Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2016

Mark Vail, Briana Shay, Gil Morris, Gustavo Didier, Rick Ager, Lawrence Pratt, Cassius Pealer, Nathan Wendte, Kate Elfer, Mike Cunningham, Jennifer O'Brien

1. **Approval of October and November Minutes**
- G. Morris motioned, M. Cunningham seconded. All approved.
2. **Grad Council Meeting Dates for Spring 2017**
- Earlier meetings are preferred. 8 am suggested, and rejected
- January 11 is happening at 8:30
- May meeting may be cancelled if we get through our business
- Other meeting dates will be sent out
3. **Proposal to allow international students defending by Skype in the event of immigration issues**
- General information: This is only to be allowed for international students who can't get back into the country. The dissertation would need original signatures. This is not just for convenience. There are no other residence requirements after coursework is done. We will continue to require an in-person defense except these special circumstances
- Comment: burden of proof would be on the student to indicate that they couldn't come back in
- Question: is there a minimum that they have to have tried? Delays on visas have happened
- Question: What happens with delays in visas? MC: it's more of an issue if it's going to impact the date of graduation
4. **New programs to review**
- Masters of Business Analytics
  - General information: Vetted by the B-School and their dean, also sent a course and faculty list. This is a new degree, so the next step is to go through OIAR to be presented to SACSCOC
  - Question: Are there similar programs at peer institutions? MC: Not around here, but yes
  - Question: Is this the same thing as the MBA? MC: No, this is a new degree
  - Question: What percentage of faculty is adjunct versus full time? MC: 11 regulars, 3 non-regulars/unlisted
  - BM: In many places it's listed as a master of science degree
  - MC: May be a faster route if they want to go that direction
  - BM: Master of Science in Business Analytics
  - Question: Does that change where it's located? Does it dramatically change the proposal? Are there any downsides that Mike saw?
  - MC: No, they're trying to be creative and add back graduate programs. They're also looking at DBA
  - Approved
- PhD in Computer Science

- General Information: we used to have a PhD program in computer science and it was suspended after Katrina. SSE voted to support this program, the president supports it, and their Dean wrote a letter of support indicating commitment to growing the # of faculty especially since the department is still pretty small
- Approved

5. New programs to consider

- General information: Without a grad school, it's hard to cross schools, there's no mechanism for it. This has been a challenge for a few of our students. All PhD programs have to be fiscally located within a school. Can have some oversight from GC. Interdisciplinary boards have to have 5 members in SLA and SSE. PhD says PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies at Tulane (not the specific subjects)
  - Question: What's the impetus for this?
  - MC: There's a special case that's come to me. The other impetus is that we've had many students want to take classes across schools, and that doesn't always work well, i.e., students going from SSE to SPH, non-paying versus paying
  - Question: This seems to be a different question. PhD students find jobs in specific disciplines, and this could be difficult, nobody will claim you. Job market competitiveness could be an issue.
  - MC: The majority of interdisciplinary PhDs are not going for academic jobs
  - Question: Where's the funding? Does it have to be situated in one of the schools?
  - MC: That would be something that would be worked out, happens within schools already, to figure this out a priori with faculty guidance. Biggest challenge is that we don't have a graduate school. We can save that until the next part as well, since I'm hoping to get a task force going
- Part-time PhD for staff/faculty?
  - MC: This would be for faculty or staff who we consider of institutional interest. All of our PhD programs are full time. We have PoPs who don't have terminal degrees and this would be ideal to help them earn it through the tuition waiver. Maybe one every 5 or 6 years, modelled like an interdisciplinary PhD. Provost is in support.
  - MC: Task force to look into the question. What would it look like, who's it designed for?
  - Comment: From the interdisciplinary program: while it's on the student to design, maybe have guidelines or a mechanism for some of the organizational aspects like funding
  - MC: How is the blend working, where would you take methods, content, how much do you need from each, these are questions that faculty should help with.
  - Comment: Expectation is that this is very limited. Someone who already has connections within the university
  - MC: It would be very hard for some random student to come up with this, by the time it gets to me they should have spoken to a number of people and I help with the rest
- Specific situation: MC: Anthropology/EEBIO crossover student. I suggested an interdisciplinary program. It was voted down. I was petitioned to give them a dual PhD in Anthropology and EEBIO. I said no, but they petitioned again, and I said that it has to go through the respective schools. I get the impression that the schools don't want to discuss it. We have dual degrees, but student has to be admitted to each school. We don't have a joint PhD program – if we were to do it, you would basically have to do two dissertations. They want to propose that the student has already done coursework but that dissertation would count for both. Are you on board with me shooting this down?

