

Meeting of the Graduate Council February 6, 2006

Minutes

Present

Councilors: Arts and Sciences—Kristine Anthis, Jon Bloch, Steve Burian, Ken Florey, Ross Gingrich, Gerry Lesley, Patricia Olney, Lori Verplaeste, James Tait, Jessie Whitehead; Business—Omid Nodoushani, Durga Prasad, James Thorson; CLIS—Yan Liu, Hrvoje Podnar, Gwendolyn Nowlan, Jane McGinn; Education-, Beena Achhpal, Bernard Hayford, Robert Axtell, Nancy Boyles, Kay Corbett, William Diffley, Joy Fopiano, Norris Haynes, Doris Marino, Beth Taylor, David Squires; HHS—Mary Bellandese, Jean Breny Bontempi, Eileen Crutchlow, Roy Hunter, Edward Lynch, Mary Purdy, Al Siegel.

Guests/Observers: Provost Selase Williams, Dean Sandra Holley, Associate Dean Roseann Diana, Assistant Dean Lisa Galvin, Dr. Deane Hetric from Foreign Languages, Dr. Henry Hein from the Educational Foundations Program, and Dr. Virginia Metaxas from History.

1. Call to Order

Dr. Gerry Lesley

Chairperson Gerald Lesley called the meeting to order at 1:09 pm.

2. Disposition of Minutes of December 5, 2005

A motion was made to approve the minutes of December 5, 2005. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Announcements

a. Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Selase Williams

Dr. Williams informed the Graduate Council that the university was moving forward with the implementation of the Academic Strategic Plan and coming up with an agenda that would determine resource priorities. To this end, they had formed a 19-person steering committee with strong faculty representation. There were two faculty members as co-chairs, two members from the Faculty Senate and two faculty members appointed by University President Cheryl Norton. He encouraged Councilors' participation in working group sessions and focus groups that would give faculty a voice in crafting the Mission Statement, identifying the core values of the university, matters related to workforce needs, and other issues that would ultimately have an impact on resource allocation.

b. Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies

Dean Sandra Holley

Dean Holley announced that graduate enrollment statistics, as presented by the Office of Management and Institutional Research on January 13, showed that full-time enrollment increased by 3% from last spring. She said we had a total of 888 full time graduate students for this spring compared to 861 at the same time last year. Part time

enrollment decreased by 1% resulting in a total of 2,299 part-time graduate students for the Spring semester 2006.

Dean Holley reminded the Council that we would celebrate our eighth Graduate Commencement on Thursday, May 25, 2006. She said there would be two ceremonies to accommodate over 500 graduate students who have indicated that they plan to attend. The speaker for the afternoon ceremony will be Dr. Blenda Wilson, President and CEO of the Nellie Mae Foundation. The speaker for the evening ceremony will be Dr. Thomas Meredith, Commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Mississippi.

Dean Holley noted that a copy of the Graduate Commencement and Hooding Ceremony guide was mailed to all students who have submitted a commencement participation form to the Graduate School office. This form was also sent to all graduate program chairpersons and coordinators, and distributed to all Councilors. She said additional copies were available at the Graduate School office.

The Graduate School will host its Open House on Thursday, April 20th. Dean Holley announced. She noted that the Graduate School relies on the active participation of a representative from each graduate program and said she looked forward to a successful event.

Finally, Dean Holley said that the announcement of the 2006-2007 GRF and GSGA competition would be posted on the Graduate School Website on Monday, February 13, 2006. She said the closing deadline for the submission of applications is Monday, March 27, 2006.

4. Reports

a. Academic Standards

Dr. Ken Florey

Dr. Ken Florey, Chair of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC), announced that the committee had reviewed the five-year reports of the Educational Foundations and Foreign Languages graduate programs. He said the first would be presented later on by Dr. Henry Hein, coordinator of the Educational Foundations Program, and the latter by Dr. Deane Hetric, Chairman of the Department of Foreign Languages.

b. Procedures

Dr. Jane McGinn

Dr. Jane McGinn, Chair of the Procedures Committee, announced the committee had recommended four nominations to the Graduate Faculty. The approved nominees were: Tricia Lin Yi-Chun from Women's Studies, Ruth Eren from Communication Disorders, and Dr. Olivier Nicaise from the Chemistry department. The motion to approve these nominations passed unanimously.

