

**Graduate Academic Council
2007 – 2008**

Minutes of the Council meeting of October 18, 2007
Approved by the Council on December 19, 2007.

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

Guest: Prof. Teresa Harrison, Chair, Dept. of Communication
Vincent Idone, Chair, Dept. of Earth & Atmospheric Science

Unable to attend: L. Kranich, S. Saleh

1. Group introductions were made at the start of the meeting.
2. Minutes from 4/20/07 and 5/4/07 were voted on and approved 7-0-0, with the 5/4/07 subject to minor corrections.
3. Proposal to Suspend Admissions to the MS and PhD Programs in Geology

Professor Vince Idone, Chair of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, described the program's suspension is self-evident and overdue. Institutions granting geology degrees typically employ a minimum of ten professors. The current program does not bring in much external funding and consists of a small student group. Chair Idone emphasized that no professors are in danger of losing their position. Three of four professors are more involved in the environmental end of the department. The fourth is close to retirement. This past December, site reviewers agreed with the program's suspension. The program remains viable for a couple years until all students have graduated. The proposal is to only suspend *admission* to the program. The Council passed the proposal 7-0-2.

4. Proposal for Establishment of a Ph.D. Program in Communication

Professor Teresa Harrison highlighted a desire to address a strength of the institution and to push the program further to accomplish more. As mentioned in the proposal, "...the Department of Communication has educated doctoral students specializing in communication through our participation in two degree programs: the Department of Sociology's Ph.D. program and the Doctor of Arts, an interdisciplinary degree program now in the process of being phased out on campus." Communication has a relationship with Sociology for those students receiving a Ph.D. in Sociology with a study of Communication. Students are supported by fellowships from Communication. Admission is via Sociology, and applications are then routed to Communication for additional approval. We are sending students to communication jobs with a degree in Sociology. Two directors of grad studies are currently advising doctoral students, and it's difficult to have an effective program for students. It was mentioned that a Letter of Intent was presented to UPC a couple years ago. Associate Dean Horton mentioned that the relationship between Sociology and Communication has been a strong one, and he solidly supports the proposal. Dean Pryse mentioned the heavy teaching load, using masters students, and that master support lines will be converted to doctoral lines. The Council voted 8-0-1 to approve the proposal and sponsor its introduction to the Senate as a bill.

5. Dean's Report – M. Pryse

- Dean Pryse indicated that Associate Dean Horton is attending his first GAC meeting. His responsibilities include half time Associate Dean and the other half as teaching faculty in Sociology. He will be recruiting students of color in the STEM fields and assisting those students once they arrive here on campus. Dean Pryse also mentioned that Associate Dean Horton's role will be expanded in the Dean's Office to focus on master's education. Associate Dean Horton will also work on the professional science master's project funded for the SUNY System by the Sloan Foundation.

- Associate Dean Horton spoke briefly of the Shepherd Project. He will develop a recruitment pipeline where students interested in research will be recruited. At the moment, three institutions are involved but will be expanded to include more in the future. Dean Pryse mentioned her desire to have Associate Dean Horton involved with the Ombuds program.
- Dean Pryse mentioned the National Research Council will release data regarding our doctoral programs in the Spring.
- Stipends for new doctoral students have been increased by \$1,000 for 2007-2008, and no new incoming doctoral student will be receiving less than \$11,000. The GSEU contract is under negotiation.
- Dean Pryse mentioned missing our enrollment target of graduate students campus-wide by 170 and discussed its critical impact. She emphasized that we are heavily dependent on enrollment-related tuition. We are trying to recruit more top-quality graduate students, and one means was the recent Graduate Fair. Around 390 students attended which included both SUNY and non-SUNY students.