- NW: Student in question is my roommate. Structure in EEBIO is articles, versus a dissertation in Anthropology. The research that he's doing would feed into the articles that EEBIO.
- MC: I don't get a theoretical rationale for why this should happen.
- NW: I think there's been some miscommunication between student and advisor, he'd like to talk to Cunningham
- MC: Finish the PhD – he's already got a masters in a science field
- Comment: Each department has to agree
- Comment: Sounds very complicated. Different departments have different requirements, different cultures
- Comment: PhDs aren't add-ons, but systematic, sustained commitments. Why does one need two PhDs?
- MC: Joint PhDs at other institutions are typically very clear. There's either two dissertations or it's one PhD from two departments. I'm happy to talk to the student
- Question: Is the mentor on board?
- MC: Yes, very much, but I don't see the motivation. To me, it seems like it's just to stay longer. Student is on track to the PhD, help him on.
- Question: What's the payoff?
- NW: He wanted the interdisciplinary degree because his job interests might be ethnobiology outside academia
- Question: Credentialing issue?
- MC: By his transcript his skills could be proved. This would be a new degree and would have to go through SACSCOC
- BM: He's not interested in academia? Send him to me. I can help him frame this
- MC: He's lucky that Wendte was here. This insight is valuable. I get the sense the schools aren't in approval
- Comment: I think the general sense of interdisciplinary stuff isn't just half of each, but it's more work throughout your career.

6. Questions of time to degree

- General Information: When students apply for their masters en route to PhD, that gets noted by the registrar, but they can't distinguish terminal versus non-terminal. It screws up time to degree because they might get a masters degree after 6 years, PhD one year later. If you want it, you should apply sooner. When do they actually register their masters degree? (Not as concerned with people leaving with just the masters). Need some guidance for students who are earning a masters within a PhD.
  - Question: Why does this happen?
  - MC: It's not a big deal to students who are eligible since they're continuing on. They may be eligible but they have to apply for it.
  - LP: If a student is successful in Chem E PhD, they won't get a masters.
  - MC: Other departments are different. Psych students who don't have a masters have to get a masters en route.
  - Question: It's an administrative problem?
  - MC: Departments make people eligible, but you don't think about it. It messes up time to degree, some "finish" a PhD in 2 years

- Questions: Maybe give them a year? Would that impact students who have to leave, but had the intention of doing the PhD? Could they backdate based on when requirements were finished?
- GD: PhD students would only graduate in statistics when they graduated in math. You can't get the masters in statistics without paying or completing the PhD
- MC: Almost like a dual MS/PhD
- MV: At Cal, you had to get the masters before going on to the PhD – either your essay at the end of your first year you either got the MA and went on to the PhD, got the MA and were kicked out, or were kicked out
- GD: This conflicts with what I just said about our funding issues
- MC: The math PhD plus MS in statistics sounds like a joint degree since they're awarded the degree at the same time. Their time to degree is OK.
- NW: There's no stepping stone degree in many departments
- LP: We don't want to invest in the people who aren't continuing on to a PhD
- NW: Make it a contingency for continuing on in the PhD
- MC: To summarize: For students who can earn a masters on their way to a PhD, that must be done in a timely fashion, not done retrospectively
- MV: Could be part of advancement to candidacy
- MC: Mainly a registrar issue. Mike earned a masters in 2015 and a PhD in 2016, and that's a problem. Whether it's a consolation prize or how they leave, that's a little different
- GM: There's a five year limit on the masters degree before their tenure runs out.
- MC: In those cases, the department has to make exceptions
- RA: Sounds like it would be good to build it in, since if they don't receive their PhD in 10 years, they're out
- MC: There are tracking issues for 4+1 programs as well. It is partly a truth in advertising issue. They are only for Tulane students and should be only one year, something we should look at in these reviews. If the majority of students are finishing in more years, that's not truth in advertising
- MV: Problem of time to degree. There's a question of the wisdom of having +1 programs at all. I know they're cash cows, but that shouldn't be the whole rationale for this. Masters degrees typically take 2 years; I'm very skeptical about whether less is actually possible. If students are taking more than a year, that's indicative that it does take more.
- MC: Students can take more classes as undergrads, and if they go past the requirements, but they have to prepare. They have to have graduate coursework before they enter the program. If they enter without, it's almost guaranteed that they won't finish in 1 year. Students have to look at this in their junior year. We want to get the word out to departments that the process needs work. They have to take grad level classes in undergrad.
- MV: You'll get push back from departments. We need to say that this is a rule
- MC: If you're not doing this, you can't call it a 4+1
- CP: Sounds like an advising problem
- MC: 5th year is reduced tuition, but there are problems at all levels, advising, advertising, etc.
- CP: Students should have to apply sooner than fall of senior year

