

**Graduate Academic Council
2003 – 2004**

Minutes of the Council meeting of April 1, 2004
Approved by the Council on April 22, 2004

In attendance: A. Pomerantz, C. Smith, D. Farr, D. Byrd, H. Charalambous (Chair), H. Meyer, J. Mumpower, J. Bartow (staff) L. Trubitt, M. Casserly, R. Geer, S. Friedman, S. Shahedipour, S. Ramanathan & S. Lee

Unable to attend: A. Ticano, F. Cornet, L.-A. McNutt & S. Chen (on leave),

Guests: I. Lurie (Rockefeller College)
E. Wulfert (EPC Chairperson)
J. Wick-Pelletier (Dean, Arts & Sciences)

1. Minutes from the meeting of 3/11/04 were unanimously (14-0-0) approved as presented.
2. Dean's Report – J. Mumpower
 - Grad Applications for Fall 2004 appear to be soft. Although this won't necessarily translate into enrollment declines it is, none-the-less, cause for concern.
 - Mission review discussions are underway with SUNY System Administration. This will lead to the 1st update (since 2000) of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Governance will be consulted as part of the campus process.
3. Chair's Report – H. Charalambous
 - Council members are encouraged to respond to the Senate Office's invitation to serve on councils and/or committees next year.
 - A proposal to establish a MS Applied Chemistry program at UAlbany has been distributed to Council members and will be on the agenda for discussion/action at the 4/22/04 GAC meeting. Members are asked to review the proposal in advance of the meeting.
 - The Senate Executive Committee has made suggestions pertaining to GAC's bill to amend the Senate Charter. This will come up later in the meeting under old business.
4. Committee on Curriculum & Instruction

Prof. Charalambous summarized CC&I activities pertaining to the review of graduate assessment reports and drew attention to the written report to the Council (appended to the end of these minutes). The Council voted 14-0-0 to accept the Committee Report.
5. Committee on Admissions & Academic Standing – S. Shahedipour

No report
6. Committee on Educational Policy & Procedures – A. Pomerantz

No report

7. Doctor of Arts, Humanistic Studies

Dean Joan Wick-Pelletier introduced this topic, drawing reference to the written program history, report and recommendation to discontinue the program. She noted that this program came forward during a period when some of our PhD programs were suspended. As PhD programs were restored there was a decline in interest in the DA. She also noted that DA programs in general have not “caught on” nationally. As regards program quality, this is neither a plus or a minus. However, this is not a renowned program. The finances involved with this program are not major. Reputational concern and harmony with College and University mission are the primary issues.

Prof. Charalambous read aloud comments from DA Program Director Leonard Slade in which he supported the movement to discontinue as well. She similarly read comments from Professors Martha Rozett and Helen Elam who expressed mixed sentiments on the proposed discontinuance.

Dean Wick-Pelletier spoke of some movement in PhD programs toward interdisciplinarity. Professor Byrd suggested that this has long been talked about but little has happened.

Prof. Charalambous indicated that the DA program faculty had been invited to attend the GAC meeting to offer comments. Although she did receive the three written/read comments, no others have come forth.

Prof. Wulfert indicated that the Senate’s EPC had reviewed the discontinuation proposal. Current students will be afforded the opportunity to finish the program. The EPC was unanimous in its mission based determination that the *raison d’etre* for the program no longer exists.

Dean Mumpower drew attention to the position of support for discontinuance taken by the Faculty Council in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Prof. Byrd lamented the loss of an interdisciplinary program. Dean Wick-Pelletier indicated she will be looking to make more joint faculty appointments.

Prof. Smith identified interdisciplinarity as a laudable objective, but tough to operationalize.

Mr. Farr indicated he felt it unfortunate but accurate that this program had no “home.”

Prof. Meyer suggested that the issues of interdisciplinary study, while interesting, were not the question before the Council. The question is more one of whether this particular program is needed or appropriate any longer.

There was a call for the question. The Council voted 14-0-0 to support the Dean’s proposal to discontinue the program.

