

MINUTES
GRADUATE COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 20, 1997

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Karen Holbrook, chair; Dr. Patricia Ashton; Dr. Barbara Barletta; Dr. Karen Bjorndal; Dr. Allan Burns; Dr. William Chamberlin; Dr. Nicolae Cristescu; Dr. Christine Chase; Dr. Joseph Delfino; Dr. Pauline Lawrence; Dr. Ann Progulske-Fox; Dr. Richard Yost; Ms. Laura Sullivan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. David A. Jones

GCAC REP ABSENT: Dr. Nita Davidson

GUESTS PRESENT: Dr. Jack Fry; Mr. Clay Scherer; Dr. Stephanie Hanson; Dr. Horace Sawyer

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Richard Lutz; Ms. Dorothy Long; Ms. Bernice Thornton; Ms. Julie Shih; Ms. Helen Martin; Ms. Mary Tomlinson; Ms. Phyl Schmidt; and Mr. Robert Woods.

The Graduate Council meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Dr. Karen Holbrook.

I. ACTION ITEMS

1. The minutes of the January 16, 1997, Graduate Council meeting were approved.
2. Dr. Holbrook introduced Dr. Horace Sawyer, Chairman of the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, and Dr. Stephanie Hanson, Associate Dean in the College of Health Professions. They summarized their proposal for a new interdisciplinary doctoral program in rehabilitation science in the College of Health Professions.

Several questions were raised by the Council. One of the concerns was whether there are sufficient faculty to mount the program. Dr. Hanson explained that there is a need to recruit more faculty. They plan to start small and use the program to help recruit top-flight students and faculty.

Another concern expressed by the Council regarded the mechanics of recruiting, admitting, selecting advisors, and funding students. Dr. Hanson explained that some of this was not completely formulated but that an inter-departmental advisory committee has been formed and that students would be evaluated via criteria used for the other Ph.D. program in the college. In addition, two key criteria for admission to this program are (a) prior interdisciplinary experience and desire to become an educator, and (b) prior scholarly activity and potential. Students will be selected by the committee, with the initial mentor assigned based on a match of interests (but with the ability to change if not appropriate).

Another concern expressed was about faculty and graduate student FTE and funding. At this point, it has been requested from the Board of Regents.

Dr. Christine Chase offered a copy of the by-laws of the Plant, Molecular, and Cellular Biology program for the college's guidance in creating an administrative plan to accompany the academic plan. The Council felt that a structure is needed to deal with conflicts that arise as well as a written commitment for staff support, office space, etc. Another question was raised as to why an interdisciplinary program was being proposed rather than separate departmental programs. The response was that the proposed approach would make more national impact. The program recognizes the changing nature of rehabilitation in practice as becoming more interdisciplinary.

Research funding is available through the National Institute of Rehabilitation Research, as well as other national organizations, e.g., NIH, CDC. Several training grants are already in place. Other funding for students will be in the form of TAs, RAs, and new fellowships.

The rationale for admitting three students per year in each area is that it is the minimum number to create a critical mass.

Currently there are 50 students in the master's program in Rehabilitation Counseling, 20 students in Physical Therapy, and 20-30 students in Occupational Therapy, respectively, creating a good recruiting base for the Ph.D. program. Although the college will be offering the program to current master's students, it is also vigorously pursuing national recruiting. The program will be attractive to students and desirable to the health care profession. They anticipate a mix of two-thirds externally recruited students and one-third internal. The early inquiries have a ratio of 50/50.

Dr. Hanson and Dr. Sawyer were not sure how many faculty have research funding, but the college has an extensive level of research activity. More detail will be provided at the next Council meeting. Current master's students do not write a thesis but instead complete a research project which is very similar to a thesis. The Council noted that the transition would be smoother from a thesis master's program because research programs and funding would already be in place.

Other faculty outside the College of Health Professions will be a good resource for the program. Dr. Hanson said they are currently contacting other faculty such as those in Clinical and Health Psychology, which is within the college. Three individuals listed as potential faculty currently do not hold the Ph.D. One is enrolled at UF and two are at other universities; nevertheless, there will be a national search to fill those three lines. A motion was approved unanimously to approve the program in principle but to ask that the college submit an administrative plan, as well as corrections and refinements of the present document.

3. Dr. Holbrook appointed Dr. Allan Burns to be in charge of the nominating committee for new Council members to replace the ones who are leaving (Dr. Allan Burns, Dr. Nicolae Cristescu, Dr. David Jones, and Dr. Karen Bjorndal).

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Julie Shih explained that the Graduate School would like to decentralize graduate admissions and have the colleges or departments accept the responsibility for most conditional admissions.

Very few are turned down by the Graduate School under the current system. She expressed concern, however, about quality control. If departments are under pressure from the central administration to admit more graduate students, their standards may decline. The current system at least forces departments to think carefully about conditional admissions by generating a justification letter. Justification of the admission is an important aspect of the process, whether at the college level or the Graduate School.

Graduate program reviews (currently being considered) will help to police abuses, and the Graduate School can still monitor decisions. This would ensure that colleges are responsible in their admissions decisions. Currently, statistics show that first-year GPA is unrelated to admissions credentials. Only 3% of all first-year students fall below a 3.0 GPA and virtually all of them were direct admits.

The Graduate School will continue to make final admission decisions on applicants not meeting BOR minimum standards. The proposal, if adopted, will cut down on a lot of paperwork.

A formal motion will be prepared for the March meeting. It will incorporate the following:

1. Graduate School review for applicants below BOR minima.
2. College review for applicants below UF minima.
3. Graduate School to examine colleges with high percentages of conditional admissions and low first-year GPAs.

A discussion ensued on the reliability of GRE scores from the People's Republic of China. For each applicant, it is important to examine which universities were attended, which courses were taken, etc. Test scores are consistently above 600 on the verbal GRE and are not indicative of the student's capabilities. They take TOEFL workshops that offer a money-back guarantee. This information should be shared with the graduate coordinators. The question was raised as to whether the test score issue should be investigated at a more discipline-specific level. It was decided that the Graduate School should present GRE data by country and let departments make their own decisions.

2. The GCAC "Best Practices" survey yielded good information. More detailed information should be disseminated campus-wide. Selected departments will be invited to present their best practices at the Graduate Coordinators' Workshop in the Fall.

3. Among the agenda items suggested for the Spring meeting of the Graduate Faculty were the new tuition policy, decentralized conditional admissions, reports from the task forces and a discussion of graduate student recruiting (especially minorities).

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. The Provost will be speaking to the Graduate Student Council, Monday, February 24, 1997, at 6:30 P.M., in McCarty A, G-186, about the new tuition policy.
2. The Council expressed the opinion that Graduate School needs to support (with both time and money) the production of glossy PR materials at the departmental level. A mini-grant program to support such activities would be useful. The OGMP is pursuing initiatives flowing from the GAPSEMC workshop that translate easily to campus-wide recruiting, e.g., the OGMP home page is linked to most departmental home pages.