

November 10, 2015 Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council

Members Present: J. Albert, D. Baker, A. Brown, K. Evans-Jackson, W. Ferguson, R. Gonzales, D. Harrington, J. Heels, R. Hernandez, H. Hurst, A. Khattab, M. Kightley, J. Lemoine, A. Magidin, A. Maida, D. Olivier, P. Morton, C. Roche-Wallace, K. Smith, D. Stevens, C. Taylor, W. Xu, M. Wright, M. Farmer-Kaiser (ex-officio member)

Members Absent: P. Auter, D. Bellar, C. Briggs, S. McInerney

Invited Guests: Dr. Michele Feist, Graduate Faculty Review Committee Chair

The meeting was called to order by W. Ferguson at 2:04 p.m.

Announcements:

The Council voted to approve the October 13, 2015 meeting minutes.

The list of degree candidates was presented to and accepted by the Council.

Committee Reports:

Student Appeals Committee – No report.

Curriculum Committee – Motion made to accept the report of the Curriculum Committee. Motion seconded and carried. W. Ferguson made special note of the effort and dedication exhibited by the members of the Curriculum Committee in getting a great number of course change forms reviewed within a very short timeframe and in time for the Graduate Council meeting. He also took care to request that course change forms be delivered to the committee in the future as received and cleared for committee consideration by Academic Affairs and the Graduate School rather than as a batch.

Fellowship Committee – No report.

Graduate Faculty Membership Review Committee – W. Ferguson welcomed M. Feist to the Graduate Council meeting, offering her the floor to present the Graduate Faculty Membership Review Committee report. M. Feist reported that, prior to the committee meeting, she and M. Farmer-Kaiser reviewed all 76 applications for membership on the Graduate Faculty along with the accompanying recommendations from the three College review entities. She then reported that the committee considered 32 of these applications following the terms set by the University policy. Of these applications, 27 were for Level II membership, while 5 were for Level I membership. The committee recommended 19 applicants for Level II membership; 13 applicants were recommended for appointment at Level I. In addition to providing an overview of the committee's recommendations for appointment, M. Feist presented a few additional items for Council consideration. M. Feist noted that 15 applications were forwarded to the committee for review due to the absence of a recommendation from one of the three independent, concurrent college review entities. The committee, thus, asked M. Farmer-Kaiser to provide letters to

individuals who did not provide a recommendation as required, reminding them of their responsibilities to the graduate faculty application review process; she also asked that copies of these letters be sent to the relevant deans and provost. M. Feist also reported that the Graduate Faculty Membership Review Committee again found continuing concern about graduate faculty applications from individuals who do not hold regular, tenure-track faculty appointments, such as research scientists and other University-affiliated researchers and experts. P. Morton added that the Review Committee also discussed the terminal degree as a prerequisite for graduate faculty status. Finally, M. Feist asked that the Council consider two issues specifically. First, she asked that the Council provide clarity on University guidelines regarding the post-College review process. In particular, the committee requested clarification as to whether the Dean and the Chair are empowered to forward applications that they may feel require additional discussion despite agreement amongst the three College reviews. The policy states: “The Chair of the Committee on Graduate Faculty Membership shall be responsible for reviewing, with the Dean of the Graduate School, all of the applications along with the college recommendations and forwarding applications that require review as specified in the University policy to the Committee on Graduate Faculty Membership for review.” Second, the committee requested clarification regarding how potential publications that are under review, accepted, or in press should be considered. Along these lines, it also asked for guidelines to prevent the same publication from being counted towards scholarly activity in two successive review cycles. On the first point, discussion ensued. M. Farmer-Kaiser asked whether the Chair-Dean review is intended as an administrative function. D. Olivier suggested a simple review for all applications by these two entities seemed reasonable, though A. Magidin noted that recent revisions to the Guidelines for Graduate Faculty membership aimed to decrease the number of reviews. A. Magidin further noted that by allowing these two entities to review those application with which they find issues, faculty may present backlash to only certain applications being reviewed, and thus concluded that this review should be administrative in nature only. M. Kightly and other Council members offered additional support for this position. The Council then turned its attention to the second issue raised. Discussion continued with most noting that blanket terminologies determining qualifying publications would be difficult to devise as the Colleges each maintain their own specific graduate faculty membership criteria. A. Maida argued that if we consider the role of graduate faculty in directing and mentoring students with the most current scholarship, then “in press” and in print articles are more current. A. Magidin clarified that the real issue seemed to be that publications should not be counted twice in the graduate faculty review cycles, prompting M. Kightly to propose that no publication be counted twice and in borderline cases, where concerns are evident that previous applications be consulted. M. Farmer-Kaiser noted that the CVs included with most-recent graduate faculty membership applications are retained in the Graduate School. Finally, D. Baker advocated for the College criterion to be revised and made more objective in terms of what constitutes an acceptable publication. M. Farmer-Kaiser noted here that the recent revision of the College of Liberal Arts criteria includes a statement on such publications. As this discussion closed, the Council turned to voting. First, a motion was made to approve, as recommended by the three College review entities, the appointment of applicants not reviewed by the Graduate Faculty Membership Committee. Motion seconded and passed. Second, the Council reviewed two applications for Level II membership that the Graduate Faculty Membership Committee recommended denial of Level II and appointment, instead, at Level I with a majority vote (rather than a unanimous vote). Upon review and discussion of the College recommendations for the first of these two applications, a motion was made to accept the

