

## Graduate Academic Council 2009 – 2010

Minutes of the Council meeting of November 9, 2009  
Approved by the Council on February 2, 2010.

In attendance: J. Baronner (staff), J. Bartow (staff), F. Bolton (staff), [S. Commuri](#), C. Fox, L. Fuller; T. Groves, J. Kimball, Gary Kleppel (Guest), L. Kranich (Chair), Neil V Murray (Guest), H. Miller, Donald Orokos (Guest), M. Pryse,

Unable to attend: [S. Chittur](#); N. Fahrenkopf, K. Reinhold

1. The minutes from 9/23/09 were approved unanimously subject to minor corrections.
2. Dean's report – M. Pryse

Dean Pryse mentioned that the GSS review is nearing completion and GAC should receive a copy of the final report by semester end. The Dean emphasized the report from the Provost's Task Force will include *no* funding recommendations but will likely contain panel ratings of doctoral programs, although these may be presented as a bar graph.

The Dean provided a copy of Chair Kranich's letter to her requesting the GSS review panel reports of the individual programs as per Senate Charter Sections X.4.5 and X.4.5.1. The Dean asked that time be reserved for discussion of this matter at today's meeting.

3. Chair's report – L. Kranich

Since the last GAC meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, there have been two Senate Executive Committee (SEC) meetings and one Senate meeting.

At the SEC meeting on October 5<sup>th</sup>, Chair Michael Range mentioned that Senate Bill 0809-09, Senate Charter Clarifying Amendment on Graduate Courses, remains on the President's desk. The President is concerned that some of the language in the bill is ambiguous, and the bill has been sent to Governance for modification.

No GAC-related issues were discussed at the October 19<sup>th</sup> Senate meeting.

Several topics were discussed at the November 2<sup>nd</sup> SEC meeting: (1) The new Chancellor is beginning a system-wide strategic planning process which will be completed by mid-February. As part of the process, each SUNY campus will formulate its own strategic plan. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study that is currently underway will serve as the starting point for our campus plan. (2) It was pointed out that there are inconsistencies between the information appearing on some departmental web pages and the Graduate Bulletin and/or Graduate Assistantship, Fellowship and Tuition Scholarship guidelines issued by the Office of Graduate Studies. (3) The question was raised whether the recently approved MA Women's Studies/PhD Sociology degree program would serve as a prototype for other such cross-departmental degrees. (4) Finally, the SEC discussed the letter sent by Chair Kranich to Dean Pryse regarding GAC's responsibility to consider graduate program assessments, including the GSS program reviews.

#### 4. Committee Reports

##### Committee on Admissions & Academic Standing

The Committee had nothing to report.

##### Committee on Curriculum & Instruction

The Committee reviewed three items.

##### 1. Advanced Graduate Certificate in Professional Science Management:

This proposal was first discussed by GAC at its meeting on 5/11/09. At that time, the Council recommended several changes to the proposal. The proposal was then modified and resubmitted to GAC which remanded it to CC&I for further review.

The Committee believes the language now reads correctly. Questions were raised concerning prerequisites for “PLUS” courses and differences between the “PLUS” options for alternative “tracks” (see CC&I report). Nevertheless, the Committee felt that all previously raised concerns and questions have been adequately addressed in the present version and voted unanimously to approve the proposal.

The Council discussed the proposal and an e-mail sent earlier today from Jon Bartow regarding prerequisites. Of the proposed Public Administration courses, RPAD 506 does not require a prerequisite. The Department distinguished between two personnel courses, where Forensic Bio students can choose RPAD 618, “Public Personnel Administration,” while Biodiversity, Conservation, and Policy students need to choose BMGT 514, “Human Resources Management.” For consistency across tracks, it was agreed to modify the admissions policy to restrict eligibility to those (former) students who received their degrees within 5 years. It was noted that this policy may change in the future as the program goes forward. The Council voted unanimously to approve the proposal, which now goes to the Senate Executive Committee before proceeding to the full Senate.

##### 2. School of Public Health – Public Health Surveillance & Preparedness Certificate:

The School of Public Health proposed adding a course to its Public Health Surveillance & Preparedness Certificate in order to give students the option of taking the in-class course HEpi 605, “Infectious Disease Epidemiology,” or an online course HEpi 625, “Zoonosis.” All other aspects of the certificate remain unchanged. The Committee voted to endorse the School of Public Health’s proposal and move the proposal to GAC for action. The Council voted unanimously to pass the proposal.

##### 3. School of Education – Proposal to Revise the MS in ETAP Degree Program:

The School of Education proposed dropping ETAP 530, “Writing and Reading across the Curriculum” from its MS in ETAP degree program since students have already completed literacy-related courses as part of their teacher certification. This would

reduce the number of credits required to complete the program from 33-35 to 30-32. The Council voted unanimously to approve the proposal.

#### Committee on Educational Policy & Procedure

The Committee had nothing to report.

#### 5. Revised Committee Memberships

Jon Bartow solicited additional teaching faculty for GAC committee memberships from schools and colleges that are currently underrepresented. Nominees were included in an updated committee membership list that was distributed earlier. Prof. Lynn Gelzheiser (Ed. & Couns. Psych.) and Prof. Allison Redlich (Criminal Justice) were proposed as members of the Committee on Educational Policy & Procedures. The Council unanimously approved the two new committee appointments.

