

**Graduate Council Meeting
Minutes
September 17, 2004**

Members Present: David Cannon, Cynthia Coviak, George Grant, Cynthia Grapczynski, Rita Kohrman, Jeff Ray, Ben Rudolph, Roger Wilson.

Ex-officio: None present

Staff: Irene Fountain, Priscilla Kimboko

GA: Dorjee Damdul

The meeting opened at 9:00 AM.

Introductions

P. Kimboko introduced George Grant and Jeff Ray. There will be a second member elected from CCPS soon. She reiterated that no one from CUII is serving as a voting member. Brian Cole is an ex-officio member representing Continuing Education, but could not come today. Please keep in mind that ex-officio members are not allowed to vote on curriculum issues. The grad directors and others may come for special topic discussions to provide their input, but may not vote on GC action items.

1) Approval of Minutes

a. September 3

Corrections: R. Wilson was added; Neal Rogness was not sitting in for Jeff Ray, but for CLAS. Hal Larson was sitting in for Jeff Ray.

Action: C. Coviak moved approval; B. Rudolph seconded. Minutes approved.

b. September 10

Discussion: R. Wilson questioned the need for including the discussion in the minutes. He would prefer only actionable items. P. Kimboko stated that it is important to have a record of action taken. However, a record of what was discussed is important as well. It explains how we come to that decision. Without discussion, someone coming from elsewhere might start the discussion all over again. C. Grapczynski indicated that it is important to have the discussion while we are trying to establish policy.

Action: C. Coviak moved; B. Rudolph seconded. Minutes approved.

2) Approval of Agenda

Discussion: P. Kimboko explained the items on the agenda and why she felt they are important to discuss today. 3a, Graduate Directors Meeting, can be removed.

Action: C. Coviak moved; J. Ray seconded. Agenda approved.

3) Report from the Dean

a) Graduate Directors

Discussion: Graduate directors are not all faculty. People in this advisory group come from Admissions, Student Services, and some are faculty, advisors, and so on. They will continue to meet twice a semester for updates, and to discuss concerns and issues. They meet on September 24, which is the same date as the next Grad Council meeting. Grad Council members may join the meeting. They cover things like Steve Lipnicki's graduate student survey, international graduate student admissions, and other issue. Their agenda will be distributed to Grad Council members.

b. Strategic Planning Update

Discussion: The Dean's Council looked at the strategic plan last week. Pat Oldt and Gayle Davis want to continue the strategic planning process, and tie the university mission and goals to each college or department's mission and goals. The GC needs to look at the Strategic Plan for Graduate Education's objectives and strategies, and to see how to ensure that they are related to the university plan. The timeline is to do this by mid-March. P. Kimboko asked whether the GC prefers to assign this to a subcommittee or ad hoc committee rather than the whole Grad Council. GC members support continuing to work on Strategic Planning as a committee of the whole.

P. Kimboko noted that the GC will be asked to handle the review of the DPT curriculum and OT course changes. They have gone to the Provost's office but have not yet been sent to GC. R. Grant told P. Kimboko that she will ask Lisa Haight to send those items to the GSGA for distribution to the committee. Therefore, the Grad Council should get it soon. GC members asked to have at least a week to review materials, so these items will not be on next week's agenda.

UCC Report:

P. Kimboko asked for a report from the UCC. R. Wilson said there was one agenda item which was comprised of the three Professional Science Masters final plans. The departments were present to discuss the final plans, but the UCC had not seen the curriculum. It will be examined at UCC next week, if the departments can provide UCC with additional information they found 'missing' from the final plans...

P. Kimboko commented that the PSM's are a cutting edge change in the science discipline. There have not been many science programs at master's level. At GVSU, the PSM programs are the result of a Council of Graduate School grant, funded by the Sloan Foundation. Without a graduate dean, GVSU had not been eligible to participate in CGS initiatives. Only member institutions were invited to apply. CGS had funded similar programs at research universities, but chose to also try this approach a master's focused institutions. P. Kimboko had approached John Gracki, who was provost at the time, and Doug Kindschi about their interest in applying. They supported it. She then asked CGS if GVSU could be invited to apply (we initially had not been invited).

The UCC expressed some concerns about how the "business" aspect of the programs can best be handled. There is also concern at UCC about the whether GVSU has resources to commit to these new programs?

One concern of GC and UCC with programs with outside funding is that there is an expectation that the program will be forthcoming. By the time it goes to UCC there is considerable pressure for

it to be approved. This concern is not unique to GVSU. Other institutions have this challenge as well. Sometimes institutions decide not to continue, despite the external funds.

b) Develop a Set of Criteria for Graduate Level Courses

Discussion: P. Kimboko handed out a draft document listing items to include in a request for a NEW graduate level course, and the UCC documents and guidelines for NEW courses. She also handed out a draft document of additional factors to consider for a 400 level course to be considered for graduate credit.

The discussion initially focused on this what makes a graduate course different than an undergrad course. The term “additional assignments” is often used. It is easy to say this, but it does not make the course any different for a grad student. One additional paper, for example, is not enough. Faculty members need to know who in their classes are grad students and how much graduate credit are they getting for a course.

