

Graduate Council
MINUTES
December 6, 2012, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Kerr Hall 307

Present: Bruce Schumm, *Chair*, Bettina Aptheker, Raphael Kudela, Seth Rubin, Megan Thomas, Su-Hua Wang, Christy Caldwell (Library Rep.), Alice Ye (GSA), Michael Tassio (ASO)

Absent with notice: Scott Brandt, Tyrus Miller (DGS), Juan Poblete, Elise Nelson (GSA), Jim Moore (DGS)

Consent Agenda

The meeting minutes of November 15, 2012, were approved with minor changes.

Chair Announcements

Chair Schumm has been contacted by a faculty member in the Technology and Information Management program regarding the program's proposal to add Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition (PDST). The proposal was last reviewed by the Council in January 2012. Chair Schumm has agreed to discuss the faculty member's concerns and will apprise the Council of them should they prove relevant.

Chair Schumm recently attended meetings for the Senate Executive Committee (SEC), and the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA). Common themes were discussed at both meetings.

The Council of Graduate Deans has expressed dissatisfaction about the weighting of students under the Rebenching Report. Deans appear to be questioning the rationale around the proposed variations in weighting for Masters, Ph.D., and Medical students.

The Governor has successfully asked Californians to put more funds into education, and as a result, he has been clear that he does not want to see anything that appears to be an increase in tuition, or more expensive fee-based programs. At the last UC Regents meeting, the Governor tabled discussions about PDSTs. Unfortunately for UCSC, the Games and Playable Media PDST program was excluded from discussion.

Faculty in academic fields that get a substantial amount of grant support regularly charge benefits and related costs to grants. There are many different ways that UC campuses incorporate benefit rates into grants; the proposed policy sets composite benefit rates for all campuses. The Senate successfully argued that setting rates for Graduate Student Researchers would greatly diminish funds available for faculty to hire them. Yet, the Senate has not been successful in arguing against increasing benefit rates on faculty summer salaries, even though faculty do not see any retirement benefits from their summer salaries.

Further, Chair Schumm has developed a case study for what the cost would be to increase benefit rates on faculty summer salaries in the Department of Physics. Given this data, the direct cost

increase for Physics would be roughly \$70,000. This total increase corresponds to the Department being unable to hire 1-2 Graduate Students or Postdoctoral Researchers. Chair Schumm noted that some disciplines will be affected, while others will not. Nevertheless, in the disciplines that are affected, graduate students will likely bear the brunt.

Chair Schumm queried the Council to see what their opinion would be on writing a letter to the Vice Chancellor for Research addressing the direct damage this policy would have on graduate student support. Council members support a statement from the Chair.

Many campus responses to the Rebenching Report, including the Santa Cruz response, noted the importance of managing enrollment in the rebenching process to ensure that each campus educates their fair share of CA students.

Chair Schumm is unable to attend the UCSC Academic Structures Taskforce meeting today, but he expressed concern that aspirational graduate growth was not on the taskforce's agenda. UCSC's use of the additional funds from rebenching to increase its Ph.D. student numbers will likely be under scrutiny by the UC system, and Chair Schumm is concerned that the campus does not appear to be engaging in serious discussions about how to leverage the funds to bring the doctoral cohort to 12%. Chair Schumm is convinced that with a serious effort, we can significantly increase our graduate numbers. Dean Miller is gathering detailed data and consider possible approaches, but he is not on the taskforce and not engaged in direct discussions with them. A member expressed concern about what the role of the Graduate Council is, or might be, in campus conversations about graduate growth. Another member stressed the need for us to have additional conversations with Dean Miller.

A member noted that graduate program representatives are being informed that they are being permitted to offer admissions to more students than in past years.

Librarian Caldwell noted that she has spoken with many faculty that are not well informed about aspirational graduate growth, and for those that are aware of it, they appear to be more interested in using funds to hire post-docs than mentoring more graduate students. Noting this concern, a member raised the point that the Council might address a letter to the Committee on Academic Personnel encouraging them to pay close attention to faculty mentoring of Ph.D. students as a sign of engagement and success that can be codified in the personnel review process.

Graduate Student Association Announcements

The GSA is planning to re-engage in discussions about Family Student Housing in Winter Quarter. GSA representative Orville Canter is planning to discuss the issue at a Santa Cruz City Council meeting. Further, the GSA co-presidents are planning to meet with Vice Chancellor for Business and Administrative Services, Sarah Latham. Chair Schumm explained that the Council will continue to be involved in this discussion, but that Family Student Housing costs could not be viewed in isolation from other housing cost issues at UCSC.