Committee's recommendation for appointment at Level I. Motion seconded and passed. Discussion of the second of these two applications focused on the date of publication for two journal publications that, if at least one counted, would qualify the applicant for Level II membership. Additional information was provided that clarified the dates of these publications, which on the CV originally submitted had only included the year of publication with no month or season. Discussion ensued, and led to the determination that one of the two publications clearly fell within the five-year period under consideration. Motion made to approve appointment at Level II for this applicant. Motion seconded and passed. The Council then moved to accept all other recommendations as listed in the Committee report. Motion seconded and passed. Finally, M. Farmer-Kaiser asked that the Council act on the request for clarification as to whether the Dean and the Chair of this committee are empowered to forward applications that they may feel require additional discussion despite agreement amongst the three College reviews or if this was an administrative function only to review the College recommendations and forward those as required by the policy (i.e., those that recommend denial, appointment at a different level than applied for, or are inconsistent or absent). Motion made to clarify that the review of applications/College recommendations by the Dean of the Graduate School and the Committee Chair is intended as administrative only and not a substantive review. Motion seconded and passed with a majority for and one vote against.

Old Business:

R. Gonzales provided a report that the Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Certificate Rules and Regulations had met and discussed its purpose and begun to devise recommendations for rules and regulations that can apply to all Certificate programs universally. That Committee expects to provide additional information at the next Council meeting.

M. Farmer-Kaiser provided an updated version of the Proposed Revisions to University Policies Related to Graduate Assistantships, which has been updated to incorporate faculty and Council feedback. A. Khattab requested that the line "The duties do not involve classroom instruction" for the Research Assistant definition be amended to read "The primary duties do not include classroom instruction." The Council agreed to this amendment and M. Farmer-Kaiser took note of the change. A. Khattab also asked that the requirements and responsibilities for "tuition-waiver only" awards be incorporated into the document. The Council supported this recommendation. A final document will be presented for the Council to vote on at the December meeting.

W. Ferguson reopened the discussion on University outside observers and the continuation of that process. M. Kightly stated that he received informal feedback from many colleagues who believed that practice itself is valuable but that the administrative system is broken. W. Ferguson posited that the process is designed for checks and balances where the student, the graduate faculty, and the University are all represented and treated fairly. Intellectual development for outside observers was determined to be beneficial, though not a reason for continued endorsement. A. Magidin from the College of Sciences and A. Khattab and R. Hernandez from the College of Engineering all stated that the faculty in their college feel that the outside observer practice should not be discontinued as it unnecessarily adds another measure of quality control that is already taking place at the faculty, program, department, and college levels. M. Farmer-

Kaiser offered input that there have been instances in which students have reported being treated unfairly during a defense, and indicated that in such instances the presence of an outside observer is valuable. R. Hernandez argued that because outside observers almost always are from different disciplines and cannot meaningfully contribute to the defense, then their presence is an indication of mistrust between University administration and the Colleges. D. Olivier replied that the College of Education is in support of outside observers and that her colleagues do not view their presence as evidence of any mistrust. She went on to note, however, that they do not wish to see outside observers asked to read dissertations and thus serve as formal committee members. C. Taylor suggested an alternate method to assigning outside observers in the form of open and regular advertisement for all thesis and dissertation defenses, prompting other Council members to agree and support the suggestion. D. Baker inquired into what exactly those observers are meant to do in terms of checks and balances, and if they are really going to report that an entire committee was treating a student unfairly. R. Hernandez and D. Baker both again supported C. Taylor's suggestions for public defenses where anyone could serve as an outside observer instead of a formal assignment by the Graduate School. M. Farmer-Kaiser provided an overview of initial peer institution research conducted by the Graduate School, reporting that there appears to be great variation among other universities. In addition, she indicated a reluctance to base firm conclusions about the need, or lack thereof, for outside observers based on outside observer reports; the Graduate School receives too few responses back from outside observers. She reiterated her concerns that the practice of assigning outside observers is broken and, because both committee chairs and faculty assigned have questioned the need for outside observers, she asked the Council to offer its support for the continuation of this practice with a statement defining its purpose and the role of an outside observer or to take some other action (e.g., discontinuing the practice, replacing the practice with some other means aimed at serving the same purpose). After continued discussion, the Council decided to take an "up or down" vote on the practice of using outside observers. Motion made to vote on whether or not the practice of assigning outside observers to thesis and dissertation defenses should continue. Motion seconded and a votes were cast. Eleven voted to continue the practices, three voted to end the practice, and three abstained from voting.

New Business:

W. Ferguson presented a request from Dr. Nancye Roussel of the Communicative Disorders department asking that a former faculty member's graduate faculty emergency appointment be extended to allow a doctoral student to finish their dissertation with that faculty member as co-chair. After some discussion, a motion was made to approve the request. Motion seconded and carried.

W. Ferguson announced the need for an ad hoc committee to discuss and consider revisions to Graduate School admissions requirements for international students. W. Ferguson asked for volunteers to assist the Graduate School with the process, with both C. Taylor and W. Xu agreeing to help with project.

An additional item of new business was added at the end of the meeting to discuss the payroll schedule changes being implemented and the hardships that would result from such an implementation. A motion was made to approve the following statement in regards to University

payroll schedule changes, “Be it resolved that the Graduate Council implores the University to take whatever steps possible to help graduate assistants and fellows mediate the change in payroll schedule in the Spring 2016 semester.” Motion seconded and passed.

Motion made to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded and passed. Meeting adjourned at 4:51pm.