

**Graduate Academic Council  
2007 – 2008**

Minutes of the Council meeting of February 21, 2008  
Approved by the Council on April 17, 2008

In attendance: J. Baronner (staff), J. Bartow (staff), F. Bolton (staff), S. Friedman (Chair), H. Horton,  
L. Kranich, J. McLaughlin, A. Pomerantz, M. Pryse, C. Robbins, L. Scoville

Unable to attend: S. Chinnam, G. Denbeaux, S. Saleh, M. Tse

Guest: Irene Lurie from Public Administration and Policy

1. Minutes of the GAC meeting of 12/19/07 were considered, amended (Chair's Report), and unanimously approved.
2. Dean's Report – Associate Dean Horton reporting for M. Pryse

- Associate Dean Horton informed the Council that the Graduate Ombuds Committee held a meeting February 13<sup>th</sup>. Attendees included Dave Wagner (Sociology), Robert Miller (Social Welfare), Hazel Prelow (Psychology), David McCaffrey (Public Administration and Policy), Edelgard Wulfert (College of Arts & Science), Chair Sally Friedman, John Reilly (representative from the University's Legal Department), and Kelly Secovnie (student representative). Tamra Minor, Director of Diversity and Affirmative Action, was unable to attend the meeting. Associate Dean Horton reminded the Council that Dick Hall retired this year and thus is unable to continue serving in the Graduate Ombuds Program. A list of nine possible faculty Ombuds candidates was generated for both this spring and fall semesters. Feedback from the Ombuds Committee is forthcoming for reconfiguration of the Ombuds forms. The student rep was enthusiastic about the program and mentioned the need to get the word out to students, student organizations, and both Grad Associates and Grad Officers of individual departments. Meetings will be held twice a semester, and the next meeting takes place in April.
- PSM (Professional Science Masters) was next discussed by Associate Dean Horton. He mentioned what an honor it was that SUNY Administration was chosen nationally to be part of PSM. Dean Pryse co-wrote the SUNY Central grant. The University at Albany's PSM Committee under the leadership of Associate Dean Horton competed with 20 other SUNY campuses for the first PSM planning grants. The UAlbany team was successful. Not only is our grant fully funded, but the committee was praised for its exceptional writing. A Fall 2008 launch is anticipated. The primary task at hand is a business advisory board being held March 31<sup>st</sup> on the campus which includes invitations to Capital District businesses. A second important task is to have the certificate program approved by University Governance. The PSM Committee will work together mainly via e-mail with meetings being held when necessary. Three programs are involved: Forensic Biology, Biodiversity Conservation & Policy, and Computer Science. A second round of grant offerings will be available in Spring 2009, and we intend to pursue an additional grant. Chemistry and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will be brought on board in Spring 2009.

It was pointed out that a PSM certificate planning process is in the works. As previously pointed out, the Professional Science Masters (PSM) programs would be aimed at preparing graduate students in the STEM fields to enter or re-join the workforce with both scientific and managerial skills. Part of the course of action focuses on training students to become managers of technology. In addition to the master's program courses, 9-12 credit hour courses must be completed. Only students who are currently enrolled in a STEM graduate program or who already have earned a degree in a STEM field will be eligible for the PSM. If a student has obtained a degree in their field, 18 credit hour courses would be required. This is to ensure the student is schooled in current trends. A standard set of courses will be made available by the School of Business, and 1/3 of the budget has been allocated to support the School of Business courses. With this new type of initiative of obtaining both a master's degree and certificate, we believe it will push our master's programs to the forefront of recruiting and enrollment.

3. Chair's Report – S. Friedman

- Chair Friedman shared her appreciation that the Graduate Ombuds Committee met and advanced their business so quickly. She particularly mentioned the suggestion to the group by a Grad student who commented on the need to spread the word that a Graduate Ombuds person be available to assist Grad students. Thus, the importance of publicity!
- The Senate passed two bills introduced by GAC, the Ph.D. in Communication proposal, for which the President has signed off, and revisions to the MS in General Education which subsequently needs state approval.
- Chair Friedman mentioned her need to step down as GAC Chair due to a conflicting schedule. She thanked the Council for their assistance to her throughout her tenure.

4. Committee on Curriculum & Instruction Report – A. Pomerantz

Item #1:

The College of Arts and Sciences' proposal for a joint MA in Women's Studies and PhD in Sociology Program was tabled for action and returned to the department for further revisions.

