

**Minutes of the Graduate Council Meeting
Wednesday, April 11, 2012**

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

Absent: Michael Bernstein, Mike DeMeo, Frank Jones

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 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 March 7, 2012 meeting of the Graduate Council (GC) were approved.

2. Approval of PhD Program Review Guidelines

The GC unanimously approved the PhD Program Review Guidelines with minor changes to wording in sections 1.0 and 4.0. The approved, final guidelines are posted online at:

<http://tulane.edu/ogps/policies.cfm>.

3. Approval of Minimum PhD Requirements

The GC unanimously approved the Minimum PhD Requirements with a minor change to wording in the section about dissertation committees. The approved, final requirements are posted online at:

<http://tulane.edu/ogps/policies.cfm>. These requirements replace the information in the Graduate Catalog and OGPS will update the online catalog.

4. Discussion of Postdoctoral Fellow Guidelines

The working draft of the guidelines for appointment of postdoctoral fellows was distributed and discussed. The GC suggested revising the paragraph related to Individual Development Plans (IDPs) to clarify that completion of an IDP would not be required by OGPS. There was discussion about whether IDPs constitute extra paperwork or if they serve as a mechanism for career planning and professional development. The IDP templates from other institutions distributed at the meeting might not fit postdocs who work in the social sciences and humanities. Representatives of the School of Medicine voiced their opposition to the use of IDPs. OGPS has requested that WFMO create a new classification for postdocs (neither staff nor faculty) that better reflects their circumstances, but such a change is contingent upon WFMO completing a software upgrade and may not take place for at least a year. OGPS is working with Risk Management to address issues related to worker's compensation for those postdocs who are not on Tulane payroll. Finally, there may be a need to revise the current hiring procedures for postdocs. Most postdocs at Tulane are hired after receiving a search waiver.

OGPS recently completed an online survey of postdocs at Tulane who are appointed as Postdoctoral Research Fellows (n=139). The purpose of the survey was to determine what services OGPS might best provide postdocs. The response rate was 27%. This information from the survey will be used by OGPS to plan professional development programming and other activities.

5. Discussion of Criminal Record Disclosure on Admissions Applications

Scott Schneider, Associate General Counsel, spoke with the GC about the asking graduate applicants to self-disclose if they have a criminal record. There is no institutional bar on admitting anyone with a conviction. Programs can use information of a criminal conviction in the admissions decision-making process just as they would use any other piece of information contained in the application. Admitting a student with a conviction might expose the institution to liability should the individual later commit a crime on campus, but Tulane's position would not be any stronger if we did not ask this question. If programs plan to admit a student with a violent criminal conviction, they should consult with campus stakeholders, such as the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), TUPD, Student Affairs, and General Counsel, so that they can complete a risk assessment. There was discussion as to whether it would be helpful to outline an official process for consulting with stakeholders prior to making an admission decision. It was pointed out that the question on the application actually asks applicants to disclose arrests and convictions, as opposed to just convictions. S. Schneider stated he was not sure that we need arrest information. The question may need to be rephrased. There is a developing trend in higher education to complete background checks on all admitted students, but there is currently no movement towards this at Tulane. Tulane completes criminal background checks on all staff members as part of the hiring process. No checks are currently completed on faculty members.

6. Outgoing Members of the Graduate Council

B. Mitchell thanked the outgoing members of the GC for their service. They are George Bernstein (SLA), Jill Daniel (SSE), Tom Klinger (SLA), and Carol Reese (Arch).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:02 a.m.