8. Proposal to establish jointly registered dual-degree program, MA Public Affairs & Policy / JD, with Albany Law School.

Professor Lurie introduced the written proposal to establish this dual degree program. She noted that what is proposed is similar to the existing MPA/JD program. This will be a more policy focused version.

Dean Mumpower pointed out that this dual degree arrangement is already doable on an individual basis. The joint registration proposed is largely for operational and promotional purposes.

Mr. Bartow explained why this proposed program would not be covered under the Hudson-Mohawk Consortium's cross-registration agreement.

The Council voted 14-0-0 to approve the proposal and sponsor its introduction to the Senate.

9. GAC Charge

The Senate Executive Committee had suggested a change in wording to the Charter bill passed by the GAC on 3/11/04. The suggestions for change are appended to the end of these minutes. After a brief discussion, the Council voted 13-0-1 to approve and introduce the revised version.

10. Ombudsperson(s)

Prof. Meyer pointed out that the *ad hoc* committee had not yet met. However, he has looked around and determined that at institutions where there is one, it gets used. He identified staffing concerns of two parts: a) senior faculty who might have the standing to serve as an ombudsperson; b) support services. The question of under who's authority an ombudsperson's office might function came up. Is it to be a Senate based authority? Might it require a Charter change? The committee will meet. There are resource issues.

11. Other Discussions

Prof. Charalambous queried the Council as to whether concerns about interdisciplinary grad study should be noted to the administration or Senate. There was a consensus for no action in that regard. Prof. Meyer highlighted concerns about CETL and suggested that the effectiveness of this unit might be valuable for GAC to discuss.

12. Adjournment

13. Future GAC Meetings:

4/22/04 at 8:30am in CC 367
5/6/04 at 9:00 am in CC 367

END OF GAC 4/1/04 MINUTES

To: GAC

From: Jon Bartow, on behalf of the
GAC Committee on Curriculum & Instruction (CC&I)

Date: March 31, 2004 (updated 4/5/04)

Re: Report on Assessments

The CC&I met on 3/10/04 and considered seven graduate assessment reports that had been forwarded to the GAC.

In attendance were: G. Pogarsky, R.-M. Weber, D. Parker, A.M. Cervantes-Rodriguez, F. Henderson, H. Charalambous (Convener), L.-A. McNutt and J. Bartow (staff).

Each committee member presented summary comments and led discussion pertaining to one of the assessment reports. There were no major "red flags" to report to the Council. Comments as provided by the presenter and/or from the notes of the Committee secretary appear below.

1. Women's Studies (Rose-Marie Weber)

The external reviewers of the degree programs in Women's Studies commented on the thoroughness of the self-study completed in spring 2003. This thoroughness, as well as the small size of the department, allowed them to offer very specific comments with respect to curriculum and instruction for the master's program.

In their view, the graduate offerings in the department, serving the MA and other degree programs, are generally in line with comparable institutions. The faculty is strong and welcomes participation in teaching by the students, as in the undergraduate program. Connections with public policy programs exist and offer potential for strengthening research and engagement with issues in the public arena.

The reviewers saw a need for a course on global perspectives on the MA level that would accord with current theoretical concerns in the field. They remark on the desirability of courses in theory and methodology compared to other institutions, but they do not consider how these would articulate with existing requirements in this regard. Importantly, they remark that there are now too many options for the culminating experience and suggest that inconsistencies be reduced.

They note that their recommendations for improvement of the MA depend on an increased population of students, greater TA resources, and greater stability with respect to faculty appointments in and outside the department.

2. Master of Fine Arts (Dona Parker)

External Reviewers were generally positive and had no serious problems to report. They noted a "high level of energy and commitment on the part of the faculty" and found students to be positive and that they were in a "challenging and supportive learning environment." They found that the MFA conforms with other graduate programs at research institutions. They applauded the department's use of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design recommendations as a guide concerning faculty work, curriculum development and both undergraduate and graduate assessment plans.

Students

The reviewers recommend attention to advising of both undergraduate and graduate students and to diversification of both students and faculty.