Item #2:

Anita Pomerantz reported on the School of Public Health – Department of Environmental Health Sciences MS and PhD program proposed revisions. The document was long but well developed. The current curriculum is comprised of three tracks in environmental chemistry, toxicology, and environmental and occupational health. The Department felt that the tracks are not unified enough to comprise a cohesive program. The solution proposed was to revise the curriculum to require more core courses in the MS and PhD programs in the areas of epidemiology, environmental health, toxicology, environmental analytical chemistry, and statistics. Several other changes were proposed as a consequence of the changes in the core course requirement. One change would be to replace the program's 4-credit seminar course EHT 790 with a one-credit EHT 780 and have EHT 790 become a zero credit course. EHT 780 would assist students to "develop foundation skills for reading and evaluating scientific literature," skills required for presenting research work in their EHT 790 seminars. In EHT, students would rotate presentations due to the large size of continuously registered students. Each student would present less often but would benefit from listening to the other presentations. It was noted that these seminars would have multiple functions: they would help students to learn how to present their research findings, they would aid in students' professional development, and they would counter the current fragmentation and promote a sense of community. Students who failed to complete EHT 790 would be ineligible for graduation. In order to make sure there would be sufficient depth in the student's area of expertise, an additional 3-credit elective in the student's area would be required. With the proposed changes, the number of required credits in both the M.S. and Ph.D. programs remain unchanged. The Council voted unanimously to accept and approve the School of Public Health's request.

5. Proposal for Modified Grad Admission Standards Tecnologico de Monterrey

Professor Irene Lurie from Public Administration and Policy discussed her department's proposal for modified admission rules for students from Tecnologico de Monterrey (Tec) in Mexico. The Department is requesting an exception to allow Tec students to enroll as graduate students before obtaining their bachelor's degree (or equivalent) after seven semesters of undergraduate study.

This college is a premier private college that offers a BA in Political Science and a BA in International Relations that are nine semesters. Both programs require two semesters of study abroad. Professor Lurie and Ray Bromley from the Office of International Education spent time at Tec to develop programs that would combine their bachelor's programs with our master's programs. Our University maintains numerous

combined bachelor's/master's programs. Under our combined programs, students apply for admittance in their junior year and complete up to 12 graduate credits during their senior year. Those 12 graduate credits are applied to both their undergraduate and masters degrees. The end result is a completion of two degrees in 11 semesters in lieu of the typical 12 semesters. Students applying for our combined programs must have a 3.2 GPA and must submit three letters of recommendation from undergraduate instructors. With the MPA and MPP programs, students are not required to complete the GRE. This proposal would entail seven semesters completed at Monterrey and four semesters of graduate study at Albany to earn the Masters of Public Administration (MPA) or the Masters of Public Policy (MPP) degree. Tec would apply two graduate semesters toward the BA, with the students being granted the BA at the end of nine semesters. At the end of 11 semesters, those students completing required graduate courses for the MPA or MPP degree would receive their graduate degree from the University at Albany.

To create this cooperative relationship, the Department of Public Administration and Policy requests permission to admit applicants who do not possess the bachelor's degree (or equivalent) as graduate students after 7 semesters of undergraduate study. To be admitted, Tec students would be required to have the equivalent of a 3.2 GPA, obtain the University's minimal requirement of a 550 on the TOEFL exam, and take the GRE. Discussion ensued. TOEFL scores were discussed, and Professor Lurie acknowledged that while in Mexico, she heard flawless English spoken by Tec students. A Council member mentioned that international grad students must possess a minimum TOEFL score of 550. For those international students that are teaching, a 600 TOEFL is required, plus the student must be certified by the chair of a department as being competent to conduct classroom discussions before being granted permission to teach classes/laboratories where the instructional language is English. If TOEFL scores are less than 600, the student must pass the Test of Spoken English with a score of 50, as well as being certified by the department chair for their competency to conduct classes/laboratories in English. For those departments wishing an exception, the department's chairperson must certify a student's competency in English proficiency. The department must bear the burden of that decision. Professor Lurie pointed out that many students transitioning from Spanish to English find it much easier than other foreign students such as Koreans converting the Korean language to English. It was mentioned that a student may speak English well but fail with grammatical testing. A Council member mentioned that a subset of The Department of Educational Theory and Practice (ETAP) holds classes to teach English to international students. On-line writing centers are available where students develop writing skills that covers grammar and punctuation.

