

MINUTES
GRADUATE COUNCIL
February 19, 2009
1:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Henry Frierson, Chair, Dr. Joseph Delfino, Dr. Bridget Franks, Dr. Maureen Keller-Wood, Dr. Michael Marsiske, Dr. Jeffrey Needell, Mr. Bret Seferian (GSC), Dr. Sharleen Simpson, Dr. Christopher Stanton, Dr. Kim Walsh-Childers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Richard Dickinson (GCAC), Dr. Christopher Janiszewski, Dr. Leslie Odom, Dr. Betty Smocovitis, Dr. Peggy Wallace

GUESTS PRESENT: Dr. Kelli Brown (CALS), Dr. Babette Brumback (Epidemiology and Biostatistics – PHHP), Dr. Zina Evans (Office of Admissions), Dr. Stephanie Hanson (PHHP), Dr. Virginia LoCastro (Academic Written English), Dr. Keith Muller (Epidemiology and Health Policy Research – COM), Mr. Steve Pritz (Registrar), Mr. Aaron Rising (GSC), Mr. Gordon Tapper (Academic Spoken English), Dr. Ian Tebbett (Medicinal Chemistry), Dr. Bruce Vogel (Epidemiology and Health Policy Research – COM)

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Karen Bradley (recording), Dr. Laurence Alexander, Ms. Rimjhim Banerjee, Dr. Kenneth Gerhardt, Ms. Stacy Wallace

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 P.M.

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Minutes from the December 18, 2008 Graduate Council meeting.** There was no meeting held in January 2009. Approved unanimously.
2. **Proposal for a M.S. in Biostatistics.** Dean Frierson thanked Dr. Maureen Keller-Wood and Dr. Charlene Simpson for providing the Graduate Council with a sub-committee review of the proposal. They indicated the proposal for a non-thesis MS in Biostatistics was strong. They expressed a concern for the proposal to be very clear relative to budget cuts and future needs when it is presented to the Faculty Senate. Dr. Stephanie Hanson and Dr. Babette Brumback were present from PHHP; Dr. Keith Muller and Dr. Bruce Vogel were present from COM. The M.S. in Biostatistics proposal is collaborative and involves CLAS, PHHP and COM, but was not ready to be presented at the same time as the previously approved PhD in Biostatistics. PHHP spoke of the need for this degree to provide an enhanced workforce in biostatistics, and to support the accreditation process for the School of Public Health. This degree program is under the broader umbrella of the existing public health structure, and will use the existing resources. The recruitment of one new faculty member is part of the master plan for public health faculty infrastructure to meet accreditation standards. There are adequate PHHP resources to fund this

position, even with the current budget situation. The program uses existing courses outside PHHP. For example, a part of the core curriculum includes statistics courses in CLAS. Because the program is building slowly, the incremental addition of a couple of students/year was approved by CLAS. The colleges are working together to coordinate electives, and applied learning experiences. Proposal: approved unanimously. Effective date: Fall 2009 pending all other administrative approvals, including Board of Trustees.

3. Proposal for a concentration in Pharmaceutical Chemistry for the master's degree major of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Dr. Ian Tebbett indicated that the specific concentration for this degree began 9 years ago. This new concentration repackages existing courses that students have been taking as electives. The entire curriculum is delivered online, except for the 3 day on-campus cumulative exam. It has a great deal of appeal to chemistry majors worldwide who wish to enter the pharmaceutical industry. The concentration will be noted on the transcript. It is possible that a minor in pharmaceutical chemistry might be created in the future. Proposal: approved unanimously. Effective date: Summer 2009.

4. Proposal to change the policy related to Academic Written English (AWE). Dr. Virginia LoCastro, director of the Academic Written English program, presented the proposal. Currently, international students who receive a score of less than 320 on the verbal section of the GRE or less than 550 TOEFL or less than 213 TOEFL-computer or less than 80 TOEFL-IBT must enroll in remedial course work. They take a university administered Academic Written English test to determine if they are required to take EAP5845 or EAP5846.

The proposal states that academic programs will now take full responsibility for determining the correct method to improve students' written English skills. This would be consistent with last year's Graduate Council policy change which eliminated the concept of an admissions threshold cut-off score for the GRE. It is also consistent with the provost's determination that the level of appropriate communication skills is the responsibility of the academic program. The proposal removes the burden of an unfunded mandate because tuition waivers are no longer permitted for any EAP courses. Additionally, the proposal indicates that writing courses will be offered through the English Language Institute (ELI), so the university is making a remediation option available at decreased cost.

Council engaged in an active discussion. Programs can apply standards which are discipline-specific. Adequacy of student's English language skills after completion of course work remains the program's responsibility. Relaxing the timeframe for remediation will allow programs to incorporate writing skills courses in concert with a student's progress. Programs will have flexibility to determine the best way to work with an individual student. Because the university no longer provides tuition waivers, the funding of academic writing coursework will be at the discretion of the academic program. Moving the courses to ELI provides the possibility that more course sections can be offered. With the absence of guidelines, programs will need to look

more carefully at their holistic admissions process. ETS posts the analytical writing portion of the GRE, which programs can access through the admission screens as a mechanism to view the actual writing sample. Other suggestions for admissions included interview phone calls, or a blanket statement in the letter of admission that the students may be required to demonstrate adequate English language skills despite the scores that are posted.

Vote: approve 8, no 0, abstain 1. Effective: immediately.

5. Proposal to permit the verbal score on the internet based TOEFL (TOEFL-IBT) to substitute for the SPEAK test. Current Graduate Council policy requires that international students who will be teaching assistants must take and pass either the ETS administered Test of Spoken English (TSE) or the university administered SPEAK test before assuming an active role in the classroom. This proposal requests that the speaking portion of the TOEFL-IBT be included as a way to evaluate oral proficiency. Mr. Gordon Tapper, coordinator of the Academic Spoken English program, informed Council that the TSE test has been phased out globally, and has been replaced with the TOEFL-IBT speaking component. Reliable score comparisons between these tests now exist, and have been confirmed in practice at a large number of US and international universities. Including the TOEFL-IBT Spoken score should help academic programs make prudent admissions and appointment decisions. Academic units can now have a preliminary indicator of oral proficiency skills before the student arrives on campus. All current requirements and policies related to scores on the SPEAK or TSE will apply to the speaking portion of the TOEFL-IBT. The equivalencies are: 55 or higher SPEAK/TSE = 28 or higher TOEFL-IBT; 45-50 SPEAK/TSE = 23-27 TOEFL-IBT; less than 45 SPEAK/TSE = less than 23 TOEFL-IBT. Vote: approved unanimously. Effective: immediately.

6. Proposal to sunset the doctorate degree in Computer and Information Science and Engineering. Dr. Ken Gerhardt indicated that this degree was sunset in 1997 when the last students graduated. This proposal will formalize the sunset process. Vote: approved unanimously. Effective date: Pending approval by the Senate and UF BOT.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 19, 2009