

## **Graduate Academic Council 2008 – 2009**

Minutes of the Council meeting of April 27, 2009  
Approved by the Council on May 11, 2009

In attendance: J. Baronner (staff), J. Bartow (staff), F. Bolton (staff), G. Denbeaux,  
S. Friedman, L. Kranich (Chair), J. McLaughlin, W. Meredith, A. Pomerantz,  
M. Pryse, B. Shaw, C. Smith

Unable to attend: T. Clyman, M. Earleywine, K. Reinhold

### 1. Dean's Report – M. Pryse

Dean Pryse did not provide a report at today's meeting.

### 2. Chair's Report – L. Kranich

Chair Kranich mentioned that he and Senate Chair John Delano attended an information session convened by Dean Pryse on the upcoming Doctoral Program Review. The last such review was done in 1997-98. Members of the previous Review Committee were invited to share their experiences and recommendations. At the bequest of Dean Pryse, this item will be discussed under New Business.

At the April 6<sup>th</sup> Senate meeting, the proposal to suspend admissions to the MA Public Affair & Policy Program was passed by the Senate.

Chair Kranich was out of the country and thus unable to attend the SEC meeting on April 20. Nominations for the Doctoral Review Committee were discussed, and recommendations will go to the Provost. The Provost will determine the size and composition of the Committee.

Interim President signed the proposal for terminating the School of Education's Graduate Certificate in Urban Education.

Jon Bartow mentioned that some bills appearing on the Senate website are listed as having been approved when they have not yet been so. Chair Kranich requested that Jon provide him with a listing of approved and non-approved bills.

### 3. Committee Reports

#### Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing

No report was given since no business has been conducted by the Committee.

#### Committee on Curriculum and Instruction – S. Friedman

Chair Friedman mentioned the Committee met to complete previous business from a prior meeting as well as to handle new business. Three items were considered and subsequently approved. First, the School of Business proposed an addition of an elective track in Nano Technology to its evening MBA program. The Committee did inquire with the School to

### Committee on Curriculum and Instruction (Continued)

clarify the number of credits. Second, the Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences proposed a revision to their MS Atmospheric Science Program. It would provide more options for students. The original request was for a fall 2008 implementation, but the Committee informed the Department that implementation would not be possible (xx possible.; then next sentence) In the context of this restructuring and of the incorporation of geology courses into Atmospheric Science. The Committee reviewed many course action forms. Finally, the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy proposed a modification of its MPA Program. A fifth area of substantive public policy concentration was approved. The Council unanimously approved the motion in support of the CC&I report.

### Committee on Educational Policy and Procedures – C. Smith

The Committee was charged with reviewing a proposal to change the current policy on shared resource courses. The current policy states “paired courses dealing with the same topic, one a 400-level (e.g., His 458, The Napoleonic Era (3)) and one an introductory graduate 500-level, (e.g., His 558 The Napoleonic Era (3) that meet with the same instructor, at the same time, in the same classroom”. The Committee recommends that shared resource courses be a course pairing of a 400 and 500 *or* a pairing of a 400 and 600 level course. Instructor permission is required for an undergraduate to enroll to guarantee the student is academically prepared since the course and/or discussion could be more advanced. Chair Smith read the following from the 1971-1972 Graduate Bulletin for 500-599 courses: “First year graduate courses. Open to seniors with appropriate background, with consent of major department, and the department offering the course.” She noted that the policy has not been updated since 1972. Chair Smith emphasized that a shared resources course does not translate into an undergraduate automatically registering for the course.

Council discussion followed. A member inquired if a coding could be applied to those undergraduate students registering for these shared courses. Coding is completed by the Registrar’s Office. It was emphasized that permission is still required by either the instructor or the department offering the course. A member commented that in her experience it was mostly undergraduate students that enrolled in 400 level and some upper level students when it came to shared resource courses. She believes that seniors should not have to seek permission and that grad students should be informed ahead of time that they are sharing their classes with undergrads. Chair Smith mentioned that the History professor the Council dealt with wanted the undergrads to be aware that the class entailed upper level students. A request was made to change the requirement of instructor permission as a necessity for undergraduates to enroll in shared resources courses. It was recommended that instructor permission could be required, but would be recommended for all courses; it would be left to the professor to decide. A member questioned whether *all* of the history department is supportive of the proposed changes or merely only the one professor the Committee consulted. It was noted that some courses probably have slipped through the cracks with the requirement for instructor and/or departmental permission. Some departments offer courses starting at the 600 level while others at 500. There probably are shared resources courses for 400-600 level where a 400-500 is not offered, but it’s believed there are not many. It was strongly advised of the need for soliciting broader departmental input. Two issues were

