

**Graduate Academic Council
2000 – 2001**

Minutes of the Council meeting of December 14, 2000

- approved by the Council on 3/9/01

In attendance: R. Irving, L. Trubitt, M. Gallant, D. Bernard, J. Monfasani, G. Harper, M. Brown, L. Mullin (Chair), J. Mumpower, D. Abdel-Hady, J. Bartow (staff)

Unable to attend: A. Fortune, N. Johnson,

1. Minutes of the meeting of 11/9/00 were reviewed & unanimously approved without amendment.
2. The Council considered a request from the Director of the Liberal Studies M.A. program that David Wolf, a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy, be authorized to provide graduate instruction, specifically for AGLS600 in the Fall 2001 term. Following a detailed review of his listed qualifications and the rationale presented, the Council acted to approve the request by a unanimous vote.
3. Report of the Dean of Graduate Studies, Jeryl Mumpower
 - Dean Mumpower noted that an upcoming meeting (12/20/00) will be held with the Provost, graduate program directors, associate deans and graduate studies staff (GAC members were welcomed as well). Two primary topics are on the agenda for the meeting: (1) a review of the implications of graduate enrollment shortfall and (2) a discussion of graduate admissions operations.
 - Dean Mumpower suggested that our institution might wish to consider the establishment of a minimum graduate assistant stipend level (or levels). He distributed a related sponsored program application guide sheet with recommendations drawn from a study of peer institutions.

Professor Mullin suggested that our institution might work to identify and put forth NSF fellowship candidates.
4. The Council considered a report from the Committee on Educational Policy and Procedure (report appended below) that recommends approval of a proposal for revision of the definition of certifiable full-time status, graduate assistantship regulations and leave of absence policy. After a period of discussion, the proposal was unanimously tabled in order to allow for greater consultation with graduate students regarding the proposed changes.
5. The Council considered four action items reported and recommended for approval by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee (report appended below). Each item was summarized and presented by the Committee Chair. Each of the four recommendations was approved by unanimous vote of the Council members. In addition to the four reported action items, the Committee added one additional item for consideration by the Council. It was proposed that four individuals (Trudy Walp, Bonnie Walmsley, Lenora de la Luna and Virginia McCann) be authorized to provide graduate instruction in the Department of Reading. After a period of discussion, the Council voted unanimously to approve the individuals to provide graduate instruction in the Spring 2001 term if needed, and tabled the issue of a longer-term approval for further discussion by the Council in the spring term.

END OF 12/14/00 MINUTES

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To: Graduate Academic Council
From: John Monfasani, Chair
GAC Committee on Educational Policy & Procedures
Date: December 12, 2000
Subj.: Report and Recommendation

The GAC Committee on Educational Policy & Procedures met on November 30, 2000. In attendance were Dona Parker, John Monfasani (Chair), Katy Schiller, Lisa Trubitt and Jon Bartow (staff to the Committee). Anne Fortune and Dalia Abdel-Hady were unable to attend.

The Committee considered a proposal to revise graduate policies pertaining to the definition of (certifiable) full-time status, the expected course load for full-time students holding graduate assistantships and the eligibility for formal leave-of-absence from doctoral programs. The policy revisions were presented and considered as a package in order to provide balance in the potential outcome of the proposals. The proposal and rationale are appended below.

After a thorough discussion of the proposals, the Committee voted to unanimously recommend approval by the GAC.

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It is proposed that University graduate policies pertaining to certifiable full-time status, graduate assistantships and eligibility for doctoral leaves of absence shall be amended as follows:

1. To be certifiable as enrolled full-time, graduate students shall be registered for twelve credits or one dissertation (899) load credit per semester, except for students as defined below.
2. Graduate students appointed to full assistantship positions are expected to register for and successfully complete a minimum of nine credits or one dissertation (899) load credit per semester. Enrollment by graduate assistants at one of these levels shall be cause for such students to be certified as being in full-time status.
3. Graduate students enrolled for less than twelve credits per semester who are participating in program required full-time field work may be also be certifiable as in full-time status, subject to the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Academic Council, based upon the recommendation of the program faculty.
4. Doctoral students shall be eligible for leaves of absence up to the point of admission to doctoral candidacy and/or registration for dissertation (899) credits.

