

## March 10, 2015 Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council

Members Present: J. Albert, D. Baker, D. Bellar, C. Briggs, R. Cheek, T. DeNardo, W. Ferguson, S. France, D. Harrington, J. Heels, R. Hernandez, H. Hurst, A. Khattab, D. Linton, A. Loewy, A. Magidin, D. Olivier, S. Ritchey, K. Smith, D. Wadsworth, M. Farmer-Kaiser (ex-officio member)

Members Absent: P. Auter, J. Davis-McElligatt, G. Gjertson, A. Lakhotia, S. McInerny, M. Wright

Guest Present: B. Viguerie

The meeting was called to order by D. Linton at 2:00 p.m.

### **Announcements:**

The Council voted to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2015 meeting after discussion to ensure wording regarding the eligibility of deans of the academic colleges to serve as elected or appointed members of the Graduate Council was accurate.

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

### **Committee Reports:**

Student Appeals Committee: No report

Curriculum Committee: Report prepared and submitted by S. Ritchey. The report was accepted by the Graduate Council.

Fellowship Committee: Report prepared and submitted by A. Loewy with request to authorize Graduate School to act on fellowship recommendations before next Graduate Council meeting. The report was accepted by the Graduate Council

Graduate Faculty Membership Committee: No report.

### **Old Business:**

Linton requested to re-order agenda and begin with the working committee descriptions and guidelines as guests were invited for input. All agreed.

D. Harrington began the discussion of the Graduate Appeals Committee Guidelines regarding the opening description of the committee's duties, which identifies who can initiate an appeal and why. Recommendation made to make clear that the provision addressing assistantship appeals exclude the need for graduate programs to appeal to offer an assistantship to international students admitted into "conditional" status only because they are international students—that is, to add the phrase "excluding international students who would otherwise be eligible for regular

admission.” B. Viguerie stated that it is important not to impede international students who meet the requirements for regular admission from holding assistantships. A. Magidin suggested that the formatting error in the last bullet be corrected by separating the two lines: one addressing transfer credit and the second addressing assistantships. He also asked how many international students are admitted as conditional-international (CONI) and are not changed to regular status. M. Farmer-Kaiser indicated that she could gather that data. H. Hurst moved to discuss the admission status of international students at a future meeting. Motion seconded and passed.

The Council moved to discuss another responsibility of the Committee: the consideration of transfer credit earned at non-U.S. institutions. Viguerie noted that, in considering the request to transfer credits from non-U.S. institutions, the committee relies very heavily on the graduate coordinators and the Graduate School to verify that the transfer credit is appropriate and equivalent.

Harrington moved the discussion to consider the materials submitted by the applicant/student as part of an appeal. Viguerie stated that the committee looks to see if the student has solved or has a plan to resolve the circumstance that led to the need to appeal. The Council agreed and offered a friendly amendment to add to the first sentence of point 3 the following clause: “and offering an action plan to meet those standards going forward.” The Council turned its attention to discuss additional letters of recommendation that can be submitted as part of the appeal. It was agreed that these letters should not be restricted to faculty members who have “recently taught the student.” Motion made and accepted to change the last sentence in this section to read: “Letters may come from faculty members who have knowledge of the situation or from employers.”

The Council also discussed the departmental response required. Viguerie noted that, although the Catalog indicates that each department must have a committee to consider graduate appeals, the way that individual graduate programs handle appeals can vary, especially in those that are considered during the winter break. He asked the Council to adjust the wording to allow individual graduate program’s to define its own appeals procedures. Farmer-Kaiser read the relevant passage from the Catalog. Motion made to replace the sentence beginning “As stated in the Graduate Catalog...” to read: “Each graduate program must have a procedure for handling appeals that results in a programmatic recommendation to the Appeals Committee.” Motion seconded and passed. Friendly amendment made and accepted to change (1) the sentence that begins “If there is no written response from this committee” to read “from the graduate program...” and (2) the paragraph that begins “The Graduate School will provide to the committee” to read “will provide to the Appeals Committee....”

Finally, the Council discussed the chain of appeals. After much discussion, the Council agreed to revise its description of the chain of appeals to read: “The chain of appeal is:

- a) Graduate School
- b) Graduate Appeals Committee
- c) Graduate Council
- d) Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- e) University President

Motion made to ask the ad hoc committee chaired by Harrington to revise the Appeals Committee description as described here and bring it back to the next Council meeting for review and final approval. Motion seconded and passed. The Council thanked Viguerie for his time and he departed the meeting.

