

MINUTES
GRADUATE COUNCIL
JANUARY 11, 1996

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Bill Chamberlin, Dr. Nicolae Cristescu, Dr. David Jones, Dr. Pauline Lawrence, Dr. Scotty Powers, Dr. Rachel Shireman, Dr. Patricia Ashton, Dr. Karen Bjorndal, Dr. Patricia Craddock, Dr. Susan Frost, Dr. Richard Yost, Dr. Allan Burns, Ms. Ruth Troccoli, Ms. Lisa Rowe, Dr. Karen Holbrook

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Anita Spring

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Richard Lutz, Ms. Dorothy Long, Ms. Julie Shih, Ms. Coralu Clements

STAFF ABSENT: Dr. Robert Woods, Ms. Phyl Schmidt, Ms. Helen Martin, Ms. Bernice Thornton

GUEST PRESENT: Dr. Jack Fry

The Graduate Council meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m. by Dr. Karen Holbrook.

Dr. Holbrook introduced Dr. Allan Burns of Anthropology. He will be replacing Dr. Anita Spring until October while she is in Ethiopia on a Fulbright fellowship.

ACTION ITEMS

1. The minutes of the Graduate Council's November 16, 1995, meeting were approved with two corrections. On page 1, Dr. Powers' first name is Scotty, not David. On page 3 under Information Items, the word Aprocess@ should be Aprogress.@"

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. The required computer purchase policy for upper division and graduate students of the College of Architecture was presented to the Council.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. The Council discussed concepts of distance education as they relate to graduate education. One of the basic issues raised by the Council is the definition of distance education. A second question that arose was how does distance education involve the Division of Continuing Education. Dr. Holbrook pointed out that a Distance Education Council has

been appointed by Provost Sorensen. The Council has been subdivided into three committees to investigate and report on the technology, content, and financing of distance education, respectively. However, nowhere in this effort regarding distance education at the University of Florida has there been any kind of focus on graduate education.

One potential problem in working with DOCE is deciding where the student credit hours accrue. Currently IFAS registers its distance education students directly, treating them as if they were actually on campus. This is one issue that would have to be resolved if distance learning is to become a vital part of graduate education. Another question that arose from the Council is the issue of how distance learning deals with courses and other activities that involve research. Is there any such thing as distance research?@

Currently both major universities as well as more minor institutions around the country are becoming involved in distance education. One opinion expressed was that we need to consider distance education as a logical extension of what we do now. As we make this extension it will require modification of our behavior. For instance, right now we tend to encourage students to remain on campus while writing their dissertations because of the resources available to them in the libraries, computer labs, etc. However, with the new and emerging availability of resources on the World Wide Web we may begin to relax some of these old assumptions about the nature of graduate education. Distance graduate education is likely to be beneficial differentially across different disciplines; for example, a laboratory-based discipline may be more difficult to extend via distance learning.

Another idea is the need for adapting graduate seminars to new technologies, for instance, interactive video. Dr. Holbrook recounted an example of a doctoral seminar at the University of Pennsylvania; her brief summary of the nature of that course is attached to these minutes. The Council was of the opinion that the real value-added@ of the seminar was primarily to the on-campus students who were actively involved in summarizing comments that came in from all over the world on the Internet because these students were the ones really working with the input. It was agreed that the Graduate Council was a good place to begin investigating academic policy with respect to distance education. Another key idea that had been expressed in the Council of Graduate Schools session reported on by Dr. Lutz was that academic policy maybe a bigger barrier to the success of distance education in traditional universities than technological barriers, which are being surmounted with increasing rapidity every day.

A question was raised about the aspect of graduate education that teaches students how to teach. In response, the opinion was expressed that teaching via the Internet and other distance learning technologies is likely to be a very important aspect of college-level teaching in the future. Feelings were expressed that technology maybe overwhelming content in current distance learning courses. The interaction that is supposedly involved via electronic media may be quite superficial, at least initially.

Fiscal issues are also important, for example, who will pay for the faculty time involved in developing distance education curricula? Similarly, how will this affect the definitions of

faculty productivity, advancement and development? The need was expressed to obtain information from institutions such as Virginia Tech, the University of Tennessee and Penn State that have already begun considering such issues carefully. An interesting question was raised about whether distance education would be involved in offering only individual courses or whether entire degrees may be earned through distance education. Clearly some of our competitors are offering full degrees. A major issue concerns accountability, e.g., how are our course credits, fees, and classroom performance to be assessed and managed properly. One opinion was expressed that payment to faculty for involvement in distance education might follow the current DOCE model which severely under-rewards the individual faculty member, paying only a modest stipend.

The need was expressed for brochures and other sorts of promotional materials from other universities already engaged in distance education in order to explore such issues as period of concentrated study and other aspects of current graduate education policy at the University of Florida. Another issue that arose was how enrollment would be limited or controlled. For instance, currently in order to take a graduate course, a student must be admitted to the university and be in a particular graduate or post-baccalaureate program. When a course is on the Internet, anyone with a computer and a modem can sign on to the course and participate in it.

It was thought that we may be able to convince the Legislature to fund distance education issues by focusing our early efforts on groups that need continuing education, for example, nurses and accountants. We need to focus on creative instructional approaches for material that lends itself readily to distance education rather than assuming distance education will be equally applicable across the entire range of graduate courses offered at the University of Florida. Finally, it was suggested that we try to involve some corporate partners in some experimental or pilot tests of distance education. Such efforts are already underway with BellSouth under the leadership of Arnie Heggstad.