Rationale

A. Dissertation registration certifiable as full-time

Policy was implemented many years ago that established a requirement that doctoral students be enrolled each semester of the academic year for a quarter-time minimum of three credits. This continuous registration requirement, still in place, was designed in part to promote continuity for students at the coursework stage of their programs. At the dissertation stage, the requirement was implemented with recognition that dissertation research and writing did not match meaningfully with semester length "course" enrollments. Instruction and supervision by faculty, along with the draw by doctoral students for other University resources (library services, computing support, laboratories, etc.) were recognized as clearly variable over the dissertation phase of one's program. Matching the credits of enrollment per term with an actual semesterly use of University resources was judged to be impractical. The point in relationship to this

proposal is that credits of dissertation registration are not reflective of actual effort or resource utilization. They are simply indicative that one has fulfilled the credit earning components of a doctoral program and is proceeding to work on the dissertation.

Against the backdrop of the minimum registration requirement for dissertation level doctoral students are a handful of policies that don't work particularly well when a doctoral student reaches the dissertation stage. Merit based State funded graduate support awards (fellowships & assistantships) are available at the University to support full-time study. The award of tuition scholarships to cover the tuition cost of enrollment typically accompanies these stipended awards. Currently, in order for dissertation level students to be considered as full-time and therefore eligible for stipended awards, they must register for 12 credits if a fellow or 7 credits if an assistant. These enrollments do not reflect actual effort on the dissertation. They are simply executed at these levels to insure eligibility for the stipended award. Students have not been overly concerned about this registration requirement due to the commonly accompanying tuition scholarships, although there has been a bit of recent concern given the implementation of increased fees not covered by the scholarships. However, deans department chairs and program directors consider the commitment of such tuition scholarships as carrying significant opportunity cost. That is, the cost of not being able to use such funds to attract either more or stronger students. Should the full-time definition shift as proposed, dissertation level enrollees would be full-time at one credit and eligible for stipended awards without inflated credit hours of enrollment. Assuming steady allocations, deans and department chairs would be able to either enrich or stretch their merit based awards.

While it may be true that funded students are not terribly troubled by the dissertation registration situation, there are many unfunded students who are. Their situation especially deserves close examination in regard to the full-time (and therefore half-time) definition as well. On the surface, one might expect unfunded dissertation enrollees to register only for the required minimum credits to maintain their good academic standing in the doctoral program. Yet, in the Fall 1998 and 1999 semesters, there were close to 100 seemingly unfunded doctoral students who enrolled for more than the minimum required. The Fall 1999 population of such students was surveyed in order to gain a better understanding of their registration behavior. The survey response rate was 62%. 15% of respondents indicated they enrolled beyond the three-credit minimum in order to qualify for fellowships or assistantships from grants or contracts. In all likelihood, it was State tuition scholarships that accompanied these awards on soft funds – again a concern for the deans, chairs and program directors. 4% mistakenly enrolled for more than 3 credits in order to fulfill visa requirements, 8% did so for a variety of miscellaneous reasons, 8% did so in order to be certified in a manner that would allow for external health insurance coverage and 75% did so in order to defer repayment of college student loans or qualify for new loans. (The responses do not total to 100% since a small number of individuals identified more than one reason for enrolling beyond three credits.) The vast majority of unfunded dissertation enrollees who enrolled beyond the minimum credits required did so for financial aid reasons. Dissertation enrollees who did not need to defer payment on prior loans or get new loans did not need to register beyond the minimum. Those who did need to defer or secure new loans had to spend more simply to qualify. Those apparently least able to afford the larger registrations were those who had to! Fairness and equity for students affected by our graduate enrollment policies could be significantly improved with the shift in policy as proposed.

The notion of certifiable full-time status for dissertation level doctoral students is a common one throughout the nation. Many institutions simply require such a one-credit enrollment while others have an access or matriculation fee in lieu of enrollment. To a certain degree, these practices are predicated on the assumption that tuition for 60 or more course credits in a doctoral program has already been deposited and that dissertation work need not be so costly to the students.

B. Assistants at nine credits

For many years, students appointed to full graduate assistantship positions have been encouraged to register for nine credits and afforded eligibility for tuition scholarships at that level. This is a very common expectation at doctoral institutions. Yet, the description of assistantships, fellowships and tuition scholarships appearing in the Graduate Bulletin indicates an expected load of 15 credits per academic year. This discrepancy is both confusing to students and potentially counterproductive. The State University

System allows the campus to be credited for one full-time enrollment for a doctoral level graduate assistant enrolled at the nine-credit threshold. This proposal seeks to end the confusion by modifying the Bulletin description of enrollment expectations. It will appropriately and additionally allow for full enrollment credit to the campus.

