

Graduate Academic Council 2008 – 2009

Minutes of the Council meeting of May 11, 2009
Approved by the Council on August 21, 2009

In attendance: J. Baronner (staff), J. Bartow (staff), F. Bolton (staff), G. Denbeaux, S. Friedman, L. Kranich (Chair), J. McLaughlin, N. Murray (Guest, from CSI), D. [Orokos](#) (Guest, from Biology), A. Pomerantz, M. Pryse, K. Reinhold, B. Shaw, C. Smith

Unable to attend: T. Clyman, M. Earleywine, W. Meredith,

1. Minutes from both 3/30/2009 and 4/27/2009 were approved by unanimous vote
2. Dean's Report – M. Pryse

Plans for the study for the Graduate Student Support Doctoral Review are proceeding. Dean Pryse met with program directors last week, and the draft for the upcoming GSS review was reviewed. She mentioned that the 1997-98 study had been considered successful and much would be adopted from that study's methods. Feedback from all councils and individuals have also been included in the planning. Grad program directors and chairs were asked to nominate persons to serve on the Review Panel, as were Senate Councils. On Thursday, Dean Pryse met with deans for informational purposes and to obtain suggestions. Among those recommended, 27 persons were selected, with invitations being sent out. More than one half of the names on the panel were provided by the Senate, and the remaining will be provided via doctoral program directors. The draft of suggestions for the program review has been updated to include comments from all sources. Next week begins the work on the design and to nail down how the process will unfold in the Fall. Departmental data will be included. The Provost's Office will make public the names of the GSS Review Panelists. A question was raised regarding when NRC data will be available. Dean Pryse hoped it would be available with the review in the Fall. She mentioned that she will be participating on the panel itself, but not on any of the sub-panels. She will not personally be involved in evaluating any of the doctoral programs.

3. Chair's Report – L. Kranich

On-line voting took place from April 27 through May 1st for SUNY-wide University Faculty Senate (UFS), At-Large Senators, and University Auxiliary Services Faculty Representatives. At the May 4th Senate meeting, Eric Lifshin from CNSE was elected Vice Chair.

Chair Kranich mentioned that according to the Graduate and Research Committee of the UFS the graduate tuition waiver has not changed in 15 years!

On May 1st, Chair Kranich sent an e-mail requesting that Council members interested in serving on GAC for 2009-2010 or serving on another council or committee should complete the on-line volunteer form. A link was provided in the e-mail.

4. Committee Reports

Committee on Curriculum and Instruction – S. Friedman

Chair Friedman mentioned the Committee met to discuss four items of business.

Item #1

The Department of Chemistry submitted a proposal to modify coursework in its MS in Applied Chemistry with a Concentration in the Forensic Chemistry program. The Committee had questions about the content of core courses and the role of forensic electives and internships (an internship would no longer be required). Subsequent communication with the Chemistry Department clarified that some of the revisions are an attempt to align the program with other programs in Chemistry and to satisfy student needs. Though more of the forensic content of the program would now be elective rather than required, Chemistry feels the change is in keeping with employers' desire for more of a general chemistry background than specific knowledge of forensics. Chemistry also feels the new structure provides more flexibility in core courses. Chair Friedman expressed CC&I's satisfaction with the proposal.

GAC members reviewed some specific course content and raised some questions about the forensic electives and the possibility that students could complete the concentration with too little forensic training. Committee Chair Friedman stated that most students will try to take advantage of the electives and available internships. Also, the degree will appear on the student's transcript simply as a chemistry degree regardless of concentration. The Council voted to approve the Committee's recommendation 9-0-0.

Item #2

The Department of Communication proposed establishing a Health Communication concentration within the M.A. Program. The proposal was straightforward and consistent with the other tracks in Communication. Chair Friedman mentioned that Health Communication is a growing field. It is not necessary to forward the proposal to UPC since historically curriculum changes have not required UPC approval. The Council voted 8-0-1 to accept the Committee's recommendation.

Item #3

The History Department voted to require GRE scores for MA applicants since this will assist in evaluating applications. The Department currently requires GRE scores for Doctoral applicants. This is a proposal to change the program's admissions criteria and not a change in the program itself. The Council voted 9-0-0 to accept the Committee's recommendation.

Item #4

The Department of Biological Sciences/CAS and the Department of Computer Science/CCI submitted a proposal to establish an Advanced Certificate (Graduate Certificate) in Professional Science Management for students in the M.S. Forensic Molecular Biology Program; the M.S. Biodiversity, Conservation and Policy Program; or

the M.S. Computer Science Program. Professors Donald Orokos from the Department of Biological Sciences and Neil Murray from the Department of Computer Science were present to answer questions pertaining to the proposal.

The proposal is in response to an initiative by the Council of Graduate Schools and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to establish such programs nationwide, with some funding provided through a grant initiative by the National Science Foundation.

CC&I had been asked by the Council to review the proposal. The Committee recommended that language be inserted in the title to distinguish it as an Advanced Graduate Certificate program versus another type of certificate program. Also, the Committee recommended that the proposal should stipulate that the Certificate is not independent of the science Master's programs but rather is contingent upon completion of the associated Master's degree. The Committee had several questions concerning the curriculum and administration of the certificate program as well as the process of revising or expanding the set of included science programs. Overall, CC&I expressed support for the proposal but recommended that it be revised and further clarified.

GAC had similar questions concerning the linkage between the PSM and the associated Master's programs and the eligibility of those already holding a Master's degree. Council members also expressed concerns regarding (1) the lack of specificity of curricular details for each track within the program, (2) the procedures for modifying the curricula, (3) the commitment by the schools offering "PLUS" courses (School of Business, School of Criminal Justice, CAS and Rockefeller College) – availability of seats, advisement, etc., and (4) procedures for expanding to include other science Master's programs. A question was also raised whether it would be more expeditious to adopt a uniform template for the PSM that might be adopted by any science Master's program rather than to combine distinct science Master's programs under a single PSM Certificate but with separate curricular requirements, as is proposed here.

Dean Pryse mentioned that timely action may be necessary to apply for NSF funding.

In concurrence with CC&I, GAC expressed general support for the initiative but found the present proposal somewhat lacking. The Council voted 7-0-0 to table the proposal until Fall 2009 pending further clarification from the Departments of Biological Sciences and Computer Science.

5. Future Meetings

The Council's future meetings will be determined in the Fall.

END OF GAC 5/11/2009 MINUTES