6. Chair's Report – S. Friedman

Chair Friedman mentioned there are three items before the Senate from last year's GAC meetings: (1) Latin American, Caribbean & U.S. Latino Studies name change, (2) mandating TOEFL scores to 550, and (3) School of Education – Department of Educational Theory and Practice's request for program revisions to the MS in General Educational Studies. The last item will require State approval

7. Update/Discussion of the Graduate Ombuds Program

Chair Friedman mentioned that three individuals were appointed to this program and have been regularly meeting with grad students. This program provides students with a method to discuss significant issues before considering the formal grievance process. Chair Friedman stressed that GAC or a subset should meet with the Ombudspersons. She mentioned the program has been functioning for two years but has lost one individual due to reassignment as an Acting Dean. Discussion ensued, and questions were raised as to administration involvement, who organizes the program, and who does the Provost designate as Ombudsperson(s). It was suggested that the Ombuds Program *not* be connected to GAC since the Council does not meet in the summer. Dean Pryse stressed that the program needs an anchor, and that the Grad Studies website clearly shows the link for the Ombuds Program. She would prefer its removal from the website rather than having an appearance that we are not completing our job. Dean Pryse mentioned, however, that GAC would need to inform Grad Studies if they desire to have Grad Studies as an anchor. Senate Bill 0405-13 dated March 14, 2005 was read, and it was noted that "...the Ombudsperson(s) will report to the University Provost. The Provost will appoint the Ombudsperson(s) in consultation with the Dean of Graduate Studies and the University Senate Chair, and ratified by the Ombuds Committee." Chair Friedman mentioned that the only report provided by the Ombuds Program was from last year. Our grad students need to believe they are completely safe and their discussions will remain confidential along with not compromising their status within the University. If a student is having problems with their department, there must be enough structural distance to help retain a student's anonymity. A member expressed a view of not foreseeing a problem allowing Grad Studies to facilitate the committee. Chair Friedman offered to investigate other institutions offering an ombuds person grad program for comparison purposes.

Dean Pryse proposed that the Dean of Graduate Studies, or designee, is requested by the GAC to work to insure the administration of the graduate ombuds program and the viable operation of the ombuds committee. The proposal was passed 7-0-1.

8. Committees

Jon Bartow explained the GAC committees' responsibilities. COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND ACADEMIC STANDING – reviews student petitions for exception to policy and/or grievances. COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION – reviews proposals for curricular changes submitted from school/colleges. COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE – considers changes to graduate policy or the establishment of new policies. He provided the Council with the names of committee chairs and members. Council moved to accept those given names. Jon mentioned he has sent an e-mail to departments requesting members be assigned to the Committees.

9. Future Meetings

The Council's next meeting will be held Thursday, November 15th. Please keep both December 6th and 13th open on your calendars.

END OF GAC 10/18/07 MINUTES

Graduate Academic Council

2007 – 2008

Approved by Council Action: _____

Proposed Standing Committee Memberships – Initial
GAC members listed in **bold**

Committee on Educational Policy and Procedures

Mary Casserly, University Libraries

Neil Robbins, Educational Administration

Larry Kranich, Economics, Chair

Jean McLaughlin, University Libraries

Committee on Curriculum and Instruction

Brad Thiel, Nanosciences

Jerry Rivera-Wilson, Education Theory & Practice

Shadi Saleh, Public Health

Anita Pomerantz, Communication, Chair

Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing

Shadi Shahedipour, Nanosciences

Anne Boehm, Biological Sciences

Mary Jane Brustman, University Libraries

Linda Scoville, Advisement Services



UNIVERSITY
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State University of New York

**APPROVED BY CAS ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE, LESLIE
HALPERN CHAIR 04/27/07**

APPROVED BY CAS DEAN JOAN WICK-PELLETIER 04/30/07

07-085

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College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: JOAN WICK-PELLETIER, DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FROM: VINCENT P. IDONE, CHAIR
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION FOR SUSPENSION OF ADMISSION TO THE GRADUATE
PROGRAM IN GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES
DATE:
CC:

As you are no doubt well aware, the situation with regard to the Geological Sciences Graduate Program here in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences is critical. Actually, *subcritical* would be a better characterization. On paper, this is still a doctoral degree granting program consisting of but four formal faculty members: John Arnason (Assistant), John Delano (Distinguished Teaching), William Kidd (Full), and Brad Linsley (Associate). Note that it is generally thought that ten is the typical number of faculty members appropriate for a doctorate-granting geology program at a major university. This is a telling statistic.