A handout of uniform course numbering, from UCC, was distributed. The Council discussed the standard numbering of courses for the 400 level and above, from the UCC document.

Grad Council members want to be sure the issue of faculty expertise is discussed with UCC. This is part of the “resources” piece of the graduate strategic plan. Also to be discussed is how to address the question of what makes a grad course. Rita Grant will be invited to attend the Grad Council meeting next week to discuss these and other issues.

Discussion of grad courses continued. One factor was a notion of ‘enhanced rigor’ for graduate courses. Various types of evidence of enhanced rigor discussed included: independent work done by the student; sustained higher order thinking; integration and synthesis of course work; and extensive student engagement in class. C. Grapczynski indicated that Sonoma has information on universal academic intellectual standards. She will bring examples of this to the GC.

D. Damdul asked if there is a standard way of dealing with students with regard to getting papers returned with grades and comments. He and other students have had courses wherein their papers were not returned. Council members discussed how they handle the return of student papers. P. Kimboko noted that there should be some type of policy that describes graduate student rights and responsibilities (which include the right to get appropriate, timely feedback on their work).

c & d) Develop/Review Criteria for New Course/Program Proposals

Discussion: The Grad Council will be the first point of review for new programs and final plans. By the time they go to UCC for review, the Grad Council should have thoroughly reviewed the materials and answered any questions in anticipation of what would normally have been asked by UCC.

The Grad Council discussed some of the points to consider in examining courses and programs, such as; the distinct goals and objectives for the course, are these articulated clearly? Does the syllabus of record explain the course? Who is putting forth the course and what experience/expertise do they have to offer such a course?

The council reviewed the UCC course proposal form and other handouts suggesting items to put in a new course proposal. The following items were noted as 'essential':

a syllabus of record required. The objectives can be included in this document. how the course relates to the department, why the department faculty member wants to offer it, and what it can do for students.

One concern the council has is that multiple departments offer similar courses from their own perspectives. An example is statistics vs. research methods. Library research should be covered as well, but courses need to distinguish the difference between library research for lit review vs. real research.

P. Kimboko's former university offered a course, "introduction to graduate studies," that included content for students on how to access library resources, appropriate citations, research paper expectations, and so on. PT/OT offers a six hour orientation to cover those things. Something like this could be offered as a gateway course within each program.

There is some overlap with course content between programs. If one would look at course descriptions, they often sound like the same course. D. Cannon stated that there may be accreditation issues regarding faculty quality and specific disciplinary elements of the course content.

P. Kimboko indicated there could be some concern that, if a course is taught in another department, can they absorb the extra students? For example, if a full class is offered on statistics for health professions, can they add another 45 students from another discipline?

Per C. Coviak, there are scheduling issues as well with regard to when to offer courses. The health professions may have different schedules so they fit courses within their curriculum, and where they are with clinicals, for example...

R. Wilson stated that, with regard to the impact new courses have; the standard response is that it will not impact the library, budget, or faculty. He questioned how faculty expertise can be evidenced or documented.

The Council agreed that proposals should be specific as to how faculty expertise can support the course at graduate level.

Question arose, who decides to pull a course? The accrediting body will give the program a chance to repair the program and fix discrepancies. The department has to have a plan. A course with too few students will get pulled. It may be listed in the catalog but not offered.

The Council agreed to require a syllabus of record that includes course objectives. However, the Council will use UCC's format. Proposals must also identify faculty that are qualified to teach the course, and include a short bibliography for the course.

D. Cannon mentioned that “special topics” courses do not have to list their course title. This could be a way to offer specialized courses that don’t need to be in the Bulletin.

e. Set Agendas for Upcoming Meetings (i. – iv.)

Discussion: It was reported by P. Kimboko, that she had been told that the remaining College elections for GC should be held by next week. It was agreed that the members would vote for a chair at the next meeting.

P. Kimboko passed around several handouts and asked the members to read the documents.

The Grad Council will need to work with marketing to review and revise the grad bulletin. It would be helpful to have Chick come to the meetings as much of the grad bulletin was developed and is administered by the Registrar/Financial Aid offices.

v. Policy Matters

Discussion: The Council was asked to review the list of possible resources on a range of policy topics. They should let P. Kimboko know if they want any of the documents on the list. Every member received copies of the CGS booklet on Master’s Education. Items on the list were briefly discussed.

The Council agreed to start off with a review of the strategic plan, which could help set the priorities. The deadline for completing strategic plan ‘refinements’ is March. Related to the strategic plan timeline is the re-accreditation of the university by NCA. The timeline of the NCA review is every ten years. NCA reviews the university as a whole but may go in depth in certain areas. However, the university does not find out ahead of time which areas will be subject to that review.

vi. Grouping Meetings

Discussion: The Council will be notified when there are curriculum items coming. We may take a week or two for discussion, depending on the depth or number of issues.

It was suggested to hold a meeting just dedicated to prioritizing the tasks of the Council. Perhaps the full Council will not need to meet weekly. Our work can be divided between sub-committees that meet as needed and then report back to the full Council, perhaps once a month. Members found this to be an agreeable idea.

5) Reports from Colleges

No reports were given.

6) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned 10:55 AM.

September 17, 2004 Graduate Council meeting minutes approved on October 1, 2004.