

**Minutes of the Graduate Council Meeting
Wednesday, March 7, 2012**

Present: Tom Albrecht, Cooper Battle, George Bernstein, Diane Blake, Tysheena Charles, Hannah Covert (OGPS), Jill Daniel, Frank Jones, Tom Klinger, Mike Mislove, Brian Mitchell (acting chair), Gilbert Morris, Carol McMichael Reese.

Absent: Hank Ashbaugh, Dick Culbertson, Holly Flora, Michael Bernstein, Mike DeMeo.

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 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 February 8, 2012 meeting of the Graduate Council (GC) were approved.

2. Introduction of New OGPS Website

The homepage of the new OGPS website (<http://tulane.edu/ogps>) was shown to the GC.

3. Approval of Voluntary Suspension of Admissions to PhD Program in International Development

The GC unanimously approved the Payson Center's request for a voluntary suspension of admissions to the PhD program in International Development. This request was a recommendation of a self-study of the center's academic and program activities. Any petition to resume admissions to the PhD program in its current or future forms will require GC approval.

4. Approval of PhD Program Review Schedule

The GC unanimously approved the PhD Program Review Schedule with the addition of the Latin American Studies/Art History degree to the list of programs to be reviewed in 2015-16. The approved schedule is posted online at: <http://tulane.edu/ogps/policies.cfm>.

5. Discussion of the PhD Program Review Guidelines

A working draft of the guidelines for PhD program reviews was presented and discussed. The review process will emphasize student experiences and outcomes and will consist of three parts - a Self-Study Document prepared by the graduate programs, an External Review conducted by a team of five to eight external reviewers, and a Final Report from the GC. The GC recommended a few revisions to the self-study criteria and the external review team report, which will be incorporated into the next draft. Members of the council should address any concerns or questions about the guidelines via e-mail to Brian Mitchell. Programs that will be reviewed in 2012-13 need to be informed of the guidelines shortly, so they will be up for approval at the April meeting.

6. Discussion of Minimum PhD Requirements

A working draft of the policy for minimum PhD degree requirements was presented and discussed. The GC recommended adding a one-year residency requirement to the guidelines. G. Bernstein of the School of Liberal Arts (SLA) discussed the tenure requirement of seven years. In SLA, stipends are normally awarded to PhD students for four years if they already have a Master's degree and for five years if they do not. After this, students often enter the job market so that they can financially support themselves. As a result, it often takes them seven years or more to complete the doctorate. While SLA does not object to a seven year tenure requirement, the finances are a constraint for SLA

students and requests for extensions beyond seven years are likely. Finally, B. Mitchell raised the issue of whether the GC should develop separate guidelines dealing with expectations of what constitutes a dissertation. This policy could cover electronic dissertations, joint dissertations, and/or multimedia projects, among other pertinent issues.

Members of the council should address any concerns or questions about the draft of minimum PhD requirements via e-mail to Brian Mitchell. This agenda item will be up for approval at the April 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 GC discussed the use of Individual Development Plan (IDP) for postdocs. The IDP is meant to open a dialogue between the postdoc and his/her mentor in regards to the postdoc's research and career development. It is not meant to restrict their role as independent researchers, nor to relegate them to the status of an advanced graduate student. Also, it was pointed out that the guidelines reflect current practices in the hiring and classification of postdocs at Tulane. Any subsequent revisions to these policies will be reviewed by the GC. Tulane recently became a member of the National Postdoctoral Association. OGPS staff will review the guidelines with Academic Affairs and the Workforce Management Organization prior to the April meeting of the GC.

8. Discussion of Criminal Record Disclosure on Admissions Applications

Members of the GC requested further information on the rationale for asking applicants if they have ever been arrested or convicted of a crime. It is unclear if or how programs are to use this information in admissions decisions and what the ramifications might be for admitting a student with a criminal record, whether disclosed or not. B. Mitchell suggested that a staff person from the General Counsel's office attend the April meeting of the GC to discuss these concerns.

9. Agenda Items for Next Graduate Council Meeting

- PhD Program Review Guidelines
- Minimum PhD Requirements
- Guidelines for Appointment of Postdoctoral Fellows
- Criminal Record Disclosures on Admissions Applications (with Scott Schneider of General Counsel)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.