#### 6. Graduate Student Support (GSS) Review

Chair Kranich's November 1, 2009 letter to Dean Pryse was discussed. According to the Charter of the University Senate, Sections X.4.5 and X.4.5.1, GAC has the responsibility to "review proposals that would affect the continuation of graduate programs" [Section X.4.5] and to "consider assessment reports pertaining to graduate programs including those from the Council on Academic Assessment and recommend changes it deems desirable." [Section X.4.5.2] The Chair requested that Dean Pryse forward the GSS review panels' completed assessment reports of the Ph.D. programs to the Council. Dean Pryse mentioned that the individual program reports will contain evaluations *only* and not recommendations for continuing or discontinuing programs nor for funding. Any such recommendations would be forwarded to the Council, per the language of the Charter. The Dean noted that Charter Section X.4.5.1 is subsidiary to Section X.4.5. Since the panel reports will not address the continuation of programs, Section X.4.5 and its subsidiary clause do not apply. The Chair informed the Council that he will forward the matter to the Governance Council for review and interpretation of the Charter on this point.

#### 7. Cross-Disciplinary MA/PhD Programs

The Chair mentioned that at the SEC meeting on 11/2/09 a question was raised whether the cross-departmental MA Womens' Studies/PhD Sociology program, which was approved by the Senate last year, has or might serve as a precedent for other similar proposals. Dean Pryse said that no one has approached her on the subject nor has Graduate Studies solicited any such proposals. Future combinations may be proposed, but they would emerge from the schools or colleges.

#### 8. Departmental Web Pages

Chair Kranich mentioned that another issue raised at the Executive meeting was that of inconsistencies between departmental web pages and information appearing in the Graduate Bulletin and/or Graduate Assistantship, Fellowship and Tuition Scholarship guidelines issued

by the Office of Graduate Studies. An example was given where the English Department's web page states that doctoral students entering with a BA receive a five-year assistantship, whereas the Assistantship Guidelines state that such students are eligible for four years. Jon Bartow commented on the problem that programs adopt or change policies without notifying the Graduate Studies Office or GAC. Unfortunately, staff is not available to police the situation. Jon mentioned the English Department example has been addressed, and a correction is in the works. Dean Pryse mentioned another example involving information about the Richard Thorne Fellowship. She has spoken to the Dean of the College of Arts & Science requesting a correction. Dean Pryse believes inconsistencies should be brought directly to her attention, and she would ensure corrections are made. Chair Kranich mentioned possible legal ramifications and suggested a memo be sent to Departments stressing the need to ensure their web page postings are consistent with the Graduate Bulletin. Jon Bartow will compose a letter and send it to all departments. A Council member suggested explicitly stating a student's eligibility in the acceptance letter. Another suggestion was to contact the University Counsel to inquire of the legal issues and obligations.

9. Guidelines for Graduate Assistantships, Fellowships, and Tuition Scholarships.

Chair Kranich inquired about the process by which these guidelines are adopted and changed. Dean Pryse mentioned that she inherited the guidelines, and they are intended for departmental assistants and secretaries. Some items are stipulated under Graduate Student Employees Union contract. Dean Pryse has discussed the issue of funding limitations with graduate deans at other universities. The four-year limitation applies only to state money provided to doctoral students. However, such a restriction is not mandated by the State but rather is a University policy or norm. After reviewing the financial history, Dean Pryse discovered that both student funding and diversity funding were not being properly dispensed. Changes were implemented and stipends were increased. Of the 500 or so students supported annually, around 100-125 are new-to-program students. Budget cuts and tuition increases have resulted in fewer funded doctoral students for this year. Chair Kranich mentioned that the Senate Executive Committee was not proposing that the four year cap be increased. Mainly, the question raised was *how* the guidelines were enacted and whether governance has a role in establishing and approving changes to the guidelines. Jon Bartow mentioned that the guidelines are an amended version of those he inherited upon entering the Graduate Studies Office in 1980. He mentioned that over the years the Graduate Dean and/or the Provost have been working with the colleges or schools to implement required guideline changes. Governance became involved only when it involved academic performance. Dean Pryse mentioned that outgoing acceptance letters call students' attention to the University Guidelines and, in particular, to the proscriptions from seeking other employment, the academic and workload expectations, etc. Chair Kranich mentioned that from his perspective the guidelines pertain to funding matters which lie within the purview of the Graduate Dean.

10. Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study

A faculty-wide e-mail was sent last week regarding the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study. The draft is on the wiki, and Chair Kranich informed the Council he would provide the link to members. The draft has a short time table with a December 7<sup>th</sup> deadline. GAC has been asked to review and comment on Chapters 5, 6 and 9. After a brief discussion, it was decided that Council members would read the draft and forward their respective comments to both the Chair and Jon Bartow for assimilation. A meeting will be scheduled the week before or after Thanksgiving, if necessary. Chair Kranich emphasized that the audience for our response will be the drafters of the self-study.

11. New Business

School of Education Title

The School of Education is preparing for accreditation review and is requesting that official program title changes be approved for two of their groups of programs. The School wants the State-registered program titles updated to conform with the titles used by the offering UAlbany Departments. The Council voted unanimously to approve the title changes.

12. Future Meetings

Tuesday, December 8, 2:30-4:00 PM, UAB 320

END OF GAC 11/9/2009 MINUTES

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