

Graduate Council Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2013

Present: Tom Albrecht, Brian Deskin, Holly Flora, Heather Frost, Maggie MacPherson, Mike Mislove, Brian Mitchell, Gil Morris, Greg Oldham, Felicia Rabito, and Ashley Robison

Absent: Jim Alm, Hank Ashbaugh, Faycal Falaky, Scott Grayson, Stacy Overstreet, Erik Svendsen

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 AM by Brian Mitchell, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research and Acting Chair of the Graduate Council.

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from September 11, 2013 were unanimously approved.

2. Student Health Insurance Subsidies

General Counsel advises that things are moving slowly on student health insurance information due to legislation of the ACA. General Counsel is evaluating changes in healthcare guidelines and how they will pertain to the university. We do not yet know the impact the ACA will have on graduate insurance policies and premiums.

Regarding the university paying student health center fees, it may be possible for those fees to be paid in lieu of a health insurance subsidy if that is what the Graduate Council recommends.

3. Graduate Student Pay Issues in HCM

Many graduate students have had issues with receiving pay (no payment, overpayment, tax amounts withheld [too much/not enough]). OGPS is working with the appropriate schools and programs to identify students who are having payment issues and forwarding this information to Workforce Management.

This brings to light the need for graduate emergency funds, especially for students on stipend, when the university systems fail to provide timely payments.

4. Graduate Catalog - ACALOG

Newcomb-Tulane College previously maintained a university-wide catalog; it has since been converted to an Undergraduate Catalog. OGPS has taken on the task of building a new Graduate Catalog. OGPS will work with the departments to update course descriptions, titles, and credits over the next year. Please look over the Graduate Catalog and send your feedback to A. Robison or B. Mitchell.

5. Individual Development Plans (IDPs)

B. Mitchell spoke with the basic science chairs in the Medical School about NIH's newly recommended IDPs for postdocs and graduate students. At a recent conference, Sally Rockey of NIH suggested that this may eventually become a requirement for all graduate and postdoctoral fellows on NIH-grants. Currently, NIH's policy recommends that IDPs should be kept on file, but NIH does not have plans to collect or review them.

By NIH guidelines, "graduate students" would be PhD-track, non-professional graduate students. There was considerable discussion of the merits of the IDP and a recommendation that any IDP

program designed for Tulane University should apply to PhDs and postdoctoral fellows only, not Master's students.

Some schools, such as SOM and SPHTM have IDPs in place, while other programs and departments do not currently have policies in place. In determining whether to apply these to all graduate students, the goals of IDPs must be determined: are they for career development? Mentoring opportunities? Based on their goal and purpose, should they be implemented for all graduate students? What is the expectation of an incoming student about when they will finish?

6. PhD Program Review

We have a program chair for the spring 2014 committee. The self-study reports are due November 1st. K. Gotham in SLA is assisting the departments in developing the self-studies. B. Mitchell hopes to have a draft of revised guidelines for the November meeting.

7. Minimum Master's Requirements

Further revisions to the Minimum Master's Requirements were reviewed. There was considerable discussion on the residency requirement, particularly with respect to its impact on the ability of schools to offer online MA and MS programs. Some universities allow for "Professional Science Master's" (PSMs). These are designed to train students to work in professional science degrees. MA and MS programs are often precursors to a PhD, and those same universities require MA and MS degrees to be earned with in-state residency. Furthermore, MA and MS degrees are generally seen as non-professional degrees; that is, not based solely on a collection of skills. Thus, these guidelines would not apply to professional degree, like the MBA, MPH, MHA. It was suggested that language emphasizing that these programs are intended to be delivered in a traditional in-person format would allow for some flexibility (one or two online courses), while not imposing a residency requirement that could not be enforced.

How would the university define and enforce residency? Full-time Residence Status and Part-Time Residence Status are confusing compared to the Residency section and have been changed to "Full-Time Status" and "Part-Time Status." Any residency requirement created would not say, "Tulane does not offer online programs," but says, "Tulane is preserving the integrity of these programs by requiring them to be in-state."

4+1 Programs: is it standard that a thesis is 6 credit hours? This varies by program, and can be problematic as we say Master's programs must be 30 credit hours.

A question was asked about the Dean approving transfer credits. They are typically managed by the department or program and then approved by the Dean.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 am.