

Agenda
Ad hoc University-Wide Governance Committee
Oct. 8, 2004

1. Approval of minutes of Sept. 17
2. Oct. 4 Senate meeting
3. Consideration of Graduate Curriculum and Academic Standing issues
 - a. SX.4.3 (GAC responsibility for the conduct of the University's graduate educational program)
 - b. SX.4.4 (GAC review proposals for new graduate programs)
 - c. SX.4.5 (GAC Review proposals that would affect the continuation of graduate programs; 4.5.1—Consider assessment reports pertaining to graduate programs and recommend changes; 4.5.2—Recommend suspension or discontinuation of program)
 - d. SX.4.6 (GAC through Committee on Curriculum and Instruction: responsibility for the graduate academic curriculum; 4.6.1—Consider revisions in existing graduate degree programs; 4.6.2—Review proposals for new graduate courses and changes to existing graduate courses; 4.6.3—Submit recommended changes and new courses to GAC for approval)
 - e. SX.4.7 (GAC through Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing: establish criteria for determining academic standing and admissions policy and its application; 4.7.1—Review changes to standards and procedures for admission to graduate study recommended by schools, colleges, departments; 4.7.2—Review changes in standards and procedures for admission to candidacy for graduate degrees recommended by schools, colleges, departments; 4.7.3—review actions of the deans and department chairs dealing with academic standing or academic grievances; 4.7.4—Submit recommended changes and actions to GAC for approval)
 - f. SX.4.8 (GAC through Committee on Educational Policy and Procedure: provide recommendations on policies concerning the administration and conduct of graduate programs; 4.8.1—Recommend graduate academic regulations to GAC; 4.8.2—Insure and review procedures for individual academic grievances at school and college levels; 4.8.3—Submit recommendations to GAC for approval)
4. Discussion of Draft Report of Subcommittee on Research
5. Discussion of Draft Report of Subcommittee on Promotion and Continuing Appointments
6. Discussion of Draft Report: Introduction

The Committee considered several recommendations relevant to the operation of the Graduate Academic Council.

The Committee was in general agreement that:

1. A university-wide faculty governance structure is appropriate for establishing university-wide policy including academic and admission standards and procedures for course and program approvals, revisions, and terminations.
2. A timely and widely accessible system of dissemination for course and program proposals would allow greater awareness of programmatic changes, their potential impacts, and possible roles for interdisciplinary collaborations across campus. It might also facilitate informal and collegial resolution of interdepartmental issues arising from curricular change. A potential mechanism could make use of information technology (e.g., email communication) to notify interested parties of new proposals and direct them to a university website to view details.

Regarding other matters of relevance to the work of the Graduate Academic Council, consensus had not been yet reached.

1. In general, there was agreement about the value of having course proposals and revisions determined at the level of the school or college. In current practice, course proposals are forwarded from Schools and Colleges to Committee on Curriculum and Instruction of the Graduate Academic Council. It is unusual for the full Council to deliberate over specific course proposals; most of these are routinely approved. The subcommittee's review of practices of other institutions indicates that it is relatively unusual for individual course proposals to be subject to university-wide review. In spite of the fact that members of the committee showed substantial agreement with this proposition, some members expressed concerns about the need for a mechanism to require university-wide faculty review in exceptional cases, for example, when requested by a Dean or Faculty Curriculum Committee. A university-wide notification system for new proposals would facilitate the process of canvassing the campus for concerns. Some members also found attractive a model used at UMass-Amherst where departments are allowed to mount courses without school/college-level review for three years.
2. Most members of the Committee were agreed that some University body should be available to hear students' academic appeals. There was some discussion about the possibility of allowing academic grievances to be settled in schools, colleges, or clusters of departments. There was general agreement that a University Ombudsperson would be of significant assistance to both students and faculty in resolving academic appeals.
3. The greatest diversity of opinion centered on mechanisms for review and approval of the creation, termination, or significant revision of academic programs (program changes). Several models were discussed:
 - a. Status quo. One strategy would be to continue to require the Graduate Academic Council to review all program changes. Two of the most significant objections to this model are the timeliness of the Council's deliberations and the lack of subject matter expertise held by members of the GAC.
 - b. Multiple-GAC model. A proposal to improve the timeliness of review of program changes would be to create multiple university-wide review committees that could

share and expedite reviews and reduce the workload for participating committee members.

- c. Cluster model. A third strategy would be to require academic units to form clusters. Each cluster would have its own Academic Council to review and approve program changes. This would allow review outside the School or College but better ensure the expertise of reviewers.
- d. Appeal model. A fourth strategy would allow schools and colleges to have final approval of program changes except in instances where other academic units request university-wide or cluster review. Such requests could emanate from program directors, department chairs, deans, faculty academic committees, or the president of the Graduate Student Organization.

Each of these models would be greatly facilitated by the university-wide dissemination system for program change proposals described above.