

**Graduate Council Meeting
Minutes
September 10, 2004**

Members Present: David Cannon, Cynthia Coviak, Cynthia Grapczynski, Rita Kohrman, Hal Larson for Jeff Ray, Ben Rudolph, Roger Wilson.

Ex-officio: Claudia Bajema, Brian Cole

Staff: Irene Fountain, Priscilla Kimboko

GA: Dorjee Damdul

The meeting opened at 9:03 AM.

1) Approval of Minutes

Discussion: The committee agreed to postpone the approval of the minutes until members could review the document.

Action: No action taken.

2) Agenda

Discussion: There are no action items on the agenda.

Action: Approval of the agenda was motioned, seconded, and approved.

3) Report from the Dean

Discussion: CLAS will hold elections next week. The CCPS representative cannot come on Fridays, so they will need to elect someone else. CUII will not be electing a representative, although B.Cole is participating as an ex-officio member.

a) Conversations with UCC/ECS Chairs Re. Review of Three Final Plans

Discussion: P. Kimboko discussed the PSM programs. The question had been raised previously as to which committee would act on the three final plans already in process in the UCC. It was decided that the Graduate Council would do a parallel review.

H. Larson inquired if there was a timeline to get the programs approved, as there are students who want to get in the programs. Per P. Kimboko, students can take a couple of classes toward the program. It was mentioned that those students would be non-degree seeking, but with the 12 credit limit, a decision needs to be made soon. Further discussion included that the UAS and UCC decisions were complicated by and impacted by the reorganization.

Policy issues will need to be discussed even if there is no routine business, e.g., review of courses, there could be policy issues such as, what a graduate program should look like. It was agreed that the committee should avoid duplication of effort, and that looking at policy now is a good idea.

C. Coviak agreed that looking at policies benefits the Council and programs. The Council should look at the policies that are priority, and let UCC finish the job it started.

C. Grapczynski stated that one of the Graduate Council's major jobs is to bring graduate education into a stronger position at the university.

b) Revisions to the Membership Roster

Discussion: P. Kimboko reiterated that Frank Hughes would not be attending the meetings. CCPS would be electing a new representative. B. Cole is representing CUII, but he is not a voting member.

The Council discussed CUII and possible reasons it had for not electing a Graduate Council member at this time.

c) Revisions to the Meeting Roster

Discussion: B. Rudolph suggested that the meetings be canceled if there is no real benefit to meeting.

P. Kimboko pointed out that September 24th had been left off the previous roster. She will not be able to attend on December 10 or April 3rd. A Council chair will be elected soon, so that should not matter.

d) Nomination of Graduate Student Members

Discussion: John Osborne, president of the Student Senate, had contacted P. Kimboko regarding the election of grad students as members of the Graduate Council. These students will be elected by the Student Senate. The Council may send names to the Student Senate, and they will interview the students. The students must be available to attend meetings on Fridays from 9-11 AM.

P. Kimboko had received a report with the graduate student head count. This will be distributed at the next meeting.

4a) Strategic Plan Review

Discussion: P. Kimboko gave background on the Strategic plan for Graduate Education. This document is dated, having been adopted in 2001-2002 prior to the university strategic plan. One aspect stressed in the mission statement is that GVSU's graduate education is committed to preparing people who will be leaders in their community.

H. Larson asked about the awkward wording of the section, "integrating education with community needs." P. Kimboko noted that this Graduate Council would not edit this document. Much effort went into finding the 'right words' by the group who worked on it at the time it was created.

H. Larson commented on the mission statement's emphasis on professional programs and indicated that UAS has approved a liberal arts masters. P. Kimboko explained that all

programs that were in existence at the time the strategic plan was written were professional programs. Also, even the English MA stressed that it was preparing secondary teachers with more content knowledge in English. The Council held a brief discussion of the uses of the terms “professional” and “vocational.” Several faculty object to the implications of describing graduate programs as “vocational.”

C. Coviak stated that the strategic plan is now a historic document. The time will come for the various units and programs to revise it. It was noted by several that the university strategic plan will require units to get more specific about these details this year.

P. Kimboko reported that in graduate education, 85% of masters degrees are career-related. These are degrees that enhance a person’s career opportunities. Traditional master’s degrees make up 15%. These are usually considered to be a stepping stone to a doctorate.

R. Wilson noted that, in the College of Education, even though students get an M.Ed here, they often go on to pursue a doctorate elsewhere. As such, even the M.Ed is not a terminal degree. Teachers usually seek advanced degrees to qualify for a salary hike.

B. Cole indicated that his background is the history of education. Prior to WWII, the ‘professional’ degrees were only in MD, dentistry, and law. This may have been the case as well after WWII. P. Kimboko noted that that is still true for national statistical reports. Not all of the career-oriented master’s degrees are ‘counted’ as ‘professional’ degrees.

P. Kimboko said that the MA in English is now underway. CLAS has shown a spike in the graduate enrollment which may be due to the English MA and possibly the ‘bio’ (PSM) master’s degrees. Also the Communications master’s has grown significantly.

