

**MINUTES
GRADUATE COUNCIL
May 21, 2015
1:00 P.M.**

264 GRINTER HALL CONFERENCE ROOM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Henry Frierson, Chair; Dr. Nancy Fichtman Dana; Dr. Ann Horgas; Dr. Christopher Janelle; Dr. Ellen Martin; Dr. Heather McAuslane; Dr. Kevin Orr; Dr. Joanna Peris; Dr. Cindy Prins; Dr. Connie Shehan.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Amir Erez; Dr. Dietmar Siemann; Dr. Pamela Soltis; Ms. Courtney Reijo (GSC); Mr. Nathan Blinn (GSC alternate).

GUESTS PRESENT: Mr. Timothy Brophy (Office of Institutional Assessment), Mr. Rick Bryant (Admissions), Dr. Elizabeth Dale (History), Ms. Julie Levy (SACS), Dr. Terje Ostebo (Religion / African Studies), Mr. Steve Pritz (Registrar), Dr. Andrew Selepak (College of Journalism & Communication), Ms. Vonne Smith (College of Journalism & Communication), Dr. Terry Spencer (College of Veterinary Medicine), Dr. Max Teplitski (Soil and Water Science), Mr. Mark Zakshevsky (Distance & Continuing Education).

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. R. Paul Duncan, Ms. Gann Enholm, Dr. Rhonda Moraca, Ms. Caitlin Nelson (recording), Mr. Robert Parker, Ms. Stacy Wallace.

Meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

I. ACTION ITEMS

1. **Minutes from the April 16, 2015, Graduate Council meeting** (Enclosure 1). Motion to approve was made, seconded, and voted unanimously in favor.

CERTIFICATES:

2. **Proposal from the College of Journalism and Communications for a new graduate certificate in Cross-Media Sales (#9914).** Ms. Vonne Smith and Dr. Andrew Selepak were present for discussion. No discussion. Motion to approve was made, seconded, and voted unanimously in favor. Effective Fall 2015, pending any further approvals.
3. **Proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for a new graduate certificate in Digital Humanities (#10214).** Dr. Elizabeth Dale was present for discussion.

Discussion:

Graduate Council Member (GCM): This seems like an interesting concept – though there is also the potential for wide variation in experience that students may get, given the number of electives. You could have students take quite different courses given those depth and breadth electives. Is this a cohesive certificate?

Elizabeth Dale: We have students with a lot of experience, with enormous computer background, and other students are beginners. We need a fair amount of variety to accommodate everyone. The studio course is the capstone to tie all those experiences together – it would be impossible to teach to humanities students if we didn't recognize that there's a wide range of experience at the moment.

Additionally, there's pressure on us to get our students graduated quickly: it often takes humanities students more than 5 years to finish. We wanted to be able to say to students that a course from your home department could count for this certificate, so we don't extend their graduation.

GCM: Is this field something that's common? Is it growing?

Dale: It's growing. I've been watching other universities – not many have certificates yet. UCLA has one that we used as a model. NC State just adopted one. We'd be fairly cutting edge in terms of a full certificate – many places have one course or another, but in terms of a whole certificate, we would be one of the first 10 schools.

GCM: Given the outcomes here, I think the breadth is appropriate for capturing those outcomes.

Paul Duncan: I think it would be helpful to council to address the question that has come up: is it reasonable to expect that the wide range of readers of the certificate title on the transcript that the certificate means the same thing for all students?

Dale: People come out of the history department with diverse experiences and that's the nature of the beast, where there are lots of different kinds of approaches. The portfolio answers that to a certain extent: they can point to that as the culmination of the work. I hope that the combination of the studio and the portfolio will come together to assure employers. I realize that the certificate is something that is targeted to employers who are not used to academics – and that's why I think the portfolio is crucial as a concrete collection of evidence.

Motion to approve was made, seconded, and voted in favor unanimously. Effective Fall 2015, pending any further approvals.

POLICY:

4. Proposal from the College of Veterinary Medicine to modify the admission policy of the GRE Exemption of DVM graduates. Dr. Terry Spencer was present for discussion.

