific Communication interests.

The second change was the proposal to eliminate the departmental comprehensive examination. It was the opinion of the faculty “that the comprehensive exams were not sufficiently integrative, they were difficult to administer across the varied coursework of the individual students, and their lack of credit bearing status was non-ideal”. The current program requires students to complete Com 698 (Research Seminar/Practicum in Communication) or Com 699 (Master’s Thesis) which will remain the program’s capstone project.

The third proposal revision was to change the MA Thesis capstone experience to a Guided Research Project. Presently students choosing this option run into significant difficulties completing the thesis and fail to complete their MA in a timely fashion. The creation of a Guided Research Project, Com 697 A and B, for 6 credits would provide those seeking to conduct independent research as their capstone experience work that is roughly equal to the workload of those who opt to write a master’s paper in conjunction with work in an organizational context (Com 698). This Guided Research Project would be equivalent to the Guided Research Project required of doctoral students in the fourth semester and so would facilitate integrating the master’s program more closely with the doctoral curriculum.

Satisfied with the proposal as presented, the Committee voted (4-0-0) to approve the program revisions and move the proposal forward to the GAC for further action and approval.

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Jonathan T. Bartow, Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies, UAB 121

**From:** Mary Beth Winn, Chair, Languages, Literatures and Cultures

**Date:** December 10, 2007

**Re:** Student Residency Waiver

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The Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures requests a permanent waiver of the residency requirement for our doctoral students in Spanish and French for the following reasons.

1. The economic pressures generated by higher tuition fees argue strongly against a residency requirement. Many doctoral students who are not on assistantships must hold jobs while studying in order to survive and cannot remain full-time (12 credits) for two semesters in a row. Even those on assistantships find it difficult to make ends meet and feel the pressure to seek employment elsewhere. Continuing in this vein may reduce our ability to attract good students to our and to maintain high standards in the selection of graduate assistants.
2. Many of our doctoral students are on the faculty of community colleges, other academic institutions, and high schools, making the residency requirement a real hardship as they commute great distances regularly and maintain tight schedules.
3. Nothing prevents doctoral students who want to and who can afford to take 12 credits for two semesters in a row from doing so, nor does the department discourage this. The department merely wishes to remove unnecessary hurdles to the students' academic success and eliminate the extra paperwork required each time a waiver is requested. This will not only reduce the pressure on students and advisors to ensure this piece is properly completed, but also on staff in both LLC and the Graduate Academic Council.
4. The residency requirement was never deemed essential by the LLC department. This was a policy mandated at the university level.

We very much appreciate your review and forwarding of this request. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions ([mbwinn@albany.edu](mailto:mbwinn@albany.edu)).