Teaching Assistants

The Fine Arts Department in an effort to maximize the limited number of teaching assistantships splits their awards between two students. The

reviewers were not bothered by that arrangement and in fact noted that it was a common practice at other institutions. The report noted the importance of sustaining enrollments in the MFA and recognized that the limited amount of studio space would limit any growth. However, they did say that the current size should remain stable.

Faculty

The reviewers noted that the faculty were "well qualified and generally active in their fields." They did comment on the three-course per semester teaching as being heavy but comparable to other schools.

The report noted that the reviewers were not sure if the self-study mentioned opportunities for cooperation in curriculum/course outlines for teaching assistants. The self-study in fact does note that advisement and supervision of MFA student's teaching is ongoing and regular. Also, the students meet regularly with their faculty supervisor to fine tune the curriculum. They discuss common misconceptions and challenges to instruction at the beginning and intermediate undergraduate levels.

Facilities

While the reviewers applaud the Sculpture studio space as being well planned and executed, they did find the Fine Arts building space in need of renovation and reconfiguration. They felt that classroom and studio space needed better lighting and upgrading of furnishings to provide a positive, constructive environment for the students.

The reviewers also noted the complexity of maintaining an art facility with only one technician/teacher. They found that faculty needed to take on the task for managing and maintaining facilities and budget for their area. They also felt that the 10 minute walk between Fine Arts and the Sculpture studio hindered cross- disciplinary work among faculty and students.

Summary

The External Reviewer's Report and the Assessment Plan for the Master of Fine Arts Program did not reveal any problems with the delivery of the curriculum. The Reviewers did stress the importance of sustaining current enrollments in the MFA to maintain an intellectual, artistic community of graduate students.

3. Department of Public Administration and Policy (Greg Pogarsky)

This analysis is based on a Review of the BA and MA public policy degrees prepared by the Department of Public Administration and Policy, and two site visit reports. The first is an evaluation of the Undergraduate and Graduate programs in Public Policy, by Bryna Sanger, Professor in the Milano Graduate School at New School University and Roy Sparrow, Professor in the Wagner School of Public Service at New York University. The second site visit report is an evaluation of the Masters of Public Administration Program in the Department of Public Administration and Policy, prepared by Charles Wise, Indiana University, Feather O Connor Houston, Secretary of Public Welfare of Pennsylvania, and William Simonsen of the University of Connecticut.

All three reports were thorough and well-organized. The following strengths were observed: 1) The programs maintained strong ties with

alumni; 2) There was strong student faculty engagement on advising, mentoring and professional placement; 3) the internship program was high quality; 4) There were recent notable improvements to the curriculum in the area of professional applications; 5) The program has vigorously pursued minority faculty applicants; 6) Good efforts to evaluate learning outcomes.

The following weaknesses were observed: 1) Light curricular coverage in the area of organizations and management; 2) Too strong a national perception that the school is a feeder program for NY state government; 3) Ties with research institutes, such as the Rockefeller institute, not as strong as they might be; 4) Enrollment in MA program in public policy (10-17 over past 5 years) could be improved to ensure the program's continuing viability.

In general, the positive remarks far outweighed the several observed weaknesses, which were all relatively minor. The programs each appear to be in strong shape.

4. Africana Studies (Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodriguez)

The M.A. program in Africana Studies is well established and maintains a high national reputation. The only areas of concern identified by the reviewers had to do with student recruitment and retention. The Committee discussed the possibility of more precise links between recruitment and retention, on the one hand, and curriculum development and course offering, on the other. This may lead to the formulation of a more solid course of action to target the retention and recruitment problems that were identified. Efforts to establish more ties with other programs and to increase study abroad opportunities were noted as commendable.

Comments were offered questioning the credibility of the site visit report. Opinion was expressed that it was poorly written, not comprehensive, of limited perspective and not necessarily constructive. However, departmental response to the external report was appropriately critical and commendable.