The GSA reported that several graduate students have expressed concern about being appointed to Teaching Assistant positions very near the start of the quarter. The GSA is interested in

learning more about the process divisions use to distribute TAships. Chair Schumm noted that the Council would be willing to, if GSA representatives request, explore and address this issue.

Librarian Announcements

There were no announcements from the library.

Office of Research Self Study

The Council had delayed its review of the document in hopes that the survey results would become available, and was somewhat disappointed that they were not available for examination. In this meeting, the Council felt compelled to conduct its review, given that the deadline for response was before the date of the Council's first winter-quarter meeting.

The Council noted that approximately \$600,000 per year of campus funds is made available through the Office of Research. Council members speculated that this money was used as initiative funding administered directly by the Office of Research; for example, to provide funds required to meet obligations for successful matching-fund grant applications. If not already available, the Senate should be provided with a more explicit accounting of the Office's use of funds to support research.

In its Self Study, the Office of Research pointed out the growing burden of supporting philanthropic activities that do not consider the cost of administration of the activity, i.e., non-agency grants that do not include resources for the significant indirect costs associated with conducting research. The Council agrees with the Office's concern, as well as its contention that this threatens to cause a reduction in the availability of general funds for the support of many other activities on campus, including the funds that are directed to the Graduate Division to support graduate study. We support the Office's implied suggestion that this issue be addressed by the administration, and a reasoned stance be developed through the coordination of the Development and Research offices, as well as the Academic Divisions as appropriate.

The Library representative on the Graduate Council pointed out that better coordination between the Library and the Office of Research might abet the development of proposals that require data management planning. With the systemwide investments made in the University of California Curation Center (UC3), the Library is in a strengthening position to provide researchers with services to author data management plans, archive data sets, and make them discoverable and citable.

Finally, members expressed support for the Office of Research's migration to paperless systems for proposal preparation and submission, and offered that this might be a high priority as the Office considers the areas on which it should focus in the near term. Faculty members felt that such systems would provide a significant benefit to their efforts to apply for and secure funding for research activity on campus.

Draft Guidelines for Degree Program Learning Outcomes

The Council was impressed by the progress that had been made in developing a structure for addressing our assessment of learning outcomes that will prove beneficial to our graduate and

undergraduate programs while not posing an undue burden on the faculty. In its discussion, however, the Council noted one issue that might merit further consideration.

For advanced degree programs for which a thesis is required, and particularly for Ph.D. programs, unstructured supervised research is usually the primary mode of developing knowledge and expertise in the field, with public presentations, the nature and level of participation in group discussions, the dissertation defense, and the thesis itself being the corresponding measures of success. While this is mentioned in the guidance provided to help programs answer the Learning Outcome questions, these considerations do not appear in the sample assessments that follow the questions. Neither of the matrices “include the thesis or equivalence project, teaching requirement, research training, dissertation, and any oral examinations” in their consideration of learning outcomes. Given the central role played by the incorporation of research and creative activity in both graduate and undergraduate education at a research university, it is not clear that the document presented to the Council gives the appropriate guidance with respect to the reflection of the nature and extent of the contribution of non-classroom activities to USCS’s instructional effort. It would be helpful if the examples provided showed how this might be addressed, either through inclusion in the offerings/outcome matrices, or by providing text that addresses the relation of non-didactic instruction to learning outcomes. As currently presented, the documents provide little guidance on how to present and support learning outcomes that are unique to the goals of the research university, and that would set it apart from a less research-oriented institution such as the CSU or CCC systems.

Visual Studies PhD Program Change

The Council discussed the proposal from the Visual Studies Ph.D. program to extend the deadline for Qualifying Exams from Fall to Winter of the student’s third year. The Council unanimously supported this request.

Adding Course Syllabi to the Student Portal

In the Council’s discussion, there was a sense that the proposal might be more relevant for undergraduate studies rather than graduate studies, the latter of which is of course the purview of the Graduate Council. In general, the faculty on the Council noted that they encourage graduate students interested in learning more about courses they offer to set up a time to discuss the classes face-to-face with them. This has a number of advantages, in that not only can the student get a much better sense of the nature and focus of the class than from reading a syllabus, but occasionally unexpected advising opportunities arise that can be beneficial both to the student and the program offering the course.

The members of the Council recognize that this may not address the convenience issue that probably serves as the main motivation for the proposal, but its impression is that it may not be as much of an issue for graduate study, which tends to operate with a much closer link between students and faculty, and for which the array of offered courses specific to a student’s interest is perhaps significantly smaller than it is for a less-specialized student.

At issue here is the imposition of another mandate for faculty to fulfill, in an era where the number and burden of those mandates is steadily rising. If the benefit of uploading graduate

course syllabi to the portal is significant, it is appropriate to encourage faculty to do so, and the Council should re-enter into the discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.