Discussion:

Terry Spencer: The proposal before you has to do with our new M.S. in veterinary medicine with a concentration in shelter medicine, which is a brand new online concentration. What arose is that we have a group of graduate Veterinarians with degrees that are exempted from taking the GRE on entrance to the masters; the policy reads that their degree should be from a regionally accredited institution. There is a difference in who accredits vet schools versus institutions as a whole – this policy was written before there was a vet school on campus, and the vet schools are accredited by the AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association), who makes sure that education is comparable. They not only accredit U.S. schools but another 19 in North America and Europe. Certain international applicants have equivalent degrees to U.S. degrees, so we are asking to modify this policy so that DVMs from accredited international vet schools would be exempt from the GRE. For example: one student had already done the certificate (she's from New Zealand), she finished it and was accepted to Cornell for her DVM. She would have to take the GRE for admission to the M.S. here whereas other domestic students from her cohort at Cornell would not have to take the GRE.

Graduate Council Member: Do all students at international schools take a GMAT or something like that?

Spencer: Many take the GRE, some take the MCAT.

GCM: What about New Zealand students?

Spencer: The AVMA accredits those schools so they have to have some kind of entrance exam.

Henry Frierson: There's a state statute that covers this issue, right?

Paul Duncan: Yes, and it's been around forever. The origin of the regulation is a BOG regulation saying that anyone entering a Florida university has to have a standardized admissions test score. The default is the GRE. There have been some substitutions approved over the years: GMAT, MCAT, LSAT, etc. This request is different and staff do have very strong concerns about it and are not comfortable having it passed. It is an issue, because the exemptions that have been granted for people with prior degrees are predicated on the fact that they would have already taken a test. If approved as currently constituted, this proposal would take that off the table. This is an auditable question, and the state could seek information asking us for documentation on how many graduate students have been without a standardized test and the basis for our exceptions.

GCM: Is this similar to the idea that if you're an international student and you have a bachelors you don't have to take the TOEFL?

Duncan: I don't think that's the case: if you're from a nation that's not on English-as-an-official-language list, you can get exempted from TOEFL if you have studied somewhere. Mastery is not the issue here, though perhaps it should be. The issue here is taking a standardized test. The GRE in the absence of another standard admissions test is on the list of "you just have to do it".

Spencer: Because the degrees are comparable, you can be assured that the schools are comparable in order to practice. For the schools that are not accredited we are not asking for an exemption – those people have to go through more hoops to get a license in the U.S.

Duncan: Tim, can you help us with the differences between accrediting bodies?

Timothy Brophy: The regional accreditors are concerned that we are following the regulations – SACS is not interested in whether or not the GRE is being taken, but rather that we are following our policies. I do take the point that the schools are potentially comparable – it's almost as if the regulation is antiquated.

GCM: In the proposal, how many students does this apply to on an annual basis?

Spencer: We just began in January this year, and we have 25 students pursuing it. Most of them are vets at this point.

GCM: Of those, how many would need exemptions?

Spencer: 10 or 12 students.

GCM: I'm concerned given the precedent-setting nature of this proposal, because this can be petitioned on an individual basis, right?

Duncan: That's how we've been handling it so far, yes.

GCM: Is that the difference between the first and second option in the proposal? The first option is to continue handling it individually, right?

GCM: If you could accept either the GRE or GMAT, would that help?

Spencer: I don't know about GMAT, but MCAT would help.

Frierson: That's no problem – because that would be an entrance exam.

Spencer: Would you require a recent score? Some of these practitioners have been working for 20 years.

Rick Bryant: We would require a 5 year recent score.

Frierson: The main concern is the precedent setting.

GCM: Could you talk about the kind of deterrent that the GRE creates for applicants?

Spencer: I can speak to you about one: she is very reluctant to study for GRE, she's been practicing for 12 years and is reluctant to take the time to take the test, when that isn't a predictor of her success. The criteria for entrance into the UF CVM is that you take the GRE and are above 60th percentile in both sections, which is higher than most other schools at UF. They've already done that hurdle at

some point, and many of the people are doing this because shelter medicine wasn't available at that time, and they are seeking out additional training for a board exam later.

GCM: It's not as precedent setting if there is a standardized test in the history.

GCM: As far as precedent-setting, of the whole pool of students who have the same background some are required to take the GRE and others aren't. All the U.S. citizens with a US regionally-accredited degree are exempt.

Duncan: Equity alone is not persuasive unless we are willing to impose the same adverse requirements on everyone.

Spencer: I can't understand a rule that has no scientific basis to show that these students will do better because they took the GRE.

Caitlin Nelson: Please note that staff did research on the history of requests for exemptions proposed to Graduate Council. For successful requests there has always had to be some documented metric for assessment in lieu of the exempted criterion: for example, substitution of one test for another, substitution of a certain amount of professional experience plus a professional credential, etc.

Spencer: It would be a DVM or other degree from an AVMA-accredited school.

Frierson: This would not be applicable, because it just doesn't meet the regulation.