5. Public Health (Hara Charalambous)

For Public Health, there was a site visit report from the Council on Education for Public Health for the accreditation of MPH and DPH. The report was generally positive. The problems that were indicated in this report included the fact that there were not enough interdisciplinary programs, that there was a lack of effective curriculum oversight, a lack of clarity for the learning objectives of DPH and the lack of distinction between the MS and MPH. The first three problems are being addressed by the department and for the last one a convincing argument was made that it is not a real problem and it was due to a poor presentation in the self study document.

6. Social Welfare (Louise-Anne McNutt)

The report generated by the CSWE-Commission on Accreditation summarized a positive, successful accreditation process. The report focused on the Masters of Social Welfare (MSW) program. Twenty-nine members of the

Social Welfare faculty are responsible for over 350 MSW students as well as students in the PhD program.

The external report indicated the MSW program is very strong, noting particular strengths in three areas: ethics, social justice and evidence-based curriculum and practice. The Dean also was singled out as a major asset of the program due to her strong leadership. The only identified weakness was noted in the fieldwork component of the MSW program. A concern was raised regarding the amount of MSW fieldwork supervision for the subset of students placed in organizations without MSW-level supervision on-site.

7. Latin American & Caribbean Studies (Floyd Henderson)

The Department provided a structured and informative self-evaluation report that addressed each component in turn.

The evaluators overall assessment is that LACS is a strong Department with a prestigious faculty that is poised to continue building on its record of accomplishments. They noted the Department's integration and links to related University programs and its student education/outcome evaluation processes.

However, they also believed a major objective of the Department should be to create a specific medium-long term plan regarding its future direction and focus. Among the several items that need to be considered in this regard are:

- 1) Faculty attrition due to retirements, their replacement/recruitment procedures, and the impact on future areas of program specialization.
- 2) The effect that changes in the language programs (especially the placement of the PhD program) will have on the Department graduate programs and alternative solutions.
- 3) The need to develop more innovative course that would attract student interest and to consider the status of the Puerto Rican Studies major vis-à-vis a major in Latino Studies.

In summary, the evaluation is positive but the future requires attention.

.....
It is proposed that the Charter of the University Senate, scheduled to take effect Fall 2004, be amended as follows.

SX.4. Graduate Academic Council

Existing:

SX.4.6 The Council, through its **Committee on Curriculum and Instruction**, shall have responsibility for the graduate academic curriculum. The committee shall have no more than eight members and shall include at least five Teaching Faculty, at least two of whom are on the Council.

SX.4.6.1 The committee shall consider all revisions in existing graduate degree programs.

SX.4.6.2 The committee shall review proposals for new graduate courses and changes to existing graduate courses.

SX.4.6.3 The committee shall submit all recommended changes and new courses to the Council for final approval.

Proposed Revision:

SX.4.6 The Council, through its **Committee on Curriculum and Instruction**, shall have responsibility for the graduate academic curriculum. The committee shall have no more than eight members and shall include at least five Teaching Faculty, at least two of whom are on the Council.

SX.4.6.1 The committee shall consider all revisions to existing graduate degree programs and shall submit all recommended changes to the Council for final approval.

SX.4.6.2 The committee shall review new graduate courses and substantive changes to existing graduate courses, as approved within the schools and colleges.

SX.4.6.3 The Council shall have final authority pertaining to graduate courses.

Proposed updated Revision from the Executive Committee of the Senate, (note that 4.6.3 is now gone!):

SX.4.6 The Council, through its **Committee on Curriculum and Instruction**, shall have responsibility for the graduate academic curriculum. The committee shall have no more than eight members and shall include at least five Teaching Faculty, at least two of whom are on the Council.

SX.4.6.1 The committee shall consider all revisions to existing graduate degree programs and shall submit all recommended changes to the Council for final approval.

SX.4.6.2 The committee shall review new graduate courses and substantive changes to existing graduate courses, as approved within the schools and colleges, **subject to final review by the Council.**

Rationale

The Council submits these modest changes to its charge both to (1) highlight the significant role that faculty within schools and colleges exercise in regard to course approval actions and (2) allow for the implementation of approved new or revised graduate courses in a timely manner, while retaining ultimate GAC authority on all graduate course matters.