Dr. Mary Purdy, Chair of the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee (GCCC), announced that the committee continued to work on defining the requirements of interdisciplinary (IDS) programs, and had reviewed two new course proposals and one program revision. The committee recommended that PCH 549: Public Health and Leadership and PCH 573 Health Communications be tabled until more information could be obtained about how they fit into the program and to make sure they did not duplicate efforts in other departments. Dr. Purdy announced that her committee had decided that anyone proposing a new course would have to attend the session of the curriculum committee in which their proposal is reviewed, because it would expedite the review process. The GCCC would make this a new requirement.

A new specialization for the M.S. in Special Education: Autism Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disabilities was approved by the GCCC as written. Dr. Purdy said the curriculum committee believed this new specialization fulfilled a real need and could only improve the Special Education program. The motion to approve these recommendations passed unanimously.

5. Old Business

Dr. Gerry Lesley

Dr. Lesley said he only had a few minor announcements to make under old business. First, nominations to the Graduate Council and courses to be reviewed will appear on the Graduate Council agenda so those proposing courses and nominees will know when the Council will be voting on their submissions. Deadlines will be implemented for submitting both nominees to the Graduate Council and course proposals.

6. New Business

a. Council/Committee Room Assignments for Spring 2006 Dr. Gerry Lesley

Dr. Gerry Lesley announced that the new meeting room for the Procedures Committee will be EN C009. The new room for the Graduate Council will be EN C112. The assignment of rooms for the ACS and Curriculum committee will be in EN B121A/B. He said room assignments would be posted on the Graduate School Website.

b. Discussion of School Dean Approval of ASC Report Dr. Gerry Lesley

Dr. Lesley asked the Graduate Council for feedback on the idea to have Academic Deans sign off on graduate program five-year-reports submitted to the Academic Standards committee for review. He said Deans could address matters related to viability criteria and expedite the review process. Objections related to faculty governance and questioning the assumption that Deans would have time to review the reports and be helpful in every case were raised by some Councilors. The vote was unanimous against the recommendation that Deans be officially brought into

the review process, but Dr. Florey reminded the Councilors that Deans already play an important role as the ASC's review of every program is submitted to the Deans. In addition, the school Dean should be provided with a copy of any program report submitted to the ASC according to the established procedures. Everyone agreed that the Deans' role was central but there was no consensus for giving Deans an official role in the review process.

c. Graduate Program Review-Educational Foundations Dr. Ken Florey

Dr. Florey introduced Dr. Hein, who proceeded to give the Graduate Council a status report of the Educational Foundations program. He emphasized the degree to which they were implementing rigorous assessment and tracking procedures as well as modeling the program on the highly structured and very effective Educational Leadership program. Dr. Florey said the committee had been impressed by progress made in this program since the last review and had voted to grant the program continuing approval for the next five years. The motion to approve this recommendation passed unanimously

d. Graduate Program Review- Foreign Languages Dr. Ken Florey

Dr. Florey introduced Dr. Deane Hetric, Chair of the Foreign Languages Department, and thanked him for his cooperation with the committee and particularly for the revised report he had given the committee after its initial feedback. In his presentation, Dr. Hetric admitted that the graduate program had structural weaknesses and viability problems. Graduate coordinators received little to no reassigned time, there was generally only one course offered per semester in French and Italian and there was extensive cross-listing of courses. On the other hand, some of its strengths were talented, dedicated students and faculty members. Dr. Florey agreed that the department was noted for the quality of its faculty and for the talents of its students. He also noted, however, that several of the Master's Programs fell significantly below Council standards in terms of admissions and graduations. Moreover, students could not complete any of the MA programs on a full-time basis. He then said that the ASC had voted to grant the Foreign Languages Program conditional approval and offered the Foreign Languages Department its support in its efforts to restructure its program. The motion to approve the ASC's recommendation passed with one abstention.

7. Adjournment

Chairperson Lesley adjourned the meeting at 2:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Olney, Secretary