Harrington began the discussion for the Graduate Fellowship Committee Guidelines. Loewy addressed comments presented on the working document. Several suggestions were made to revise verbiage. All reference to “Master’s Fellowships” will be changed to “Graduate Fellowships” and the number of fellowships award and stipend amounts will be removed as those numbers could change. Magidin motioned to remove such details from guidelines and to describe here only the responsibilities and procedure for the committee. The Council recommended the following responsibilities: The committee is charged with making recommendations to the Graduate Council for setting and reviewing eligibility qualifications as well as guidelines for retaining both master’s and doctoral University fellowships; setting the deadlines for applications for fellowships; and selecting the recipients of the master’s University fellowships and reporting the results to the Graduate Council. Motion made to ask the ad hoc committee chaired by Harrington to revise the Fellowships Committee description as described here and bring it back to the next Council meeting for review and final approval. Motion seconded and passed.

Harrington opened the discussion of the Graduate Curriculum Committee Guidelines. Farmer-Kaiser asked the committee to identify and to clarify the ownership of the “instructions and quick reference checklist” as well as the “course style guide.” Are these documents created by the committee (or the Council) or are they the University’s instructions and guides? After it was determined that they are the University’s broader course guidelines, a friendly amendment was made and accepted to replace paragraph three with the following: “The committee shall follow University style and guidelines as set by offices of Academic Affairs and the Registrar for course additions, deletions, and changes.” The guidelines were further clarified to make clear that the staff of Academic Affairs and the Graduate School shall play a greater role in the initial review process to ensure that course change forms are free of errors prior to their submission to the Curriculum Committee. Suggestion was made to simplify guidelines and to give the committee greater control and flexibility in how it reviews course change forms. Discussion centered on questions over consideration of “the student population served” and “qualifications of the faculty,” resources, in particular. Recommendation made to revise the description of the committee’s major concerns for evaluation to read: “In evaluating the courses, the major concerns of the committee include the following: (1) The clarity of the course title, description and prerequisites. (2) The justification for the course addition, deletion, or change. (3) Duplication and/or infringement on the domain of another department or graduate program. (4) Quality of the course, qualifications of the faculty, and resources available for the course.” Discussion continued over the internal procedures used for review and to answer questions. Motion made to revise the paragraph beginning with “Course proposals may be tentatively approved...” to be combined with the next to read in full: “Course proposals may be tentatively approved by the committee pending satisfactory explanation of minor questions. Final approval is left to the discretion of the committee chairperson. Courses not approved by the committee are sent back to the department from which they originated with an explanation of why the course change was not approved.” Finally, the Council recommended that the last paragraph be

simplified to read: “The committee considers course proposals, makes recommendations for approval/denial, and submits a written report to the Graduate Council. A copy of the report is presented to the members of the Graduate Council for consideration and approval. Course proposals approved by the committee are presented to the Graduate Council for its approval.” Motion made to ask the ad hoc committee chaired by Harrington to revise the Curriculum Committee description as described here and bring it back to the next Council meeting for review and final approval. Motion seconded and passed.

The Council was reminded that it would review the Graduate Faculty Membership guidelines at the April meeting. Farmer-Kaiser encouraged members to take care to review the working documents prior to the meeting.

As the last order of Old Business, Linton directed the Council back to the proposed Graduate Council description, which contained the recommended, approved changes from the last Council meeting. S. France noted that under the vacancies section the words “may not” should be replaced by “cannot.” France also suggested that the second paragraph under meetings be revised for clarity to read: “The Dean of the Graduate School, in consultation with the Chair of the Graduate Council, is charged with the task of setting the agenda for Council meetings.” Magidin suggested that the phrase “of the graduate faculty” be deleted from the first paragraph under membership and inserted into the bullet points below where appropriate. Motion made to approve the description of the Graduate Council with these revisions for inclusion in the Graduate Council Handbook and the UL Lafayette Faculty Handbook. Motion second and passed.

### **New Business:**

Linton requested the Council share feedback, comments, and/or recommendations to be taken to the University Strategic Planning Committee. Farmer-Kaiser supported this request by reminding members of the great efforts taken by past Graduate Councils, the Task Force on Graduate Education Governance, and the graduate faculty more broadly to ensure that the Council remain at the center of graduate education policy making. Several comments and recommendations were discussed including, but not limited to, the following: the need to increase stipend levels to attract top graduate students, the need for increased resources for faculty and graduate students (travel, library, etc.), the need to support existing programs prior to developing more graduate programs, support for graduate faculty with increased workloads, the need to increase yield of top-quality applicants, and the need for new initiatives to be realistic and achievable. Linton agreed to summarize these concerns and bring back a document for the Council to review at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:44pm.