GCM: So the question is: Would a student coming in from Australia get approved through the petition process?

Duncan: All students so far for this program have been approved individually.

Frierson: It's just about meeting the regulation.

Duncan: The likelihood that this program would trigger an audit is tiny; the issue is whether or not we get this request from other programs for a blanket exemption rather than using the individual process.

GCM: Do you believe it would be a deterrent for students if you say, we can apply for an individual exemption?

Spencer: Not if we can intercept them. If they get past the initial inquiry, we can communicate with them, but we can't screen them all. I think we would be losing some potentially qualified students.

Duncan: And we can't publish something about individual petitions being granted in lieu of advertised admissions standards.

GCM: Could you say something like, 'Students from AVMA please contact the grad coordinator'?

Brophy: AVMA is also recognized by Council for Higher Education – it's clearly recognized by all the right people in this country.

GCM: Just to clarify, even if we said that the MCAT, GMAT, or GRE is required that wouldn't work because most of these students are past the 5 year rule?

Duncan: If there's an old standard score, that triggers a referral to conditional admission – those old ones still do come here. And I would think there could be some wiggle room for us to institute some procedures to accept the out-of-date scores as at least existing. And we could approve them without petition potentially.

Bryant: We would not bring it down to screen 7 if it's reported at after the 5 year mark; but the testing authority would not even send us the twenty-year-old score.

GCM: We have hundreds of applicants for the Doctor of Nursing or the Ph.D. and the GRE always an issue and they never want to do it and they have to take it. So if you say that we can accept the 20-year-old score, then there's going to be a line of other applicants in other fields saying they want same thing.

GCM: It seems, there's no other recourse but to make a motion to deny, but perhaps to recognize the option for individual petitions.

GCM: But you will lose people who see the website and think they can't do it. In nursing, education, etc. I know we're losing a lot, and that it's only the ones with the wherewithal to contact someone about a holistic application who make it through.

Spencer: If it's a problem that affects so many programs, we may wish to pursue changing the statute.

GCM: That's how I feel – contact the BOG. What is that procedure?

Duncan: We'll ask again. The history on that is when the Board of Regents devolved to the Board of Governors with trustees, the enabling legislation said that the BOR rules became BOG rules. BOG rules could be changed by the 10 campuses if they chose – and some did petition to adapt various rules and make them local regulations, but those were denied. We've asked at least a couple of times since then – indeed many people ask for many changes. Boards of Trustees are willing to fight for local autonomy on some issues but not others. This has not been one that our Provosts have wanted to ask of our Board of Trustees.

GCM: Why is it problematic?

Duncan: If you look back 30-40 years, I suspect it had to do with stature of Florida institutions and the desire for us to be seen as having standards and quality that were equal in a national context, and at the time the GRE was the default option (I'm guessing).

GCM: These students coming in with previous degrees and experience have already proven themselves with the degrees they have.

GCM: But to me, taking the GRE is a small enough hurdle to get into a larger program of study.

Motion to deny was made, seconded. Motion to deny passed with two opposed.

5. Proposal from the College of Journalism and Communications for a new policy for an English-language bootcamp for Journalism students. Dr. Paul Duncan was present for discussion.

Duncan: Dr. Triese is in Italy at the moment so I am presenting this proposal from Journalism. It is based on an argument that writing for Journalism is different from other academic writing and all of our current measurements are really targeted to general writing or academic writing. They would like students who meet certain requirements for the TOEFL to come in during the summer prior to their degree program, register for and take this multi-credit hour bootcamp for Journalism.

Discussion:

Graduate Council Member: I like the idea that they would open it for other programs.

Duncan: Our biggest concern was that they be integrated with ELI folks, and they did follow through with that.

Motion to approve was made, seconded, and voted in favor unanimously.

CONCENTRATION:

6. Proposal from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Soil and Water Science Department to begin participating in the Climate Science concentration for the Master and Doctoral degrees (#10223). Dr. Max Teplitski was present for discussion. No discussion. Motion to approve was made, seconded, and voted unanimously in favor to approve. Effective Summer 2015.

II. INFORMATION ITEMS

7. Proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for a modification in the graduate certificate in Global Islamic Studies (#10148). This item was administratively approved for Fall 2015.

8. **Update on Graduate Council election and appointments for 2015-2018.**
9. **Graduate Programs – Distance and Self-Funded**
 - Master of Science Veterinary Medical Sciences with a Concentration in Veterinary Forensic Sciences
10. **June meeting:** There will be a June meeting, to be held June 18th, 2015.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:01 p.m.