- MV: These programs aren't built into departments in a meaningful way. Not integrated in a systematic way.
- MC: I put this on the radar because I think we're going to get dinged for this in accreditation. They're going to ask about the purpose, etc. I want to put out a strong message that this is a philosophical issue. There should be a rationale for how students get through and finish this.
- CP: How many are there? SSE has 10

7. Master's Degree Program Reviews

- List of programs to evaluate – cleared up from last time
  - MC: We're not evaluating professional degrees. Mostly looking at terminal and stand-alone degrees and 4+1s. You don't have objectives for your program so why do you have it?
  - GM: We are reviewing the +1s in PhD programs
  - MC: Learning outcomes and placements are important
  - GM: We used Qualtrics to survey students. Where are they, how long did it take, satisfaction levels?
  - MC: We tend to know where our doctoral students are, versus our masters
  - CP: That's a different question: If you don't know where your alums are, how does that feed into it
  - MC: Anything else we should add? Short bio for faculty that contribute?
  - GM: That's important for publication, maybe less important for masters programs
  - RA: Should we include retention rates?
  - MC: Time to degree, etc. We'll get a lot of this from the registrar. Then we'll send it to the department for review
  - JO: I'll send out the list of programs
  - Terminal Masters Degrees
  - Stand-Alone Masters Degrees
  - Master's Degrees in PhD Programs
- Schedule for Reviews
- To be conducted in AY 17-18
- Master's Degree Program Self-Study
  - No external evaluations
  - Table of Contents can remain as is
  - Review and edit the criteria in the "Charge" section
    - SACSCOC objectives would be useful
    - Learning outcomes, placement outcomes
  - Any other edits

8. Donut/King Cake Day speakers

- General Information: Reorientation wasn't well attended. So the idea is to use donut days as a party with a purpose. Brief presentation from people that would speak at reorientation at the donut day. Financial aid, insurance, payroll, Title IX, diversity. Quick presentation, then one on one meetings.
  - KE: If it's not before the first bit of classes, then payroll is most useful at spring to summer transition (so later in the semester). Insurance might be good for a first meeting.
  - MV: Visas?
  - KE: Financial aid tends to be an international q&a, but we can make sure that's addressed

- MC: Any other topics?
- NW: The big ones are insurance and pay roll
- CP: Health and wellness, but perhaps donut days are counterproductive
- NW: Perhaps something about wellness and what the fees go to, what the resources are. Grad students feel excluded from campus life
- KE: Maybe invite Carolyn Barber Pierre, Kristy Magner
- GM: Could there be a donut day downtown?
- MC: We have in the past, in the lobby of SPH
- CP: Childcare
- MC: It's hard for people to get childcare period. You can actually put the cost of childcare in your cost of attendance, but you have to enroll your child to get the bill. Something that financial aid could cover. We don't have a generalized cost of attendance on OGPS website because it's different for each school. We have a template

9. **Adjourned at 9:48**