

Graduate Council
MINUTES
November 15, 2012, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Kerr Hall 307

Present: Bruce Schumm, *Chair*, Bettina Aptheker, Scott Brandt, Tyrus Miller (DGS), Seth Rubin, Megan Thomas, Su-Hua Wang, Elise Nelson (GSA), Christy Caldwell (Library Rep.), Jim Moore (DGS), Michael Tassio (ASO)

Absent with notice: Raphael Kudela, Juan Poblete

Consent Agenda

The meeting minutes of November 1, 2012, were approved.

Chair Announcements

Chair Schumm reported that the UC Academic Planning Commission has been re-initiated to study the size and shape of the UC. The Chair of the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) is typically on this commission, along with chairs from other UC-wide committees and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Academic Senate.

A Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition (PDST) taskforce has been created to make a systemwide assessment of PDSTs with an eye to improving policy, shifting approval to the president, defining the “Professional Degree,” etc.

More research is being done on graduate studies within the UC and there is a graduate student placement survey that is being started for all campuses. It is expected that UCs will continue to promote non-academic job tracks as rewarding careers that are an alternative to academic job tracks.

The UC is planning to reform composite benefit rates. Currently, when faculty apply for support for a project, they include benefits for faculty or staff also working on the project. The new rates move towards having as few as two rates that would also apply to summer salaries. Faculty are concerned that this move is merely a new way to tax faculty research funds, and would result in faculty being less able to hire graduate students.

The UC is currently running a Negotiated Salary Pilot Program at 3 non-medical campuses. The idea is that to have competitive faculty salaries, faculty should have the opportunity to demonstrate their “worth” to their dean. If they are successful, they then would be allowed to increase their salary using their grant funds. Council members expressed concern that this may have an impact on funds available to support graduate students.

The UCSC Academic Structures Taskforce has begun meeting. The taskforce is being chaired by the Senate Vice Chair and the VPAA, and includes divisional deans as well as Chair Schumm and other Senate Committee Chairs. During the first meeting there was a broad conversation about the taskforce charge, and aspirational graduate growth at UCSC. Chair Schumm is hopeful that the taskforce will have meaningful conversations about the difficult decisions that will need

to be made to achieve significant graduate growth. From this point of view, it is unfortunate, and a loss to the taskforce, that Dean Miller is not currently a member.

Dean of Graduate Studies Announcements

The Leadership Academy Program already has 16 applicants. Assistant Dean Moore asked Council members to continue to do student outreach.

Dean Miller continues to meet with graduate program representatives. The second round of meetings has been focused on aspirational graduate student growth and additional meetings are expected to happen. Dean Miller has been discussing graduate student capacity issues in departments, to get a sense of workable solutions for the current admissions cycle. The conversations have been lively and broad in scope.

The Chancellor's, Cota-Robles, and Non-Resident Tuition Fellowships are due on January 24th. The Council members on the awards sub-committee will have roughly a week to review them.

Dean Miller reported that he is currently in discussions about graduate enrollment numbers for next year's incoming cohort.

Graduate Student Association Announcements

Though there were no formal announcements, the Graduate Student Rep brought to Council's attention two concerns about the Economics Department. First, the department is apparently enforcing a policy that prohibits students from defending their dissertation until they have a job. Second, the number of faculty in the department has drastically decreased in recent years from nearly 30 faculty to roughly 15. Chair Schumm noted that these are important issues that, should the students in the department think it helpful, the Council is arrayed to address.

Library Announcements

The California Digital Library (CDL) has provided each UC with a small amount of funding to assist faculty, researchers, and graduate students with costs for publishing in open-access publications. Librarian Caldwell encouraged members of the Council to apply for funding.

Stage One External Review: Comments on the External Review Committee Charge

Philosophy Department:

The Council reviewed the documents submitted with the universal charge to the external review committee for Philosophy and requested that the committee consider these additional questions:

1. Does the level of dissatisfaction expressed by the graduate students raise questions about the quality of the student experience? If so, might you have suggestions of how this problem could be addressed?
2. The size of the faculty is significantly reduced from when the Ph.D. program was originally proposed, and the target annual enrollment is thus very small. Is the proposed class size large enough to support a high quality Ph.D. program? Do you have any perspectives on how to manage admissions when enrollment targets are so low?

3. What are the relative justifications and strengths of the Ph.D. and M.A. degree programs? Should Philosophy continue to maintain two degree programs? Would concentrating on a high quality Master's degree, which could target both external applicants and Master's applicants from UCSC undergraduate programs, be preferable?

Physics Department:

The Council reviewed the documents submitted with the universal charge to the external review committee for Physics. Council Chair and Professor of Physics, Bruce Schumm, was recused from the discussion.

Graduate Council agreed with the Committee on Planning and Budget's (CPB) assessment that "[i]t seems clear that this is a very strong department that is doing well in spite of significant resource challenges, but is in potential danger of a noticeable loss in quality if limited resources are not managed with great care over the life of the next review cycle."