P. Kimboko explained the terms in the **core values** section of the strategic plan. H. Larson made a comment about CUII with regard to core values and the matter of the value of ‘global’ perspectives. Without CUII sending a representative to the Grad Council they will miss out on this discussion.

B. Cole explained CUII’s position: there are a limited number of faculty; and most of the people in the College are AP staff. The faculty members’ reason for not participating may be to save them from having to serve on a number of committees.

Part of the criteria for serving on the Graduate Council is faculty member representatives who are active in graduate study. Some of the faculty in CUII do teach in graduate programs, but most of their programs are undergraduate minors.

The Graduate Council needs to be cognizant that what it does impacts international students, as many international students are full time graduate students.

The **critical issues** section was reviewed. The Graduate Council has resulted from the number one critical issue, which is “Role in governance and administration at GVSU.”

Number 2, “Relationships,” referred to the new administration. Gayle Davis has demonstrated willingness and openness in saying that graduate education is important to the university. Her role is to educate the rest of the executive staff, how a university combines undergraduate and excellence at the graduate level.

The other challenge regarding relationships is that there should be a beneficial relationship between undergraduate and graduate programs. The challenge is to recognize and demonstrate the benefits.

Number 3, “Resources,” is at the heart of concerns of the graduate directors. The primary form of assistance to graduate students is loans. This information is in the Graduate Bulletin. Another form of assistance is graduate assistantships. Other issues are lack of resources for graduate student recruitment and availability of graduate faculty. Other universities have policies that those who teach at the graduate level must have graduate degrees. This always raises a question about the ratio between regular faculty and adjuncts in graduate programs. Other resource concerns relate to the facilities limitations: classrooms are not set up for adult learners. Often the services for students are not geared to the adult, part-time student either.

Steve Lipnicki, of Pew Campus Student Services, conducted a graduate student satisfaction survey, which has uncovered several ‘student services’ issues.

One of the biggest graduate student complaints is that services close down early and are unavailable to students. Council members recalled situations that they had experienced or heard of where students needed services but were unable to obtain them.

Most departments do not conduct exit interviews whereby they could learn more about student concerns...both those ‘dropping out’ as well as those completing degrees. However, OT and PT do have such exit surveys; and KCON does alumni surveys.

H. Larson discussed the role of the governance and the NCA. The last NCA accreditation was in 1999, for ten years. The university now has less than five years until the next one. Within that context, policy issues need to be addressed as important agenda items. The Graduate Council exists as a result of the NCA.

The university needs to pay attention to developments outside the university, with regard to competition. Many universities offer graduate programs or classes online for the convenience of students. Online and off campus classes should be part of the Graduate Council’s discussions, with Continuing Ed as it works with distance programs.

ECS had a task force on distance learning that included a definition of online versions of classes. The Council discussed the conversion of traditional courses to online courses and the University of Phoenix as a competitor.

b & c) Graduate Policy Manual Guide & Graduate Catalog

Discussion: The 'grad policy manual guide' [an EXCEL spreadsheet] was created by P. Kimboko in 2001. The information came from the Graduate Bulletin. P. Kimboko laid out a list of policies frequently covered in graduate bulletins and looked at the GVSU bulletin to see if there was a current policy on these matters. Other university websites and bulletins have a very logical layout of the graduate degree process. Everyone was asked to read the pages in the graduate catalog that cover policy, starting with page 29. Please make comments, and the Graduate Council can lay out an agenda to discuss policy issues. Also the GC can make recommendations about how to restructure the content of the Graduate Bulletin.

Most programs have their own graduate manual. The university through the Graduate Council sets 'minimum standards', and programs can go beyond those minimums.

d) Types of Items the Graduate Council will be acting on

Discussion: Things to look at include: criteria for reviewing graduate courses; what distinguishes graduate from undergraduate; and how one can tell the difference just by looking at the syllabus.

Discussion ensued concerning "mezzanine level" courses; e.g., 500 level courses. These are considered to be transition level in some programs. In others, they are a core part of the graduate program. R. Wilson stated that this was discussed at UCC last year with regard to 400 level courses for graduate students.

Per P. Kimboko, she had met with UCC when they discussed 400 level courses as well. Some issues to consider were: in order to get graduate credit for a 400 level course, what separated the undergraduate and graduate level regarding the work? Is the grad student doing undergraduate level work? Are there separate syllabi? If so, can only those 400 level courses with a separate syllabus be taken at the graduate level? Is there a limit to the number of 400 level courses the student can take? How do 400 level courses look on a transcript? P. Kimboko had surveyed major Research I university websites where she found that some students are allowed to take 400 level courses, but they do not do the work at an undergraduate level.

Action: The Council agreed to hold a meeting each week, only if there are things to discuss. Cancellations will occur no later than noon on Thursday.

5) Reports from Colleges

No reports were given.

6) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned 10:35 AM.

September 10, 2004 Graduate Council meeting minutes approved on September 17, 2004.