Indeed, with the confluence of the recently undertaken campus-wide review of doctoral stipends and the DEAS "Self-Study" underway for assessment, the status of the Geological Sciences Program has been brought into stark relief. To be honest, many of us here in DEAS have known for quite a while that the situation was poor and that it just could not go on. But it is human nature to "go with the status quo" until change is forced upon you externally or until the depth of self-awareness rises to the point that change is embraced spontaneously and willingly. We've arguably undergone the latter experience.

In fact, the essence of the situation relative to the current status of the program (regardless of how it got to this point, which is a two-decade long sad and painful story), is captured in the tables below which compare the application and admission statistics for the last several years between the Atmospheric Science Program and the Geological



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State University of New York
Sciences Program (These are actually Tables 5 and 6 of our recently submitted Self-Study document.):

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College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences

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Table 5. GPA and GRE Scores for Applicants, Admits, and Enrolled Students

Atmospheric Sciences M.S.									
	Applied			Admitted			Enrolled		
Year	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA
Fall 2002	487	682	3.28	495	718	3.43	499	699	3.45
Fall 2003	501	727	3.43	495	742	3.59	479	742	3.64
Fall 2004	515	681	3.35	562	730	3.68	520	760	3.73
Fall 2005	487	676	3.36	510	733	3.75	453	713	3.81
Fall 2006	476	674	3.49	513	673	3.75	420	650	3.46
5-yr mean	493	688	3.38	515	719	3.64	474	713	3.62

Atmospheric Sciences Ph.D.									
	Applied			Admitted			Enrolled		
Year	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA
Fall 2002	574	774	3.38	588	750	3.48	525	730	3.65
Fall 2003	602	769	3.70	601	777	3.98	550	747	3.98
Fall 2004	523	748	3.73	531	740	3.73	530	734	3.79
Fall 2005	526	741	3.64	519	733	3.67	450	707	3.74
Fall 2006	513	757	3.52	553	750	3.62	568	750	3.47
5-yr mean	548	758	3.6	558	750	3.69	525	734	3.73

Geological Sciences M.S.									
	Applied			Admitted			Enrolled		
Year	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA
Fall 2002									
Fall 2003	450	607	2.72	450	607	2.72	450	595	2.72
Fall 2004	538	683	2.92	527	653	2.96	560	685	2.68
Fall 2005	450	659	3.36	450	616	3.36	450	780	n/a
Fall 2006	520	608	3.20	520	608	3.20	520	590	2.5
5-yr mean	490	640	3.05	487	621	3.06	495	662	2.63

Geological Sciences Ph.D.									
	Applied			Admitted			Enrolled		
Year	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA	GRE-V	GRE-Q	GPA
Fall 2002	490	490							
Fall 2003	430	550	3.29	430	550	3.29	430	550	3.29
Fall 2004	417	683	3.10	455	625	3.10	460	500	3.10
Fall 2005	457	617	2.75	457	617	2.75	460	610	2.78
Fall 2006	440	785	n/a	440	785	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
5-yr mean	447	625	3.05	445	644	3.05	450	553	3.06

Table 6. Graduate Program Admissions

Atmospheric Sciences MS

Year	Applied	Admitted	% Admitted	Enrolled
2001	19	8	44	1
2002	32	16	50	8
2003	31	12	39	8
2004	33	8	24	1
2005	48	5	10	5
5-year mean	33	10	33	5

Geological Sciences MS

Year	Applied	Admitted	% Admitted	Enrolled
2001	1	1	100	0
2002	8	6	75	4
2003	4	4	100	3
2004	5	4	80	3
2005	7	5	71	1
5-year mean	5	4	85	2

Atmospheric Sciences Ph.D.