The challenge of distance education causes us to think specifically about what we can do particularly well on campus, for example, examining the quality of our mentoring. Purdue recently has released a document on mentoring that will be distributed to all Council members. Perhaps the key questions are what can students do and what can we do to enable them to learn, rather than focusing on what we should do for the students. We need to focus on how we can help the students do for themselves. However, these are not virtually exclusive issues. We can mentor students on campus and on the Internet. Mentoring is the true lynchpin of graduate education. One suggestion was that we may be able to work with mentoring partners at remote locations. For instance, if a graduate student was working on a Ph.D. in chemistry while working in a chemical company, it is quite possible that the Ph.D.-level supervisor in the company would serve as an effective mentor partner. Another point raised was that, as we expand graduate education while suffering faculty downsizing, we are creating more mentees while we actually have fewer mentors to work with them.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

President Lombardi feels that we need more graduate students at the University of Florida, as reported in a recent Gainesville Sun article, which is appended to these minutes.

However, growth in graduate education with shrinking fiscal resources and an already relatively low-quality applicant pool will be extremely challenging. Currently in some fields there are plenty of good applicants but not enough faculty to mentor them properly.

Some of this is due to the recent pressure on increasing the amount of undergraduate teaching. Many departments lose very good graduate applicants every year due to better financial aid packages offered by other schools. To be competitive, UF needs more and better fellowships. Dr. Holbrook pointed out that the Division of Sponsored Research has no additional funding available to invest in graduate education. It already invests a considerable sum, and there are many competing needs for the DSR budget. One possible model that has been proposed by President Lombardi to Dean Holbrook is a five-year fellowship packages, where year 1 and 2 would be funded by the Graduate School in the form of a fellowship, years 3 and 4 would be a departmentally-funded assistantship and year 5, presumably the dissertation year, would again be a Graduate School fellowship.

In addition, it was pointed out that we also need money for the recruitment of students; fellowships and assistantships are not enough in and of themselves. We need a more proactive recruiting stance. It was pointed out by the Council that the current system of Grinter Fellowships is very helpful, allowing colleges and departments make their TA and RA offers more competitive with other offers. However, it was noted that the value of this program varies widely by department. Full fellowships may be most useful in some cases while supplemental fellowships may be the key approach in other departments, for instance, where the TA stipends are relatively low. With regard to recruiting, it seems that the University infrastructure is not up to par with the quality of the students and faculty. The Registrar routinely takes months to process graduate applications. In response to this, two departments represented at the Council meeting, Chemistry and English, as well as the College of Journalism, have set up their own *shadow@bureaucracies* to circumvent the Registrar in handling admissions. They prepare packets fully and send them to the Registrar to act on officially. They use the same approach to assist their students in applying for Florida residency status. It was felt that there is an attitude problem among the staff at the Registrar's office and at Student Financial Affairs. It was suggested that the Registrar be invited to a Council meeting to discuss the ongoing frustrations of both faculty and graduate students with the services of the Registrar's office. Another thought that was expressed is that university of Florida is not a student friendly university, for example, the libraries are not open long hours like they are at other universities.

A final barrier to growth in graduate education is the paucity of jobs for graduates in many fields. Therefore, if graduate education is to expand at the University of Florida it needs to be expanded judiciously. This would be a benefit of introducing periodic graduate program reviews in order to determine which programs need to grow and which ones do not.

Dr. Holbrook reported that North Carolina State and Virginia Tech have proposed a consortium of southeastern NASULGC institutions. This consortium would be similar to the CIC in the midwest and WICHI in the northwest and would be for the purpose of fostering inter-university cooperation and programs. Dr. Holbrook also reported that there has been a followup to the COSEPUP report. The original COSEPUP report dealt with careers in science and engineering, and the new report, which is intended for students in those fields, downplays universities as potential employment opportunities for students. The report is currently in draft form only, and Dr. Holbrook was sent a prepublication copy for comments. She believes that it is overly pessimistic about academic employment opportunities.

As a final point, Dr. Holbrook informed the Council that she is chairing the next meeting of the Council on Research Policy and Graduate Education of NASULGC. Any ideas for the agenda at the upcoming Spring meeting are welcome.

Dr. Richard Lutz noted that the March meeting of the Council was scheduled during the University of Florida Spring break. He suggested that the meeting to be moved to Thursday, March 21, at the same time and place, and the Council concurred. A notice will be sent to all members regarding the change.

Adjournment at 3:05 p.m.

Information Item: **Library hours for the Spring Semester - 1996**

Marston Science Library	-	M-Thurs	8am - 1 am
		Friday	8am - 10 pm
		Saturday	10am - 6 pm
		Sunday	Noon - 1 am
HSC Library	-	M-Fri	8 am - 12 am
		Saturday	8 am - 5 pm
		Sunday	2 pm - 10 pm
Smathers Library/Library West		M-Thurs	8 am - 11 pm
		Friday	8 am - 10 pm
		Saturday	10 am - 6 pm
		Sunday	Noon - 1 am
Library East		M-Thurs	8 am - 11 pm
		Friday	8 am - 9 pm
		Saturday	10 am - 5 pm
		Sunday	Noon - 11 pm]