

**Minutes of the Graduate Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 8, 2012**

Present: Tom Albrecht, Cooper Battle, Diane Blake, Tysheena Charles, Hannah Covert (OGPS), Dick Culbertson, Jill Daniel, Holly Flora, Frank Jones, Tom Klingler, Mike Mislove, Brian Mitchell (acting chair), Gilbert Morris, Carol Reese.

Absent: Hank Ashbaugh, George Bernstein, Michael Bernstein, Mike DeMeo.

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m. by Brian Mitchell, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research and Acting Chair of the Graduate Council.

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the November 30, 2011 meeting of the Graduate Council were approved. In response to one of the items in the minutes, B. Mitchell noted that a Director of ESL will be hired and housed at the Center for Global Education.

2. Introduction of new OGPS Senior Program Coordinator

Hannah Covert, who was recently hired to coordinate OGPS, was introduced to the Council.

3. Approval of MS in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

This agenda item was tabled pending approval of the degree program by the School of Medicine (SOM). Upon later receipt of SOM approval, a vote of the Council members was conducted via email. The MS program was approved by the Council (8 aye, 1 abstention) on February 10, 2012.

4. Discussion of the PhD Program Review Schedule

A schedule for review of PhD programs was presented for approval. The fit of certain programs with others proposed to be reviewed in the same year was discussed in some detail. There were questions as to whether Psychology should be reviewed with programs in health sciences or with those in math, physical sciences and engineering; whether Linguistics should be reviewed with humanities or with social sciences; and whether Biomedical Engineering should be reviewed with health sciences or with math, physical sciences, and other engineering programs. It was decided that that feedback from these three programs is required prior to putting the schedule to a vote. K. Daniel, T. Klingler and B. Mitchell agreed to seek specific feedback from these programs. B. Mitchell emphasized that the reviews are formative in nature and are intended to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the PhD programs. The reviews are not an attempt to downsize or eliminate programs.

5. Discussion of the PhD Program Review Criteria and Documentation

The council discussed possible criteria to use in reviewing PhD programs. Suggestions included learning outcomes, graduate placement, and metrics; for example, faculty productivity, quality of graduate students, NRC rankings, time to degree, stipend levels, and publications attributed to graduate students. The relevance of certain criteria will vary by program. Thus, each review team will be provided with a broad charge that will allow them to weigh the factors important to the programs under review. Also, the point was raised that some of the new PhD programs may not have certain data yet, especially time to degree and graduate placement. Lastly, it was mentioned that Master's degree program should not be a formal part of the PhD program reviews, but at some point in the future it might be beneficial to review the 4+1 degree programs. B. Mitchell asked the

GC to continue considering possible PhD review criteria and to be prepared to discuss further at the March meeting.

6. Discussion of Minimum PhD Criteria

A working draft of the policy for minimum PhD degree criteria was presented and discussed. Once approved, the policy will be published in the University Catalog. There is a need to strike a balance between implementing university-wide requirements and allowing programs the flexibility to do what they deem important for doctoral education. The GC recommended striking language about encouraging students to finish the degree in four years, revising the current language about off-campus employment and the ability to receive financial aid, and clarifying the language about the full-time status of students after their coursework is completed. Moreover, it was recommended that the policy on transfer credit remain as is (24 credits) and that the prospectus should continue to be submitted prior to the semester of graduation. It was suggested that there be a minimum of three faculty members on each supervisory committee, the majority of whom should be Tulane faculty. Last, students should be required to submit their dissertations to UMI (where it is copyrighted) and the schools should decide upon the necessity of submitting a paper copy of the dissertation. This agenda item will be discussed again at the March meeting.

7. Discussion of Guidelines for Appointment of Postdoctoral Fellows

A working draft of the guidelines for appointment of postdoctoral fellows was distributed and discussed. The need for this policy stems from the fact that not all postdocs at Tulane are appointed as such and that some individuals are appointed as postdocs who do not function as a postdoc. Guidelines will assist faculty and departments to appropriately hire postdocs or to hire research scientists or other related titles if more appropriate. Also, Tulane needs a mechanism to allow postdocs with external sources of funding to officially affiliate with Tulane. Most definitions of postdocs include three components: training, short-term in duration, and professional development. The point was raised about the importance of postdocs to carry out and publish independent research, as well as have the opportunity to teach. Nothing currently prevents postdocs from teaching at Tulane. Also, we should not require postdocs to have recently received their PhD. Not all council members were familiar with the idea of requiring postdocs to write an individual development plan (IDP), which was proposed in the draft guidelines. OGPS plans to become a member of the National Postdoctoral Association. This agenda item will be discussed again at the March meeting.

8. Agenda Items for Next Graduate Council Meeting

- Schedule of PhD Program Reviews
- PhD Program Review Criteria and Documentation
- Composition of Review Committees for PhD Programs
- Minimum PhD Requirements
- Minimum Master's Degree Requirements
- Guidelines for Appointment of Postdoctoral Fellows

9. Next Meetings of the Graduate Council

March 7, 8:30 a.m., 210 LBC

April 11, 8:30 a.m., 210 LBC

The meeting was adjourned at 10 a.m.