C. Field enrollments certifiable as full-time

There are a handful of academic programs with fieldwork requirements that cause students to be engaged full-time while registered for less than twelve credits. The GAC has acted previously to authorize the full-time certification of such students. Specifying that such class exceptions may be considered and extending the authorizing authority to include the Dean of Graduate Studies is simply intended to improve the mechanisms for such action when warranted.

D. Leaves available up to candidacy

With the reduction of dissertation registration to a minimum of one required credit per term, the dissertation load registration becomes more of an on-going matriculation charge and less a reflection of academic instruction. Accordingly, the change in practice to allow leaves only up to the dissertation/candidacy point is viewed as a fair trade off to keep students involved and on track.

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To: Graduate Academic Council

From: Richard Irving, Chair
GAC Committee on Curriculum & Instruction

Date: December 12, 2000

Subj.: Report and Recommendations

The GAC Curriculum Committee met on November 16, 2000. In attendance were Karin Reinhold, Richard Irving (Chair), Kevin Quinn, Cliff Ellis and Jon Bartow (Staff to the Committee). The Committee reviewed twelve proposals. Two were tabled to allow for solicitation of additional relevant information. The remaining ten are summarized below and recommended to the Council for action as listed:

1. Proposals for the curriculum of six programs within the School of Education were presented by Associate Education Dean Sandra Mathison, who had accepted an invitation from the Committee to provide introductory remarks about the proposals. Dr. Mathison guided the Committee to gain an understanding about why the changes are necessary and how the education faculty have opted to craft revisions to their programs. The revised programs will need to be submitted for re-registration purposes to the State Education Department (SED). She alerted the Committee to the following:

SED has mandated that all programs leading to teacher certification be re-registered. There are new SED regulations that change the types and titles of teaching certificates that will be issued. There will be initial teaching certificates and professional teaching certificates. Certification candidates will be required to pass a qualifying exam. Our programs must produce graduates who pass this exam at a rate greater than 80%. The new regulations include various requirements of certificate candidates, including: six credits of literacy; media & technology; training for classroom inclusion and certain classroom assessment mandates – prevention of child abuse, drug abuse & violence. Professional certification will require a twelve-credit linkage between pedagogy and NYS learning standards. Continuous professional education will be expected of certified teachers.

The Education curriculum proposals incorporate certification contact requirements in the programs to accommodate the new SED certification titles. In light of the new requirements, it is the intent of the School of Education to discontinue the undergraduate teaching minor at the University.

The propose curricula for the following (revised) programs were individually reviewed:

- a. Reading, changing the name to Literacy and creating 2 tracks within the program: birth to grade six or grade five through twelve
- b. Special Education
- c. Basic Classroom Teaching, changing the name to Secondary Education
- d. Educational Psychology & Statistics
- e. TESOL
- f. Special Education & Reading (Dual Program)

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the above listed Education curriculum proposals by the GAC.

2. The Committee considered two proposals related to the Ph.D. program in Spanish. The first is a request to establish a series of doctoral level course entries in the Department of Latin American & Caribbean Studies (LACS) for students enrolling in the Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Cultural Studies track of the program. After investigation it was documented that the faculty in both the LACS Department and the Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures were supportive of the establishment of these routine course entries. The second proposal is a general revision to the Ph.D. program intended to “serve the students better and prepare them for today’s job market...[with a] program more coherent, demanding and up-to-date.” The program remains at 60 credits total.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of both of the Spanish Ph.D. proposals.

3. The Committee considered a proposal to revise the M.A. English program. The revised curriculum consolidates the previous general and writing sequences, increases the required credits to 32 (from 30), establishes a thesis course and a tutorial/exam course, and eliminates foreign language as a requirement.

After examining the proposal in detail, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend the changes be approved by the GAC.

4. The Committee examined a proposal to create a new track in the M.S. Biology program in Forensic Molecular Biology. The track has been developed in response to a strong and growing demand for training in this area. This thirty-credit track in the Biology program is very well detailed and documented, having been thoroughly reviewed at three prior levels in the College or Arts & Sciences.

The Committee strongly endorses the proposal and recommends it unanimously to the GAC for approval.