In keeping within the Council's purview over graduate matters, members raised several questions related to the graduate program, some of which echo those already asked by other Senate committees:

1. The Physics Ph.D. admit rate and enrollments dropped sharply in 2010 and stayed down in 2011 and the department's Ph.D./FTE ratio is relatively low at 2.4 (by our calculation), lower than the PSci average of 2.9, which is the lowest of any Physical Sciences Division in the UC system. We ask the external review committee to comment on the size and advising ratios of the graduate program. Are the graduate numbers appropriate and, if not, how can the department best grow its Ph.D. enrollments to meet the UC-wide target of 12% Ph.D. students?
2. The department notes that TA funding has dropped, that it relies heavily on university funding for new students, and recent difficulties in obtaining external funding. At a time when core funding is unlikely to increase, does the external review committee have any suggestions for how the department can better leverage its available and external resources to continue recruiting, retaining, and graduating appropriate numbers of Ph.D. students?
3. The self-study data shows that the Ph.D. graduation rate is sometimes quite low: only 1 of 4 students entering in 2005 earned their Ph.D., and only 60% of those entering in 2004 earned their Ph.D. by the end of their 7th year in the program. Please consider the Physics graduate time-to-degree and graduation rates, commenting on their relation to disciplinary norms and recommending measures for improvement. Specifically comment on whether the timing of the departmental exams and the commencement of research under the supervision of a doctoral advisor are appropriate and consistent with norms for the field?
4. The department notes a need for additional faculty in several areas and there has been ongoing discussion of the creation of an interdisciplinary Materials Science graduate program at UCSC with significant participation from Physics. Is the size of the

department and its subareas appropriate and sufficient to maintain an adequate graduate program? If not, what areas most need additional faculty? Please consider the possible contribution of Physics to a Materials Science initiative and its impact, positive or negative, on the Physics graduate training and faculty research strength.

5. In the survey of graduate students, only 40% indicated that they had received adequate research training before beginning their own research and only 36% rated their preparation to obtain funding for their research as Good or Excellent. What measures can/should the department do to address this survey response? Is the professional development training for graduate students adequate and, if not, what more should be done?
6. The department notes its relatively high number of female graduate students. Please elaborate on what this is attributed to. Can the department build upon it to increase other underrepresented groups?

Stage Two External Review: Comments on the External Review Packet

Art Department:

The Council considered the documents associated with the external review of the Art Department and made the following comments:

1. In reviewing the MFA program proposal, which is currently under revision after an initial round of Senate comment, the ERC report encouraged the department to define the scope of the MFA program more generally than it currently has, including a broader range of media in the proposed scope of the program. The Dean of Arts concurred with the ERC's suggestion, and in its response the Department seems to suggest that it is considering the ERC's position as it revises its draft. We suggest that the Department and Dean come to some agreement about how the proposal should read in light of the ERC's comments before the proposal is circulated for the second round of Senate comment.
2. The ERC suggests that the MFA be carried out with an eye toward enhancing undergraduate instructional quality. The Council does not agree that undergraduate curricular issues should be a primary force in the development of the Arts MFA. Instead, the Council believes that the department should focus on those practices that will best match students to areas of faculty expertise, in order to provide the most meaningful education for matriculated MFA students.
3. The department has, along with the ERC and the Dean, affirmed its plans to further its national and international reach with its present and future hires. The Council commends the department for these plans as well as for its success in other steps it has taken to raise its reputation and broaden its presence nationally and internationally.
4. The Council has one outstanding question by way of clarification: Is the half-time staff position that the ERC considers integral to the MFA program (ERC report, p. 4) permanently funded? We are unsure, because in his letter of June 18, Dean Yager notes that "Though we do not have any permanent funding to increase staffing, we have

provided three years of matching funding to the department for additional technical staffing” (Dean’s Response, p. 4). The Council would be concerned if the department does not have permanent funds for a staff position required for the success of its program.

Psychology Department:

The Council discussed the documents associated with the external review of the Psychology Department and noted the following few comments and concerns:

1. We are pleased to see the ERC’s overall positive evaluation of the quality of the Psychology Department’s graduate program with respect to recruiting, placement of Ph.D.s in careers, and graduate student mentoring. The Department should be commended for maintaining the size and quality of its graduate program throughout the review period despite cuts to Teaching Assistant allocations and demands of the faculty to maintain the undergraduate curriculum.
2. At the same time, we are alarmed by the growing threat to the graduate program from the greatly diminished faculty size and continued lack of sufficient Teaching Assistantships. The reduction in funding for direct graduate support has already resulted in lower target numbers for recent admissions cycles, several students needing to take leave, and a sense of stress and uncertainty among current students. Lack of funding is exacerbated by the expiration of the department’s T32 NIH training grant, although GC was not aware of the status of its renewal. We support the Department’s acknowledgement of these issues and encourage discussions regarding how best to increase graduate support through extramural funding and fellowships.
3. We agree with the ERC that the Department’s research and graduate mentorship in the specific area of social psychology is a great strength. We are concerned of the impact that the recent loss of two senior faculty in this area, Aaronette White and Aida Hurtado, will have.
4. Cognitive psychology is interdisciplinary, and we were disappointed in the lack of comment in the report evaluating the Department’s efforts to engage other faculty on campus in research and graduate training in this area. We note that if there is opportunity for augmenting the quality and size of the graduate program in cognitive psychology through interdepartmental interactions, for example with Physics, Computer Science, Philosophy or Linguistics, they should be explored.

Draft Guidelines for Degree Program Learning Outcomes

The Council briefly discussed learning outcomes. One member argued that faculty often have nuanced thoughts about learning outcomes that are not always clearly communicated with their students. Having clearly articulated learning outcomes will help students be successful by informing them—early on in the process—of what is expected from them; this is notably the case for students who are less prepared for graduate education.

Post-consultation Discussion on Aspirational Graduate Student Growth

The Academic Structures Joint Taskforce appears to be focusing on aspirational graduate student growth as a central issue, and Chair Schumm is concerned that Dean Miller is not formally a member of the taskforce. Dean Miller stated that he is happy to consult with the taskforce about aspirational growth or other graduate issues. He noted that the taskforce has an opportunity to study issues such as interdisciplinary groups, pulling on much research that the Council has already done, and to make meaningful recommendations to campus.

Meeting adjourned at 4:04 p.m.