Committee on Educational Policy and Procedures (Continued)

raised: (1) some graduate instructions may use shared resource courses to fill classrooms with extra students and (2) if contents covers three levels of 400, 500, and 600, which departments would utilize 600 as master's level versus those that have both 500 and 600 level courses. Would they utilize 500 in lieu of 600? Enrollment in pre-existing 400 and 600 level courses should require the permission of chair and not just the professor. It was noted that the present policy requires no permission if an undergrad wishes to register for a 400 level course. A member objected to the implication that low student enrollment would result in certain graduate instructions using shared resource courses to fill classrooms with extra students. If a course is being developed, an instructor is not able to obtain students overnight. Also, if an instructor is cognizant that the course is two levels, both instructor and student will benefit from the mix. Shared resources courses are more difficult to teach. 500 and 600 level courses are typically the entry level courses taken by Master's students. The objection was made to a 500 level being taught in order to obtain students to fill a classroom. The question was raised as to whether the policy could limit it to 400 or 500 level with the exception of those starting at 600. An example was given where a junior wishes to take a higher level course because the instructor is teaching an unusual course, but a doctoral may wish to take the same class due to the course's unusual nature. It was noted that in programs offering masters or doctoral courses, the criteria is higher. Masters students are told that if they enroll, and do well, in a graduate course, they will be considered for admission to a doctoral program. A member expressed concern for what grad students obtain from the course. The suggestion was made to adjust the policy to allow exceptions *only* for those programs with 600 level courses. The Chair mentioned his support of the policy being specific for higher level students using a 500 level for their 600 level. However, it seems a little hasty to grant approval without providing thoughts to other structures affecting the proposal. It was noted that the sanctity of graduate education is GAC's duty to safeguard. There are not more than five courses in any given term. An additional hour weekly meeting should be considered for this change. The Council should not endorse a new policy or drop an old policy quickly. UAC approval is required for the proposal before being forwarded to the Senate for approval. Another factor to consider is resources. We don't have resources to offer all the desired courses at both the undergrad and grad levels. Thus, we have the proposal to combine shared resources. Seniors and Juniors can register for a 400 level offering. A student may also register for a 500 level but permission is required, along with the need to show ability to take the course. Chair Smith commented that the proposal was not based on 500 level. The Committee considered the possibility of stepping back and looking at the differences between 500 and 600 level courses. She reminded the Council that a unit still has the option to not allow undergraduate students admission to a course. Chair Smith mentioned that the originally proposed history documentary studies program has shared resource courses that are 400/600, and the department was questioned. The Committee is willing to seek departmental comments in addition to the History Department. It was suggested that the Committee contact department assistant deans in charge of curriculums at schools and colleges. Mention was made of allowing students to register for some 600 level courses without having met the 500 prerequisite. Such an agreement would need to work for everyone in order for it to become a policy. A member commented that it was more difficult to teach grad students when undergrads are in the same class. Undergrad students do not possess the professional investment in the field that comes with grad

students. The member expressed concern of a grad student's encountering a "dummying down" piece within the course when grads and undergrads are mixed in the same class. The current policy provides some limit on the number being offered per semester. For those small and/or emerging programs where shared resources are utilized and respectable energy is not given to grad students, their programs will not run long. Grad students will be unhappy and will leave the program resulting in programs being dropped. It was noted that the approval process is completed by the school or college, and Registrar's Office polices the program.

The Council moved to table the issue. E-mail suggestions or comments should be forwarded to Chair Smith for her Committee.

4. New Business

Jon Bartow informed the Council that the College of Computing and Information have submitted a proposal to establish and advanced certificate program. The certificate will be in Professional Science Management and will be an add-on to the existing Master degree programs. The program allowing individual study in both the scientific field as well as study in management would offer improved employment opportunities for our students. This type of certificate is offered nationally at other universities. The Committee on Curriculum and Instruction meets May 6<sup>th</sup> and could review the proposal before Council meets again May 11<sup>th</sup>. The Council agreed to pre-screen the proposal as well as having CCI review the proposal at their May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Jon Bartow will e-mail the proposal to Council members.

Draft Plans for a Study of the Graduate Student Program and Support – M. Pryse

Dean Pryse provided a DRAFT plan for a study of graduate student program and support.

Council discussion followed. The question was raised as to whether separating domestic and international GRE scores would place more weight on scores for international students. The question was raised as to whether we may utilize different categories in addition to part time students since we use different criteria for funded students. The Dean mentioned that departments will need to come forward with their wishes. There is no pre-fixed agenda for the outcome. We will request departmental input by the beginning of September. Council members were requested to review the draft and provide comments to the Dean with the Provost being copied on the e-mail.

7. Future Meetings (held in UAB 320, Western Avenue)  
Monday 5/11, 2:45-4:15

END OF GAC 4/27/2009 MINUTES

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