It was noted that this proposal is an opportunity to move our institution forward internationally and to think creatively in setting up dual degrees. Professor Lurie mentioned that her department initially expects only 2-3 students a year. The Council voted unanimously to accept and approve the Department of Public Administration and Policy's request.

6. Selection of New GAC Chair

Professor Laurence Kranich volunteered to resume GAC Chair duties for the remainder of the Spring 2008 semester. Professor Neal Robbins agreed to continue Professor Kranich's duties as Chair of the Committee on Educational Policy and Procedure.

7. Future Meetings

Jon Bartow requested Council members keep the following dates open on their calendars: March 13, April 17, May 1, and May 8. Unless pressing issues arise, only one meeting will be held in May.

END OF GAC 2/21/08 MINUTES

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## Attachment #1

To: Graduate Academic Council

From: Anita Pomerantz, Chair  
GAC Committee on Curriculum & Instruction (CC&I)

Date: February 14, 2008

Subject: Report and Recommendations

CC&I Members Present: G. Denbeaux, Anita Pomerantz, B. Thiel, and F. Bolton (staff).

Guest: Caitlin Reid, Graduate Program Administrator in School of Public Health

Two new items of business were considered by the Committee.

### 1. School of Public Health – Department of Environmental Health Sciences MS and PhD program revisions

The School of Public Health seeks to restructure its Department of Environmental Health Sciences' current curriculum and program requirements to reflect its environmental health focus. The curriculum is presently comprised of three unrelated track structures in environmental chemistry, toxicology, and environmental and occupational health, each of which requires a separate core of courses. The revised curriculum would require a unified set of core courses for all students in the MS and PhD programs. This 16 credit department-wide core seeks to provide a common foundation in epidemiology, environmental health, toxicology, environmental analytical chemistry, and statistics. Students would then select additional advanced coursework in their proposed concentration or area of study.

Caitlin Reid was most helpful in leading the Committee through the changes to the MS and PhD program structures that resulted from the introduction of this unified core of courses. A basic core requirement change was the replacement of the program's 4 credit seminar course EHT 790 with one credit of EHT 780 Current Literature in Environmental Health and with continuous registration of EHT 790 Seminars at 0 credit for the duration of the student's course of study. Under this proposal, all masters and doctoral students would take EHT 780 for one credit. EHT 780 helps students develop foundation skills for reading and evaluating scientific literature, critical skills needed for students to present their own research work in the EHT 790 seminars. Because all students in the department now would need to be continuously registered for EHT 790 Seminars, the EHT 790 class sizes will increase with the consequence that students in this larger group would present less often. Three advantages to this new design are (1) all students would be exposed to a broader range of material, (2) senior students would now be in the mix to share their expertise, and (3) the department would experience greater unification, which is one of the goals of the proposal.

Reducing the 4 credit assignment of EHT 790 to 0 and requiring EHT 780 for 1 credit enabled the department to add a 3 credit elective to their programs. It was felt that the knowledge a student gained from the elective required in their chosen individual concentration and the educational training benefits offered by the continuous seminar experience were both extremely valuable. In addition to accomplishing these departmental goals, an additional benefit of instituting a combination of reducing the credit requirement of EHT 790, adding 1 credit for EHT 780, and adding a 3 credit elective is that the credit requirement for the MS and PhD programs remain unchanged. The MS program remains 36 credits and the PhD program remains 66 credits.

Although the department received University approval to change its name from the Department of Environmental Health and Toxicology to the Department of Environmental Health Sciences in 2005, with this proposal the department now desires to change the name of the degree program to Environmental Health Sciences to correspond with the study completed by the students and to communicate the broad training in environmental science that students will receive in the proposed revised curriculum.

The Committee voted in favor unanimously (3-0) to pass the proposal forward to GAC.

### 2. College of Arts and Sciences – Proposal for a joint MA in Women's Studies and PhD in Sociology Program

The proposal submitted by the departments of Women's Studies and Sociology for the establishment of a joint MA Women's Studies/PhD in Sociology program contained language that addressed implementation details and staffing issues that the Committee believed were beyond its charge of curriculum review. Therefore, the Committee voted to table action on the proposal (3-0) and to return it to the departments for revision.

**Attachment #2**

A pdf file entitled "Technologico de Monterrey" was distributed and discussed at the 2/21/2008 GAC meeting.

# **Attachment #1**