Year	Applied	Admitted	% Admitted	Enrolled
2001	15	6	40	3
2002	22	5	23	2
2003	25	8	32	4
2004	14	6	43	5
2005	29	15	52	7
5-year mean	21	8	38	4

Geological Sciences Ph.D.

Year	Applied	Admitted	% Admitted	Enrolled
2001	1	1	100	1
2002	1	1	100	1
2003	1	1	100	1
2004	3	2	67	1
2005	3	3	100	2
5-year mean	1.8	1.6	93	1

In examining this data, it is clear that the Geological Sciences program has minimal application rates and a nearly 100% acceptance rate. These are poor indicators.

With such manifest evidence and your own timely inquiry as to the appropriateness of admitting new doctoral students in the current round of graduate recruitment, we met on January 22nd to consider the facts and the options available to us. It was decided via a formal vote of the faculty (10-1 in favor; 11-1 if you include me) to recommend suspension of admission of students to the graduate program of Geological Sciences. In essence, it was argued that the majority (3 of 4) of the current Geological Sciences faculty could effectively continue their research and teaching endeavors within a sub-track or stream of the Atmospheric Science graduate program, the details of this to be worked out over the coming months. I and many others here are totally convinced that this can work and actually lead to a much improved situation.

The issue of the cohort of current students needing to complete their degrees is readily addressed. As no faculty member will lose his position, those same faculty members will be here to continue their research and guide these students to completion of their degrees. There are, in fact, only eight students. The breakdown with estimated completion time for each is as follows:

Spring '07 TA's	Degree	Future TA Support	Likely graduation
Kritcheff	MS	1 year	Spring 08+
Langton	MS	?	Spring 07
Neumann	MS	1 year	Spring 08+
Marsellos	PhD	1 year	Spring 09+
Montario	PhD	1 year	Spring 09+
Zhang	MS	0	Spring 07+
Lim	PhD (ABD)	0	Spring 07
Gillen	BS/MS	2 years	Spring 09

The requisite courses for processing out these students will not be an issue, as most have already completed the few such courses required. Other courses entailed will still be made available. In essence, assuming the suspension of admission is approved to take effect this coming fall, the full cohort of students should be processed out in two years. One student who previously would have been in this group (H. Wu) has already opted to complete an atmospheric science degree. S. Langton is currently deciding whether to stay on for her doctorate or attend a different institution. Should she decide to stay, she would represent the only student for which degree completion would definitely take three or more years.

It should be noted that there will continue to be Geological Sciences courses offered, especially on the undergraduate level. The ending of admission to the graduate program does not mean that all geology will be eliminated from the curriculum. Various geology courses will be offered as a component of the environmental sciences degree, and some may actually continue with the GEO designation, or both GEO and ENV designations. Examples include ENV/GEO 201, 230, 250, 350, 435, 450, and 466. Consequently, we do not see this as having any serious effect on the coursework required for students pursuing a master's degree in education and teaching certification in the School of Education, for example, and certainly not in the near term as we process out the current geology undergraduates and graduate students over the next couple of years.

We have yet to work out the details of what will be the exact format and graduate curriculum of the "environmentally focused" transition of the former program. In essence, we will leverage the current strength

and stature of the Atmospheric Science program to build outward into areas that will expand and complement this program. Specializations which naturally intersect both disciplines and which are highly environmental include hydrology/hydrometeorology, climate dynamics and paleo-climate, and numerical modeling of any number of geophysical systems. Further down the road, creation of a formal graduate program in environmental science could be an option, especially if the pool of resources improves for UA or if other trends argue for the suitability of considering this. Regardless, many here believe that a name change is in order for the department; one often suggested is "Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences." So, we would go from DEAS to DAES. (At least we would no longer have our acronym confused with East Asian Studies.)

We are confident that in cooperation with your office, we can effect a transition that allows the remaining Geological Sciences faculty and the overall program to gain new momentum and move ahead. This should not be considered an end, but really, a new beginning.

We hope too that governance will appreciate the basis for our request and confirm our recommendation so that we can actively move on from here.