**Graduate Council**

**Minutes**

**November 16, 2012**

The Graduate Council met Friday, November 16, 2012 at 1:00 pm in the Dogwood Room of the University Center.

Members present: S. Alspaw, Terri Armfield for Christina Reitz, L. Comer, M. Fenton, B. Kloeppel, K. Lunnen, A. Malesky, P. Robertson, D. Sally, S. Swanger, M. Tanaka and A. Voelker

Members absent: K. Cooper-Duffy, T. Creasy, A. Debo, G. Graham, S. Ha, E. McNelis, D. Russell, and K. Topolka-Jorissen

Others present: E. Frazier and E. Sigler

**Announcements** The announcements were distributed as an electronic handout for the meeting. Graduate Council members were encouraged to submit announcements and to provide feedback on how to make Graduate Council meetings more efficient.

 Interim Dean Fenton and four members of the Graduate School staff attended the North Carolina Council of Graduate Schools Conference held in Wilmington, North Carolina on November 1 and 2. Graduate School attended a presentation on implementing a paperless file system. The Graduate School staff will review the feasibility of implementing a paperless file system at WCU during the next year.

 A decision has been made to keep the Graduate School and Research as a single unit.

Interim Dean Fenton requested feedback from the Graduate Council regarding a proposed change from the UNC Council of Graduate School Deans to the new graduate program proposal procedures. Currently each university has representatives to propose and vote on new graduate programs. Under the new process, the Graduate School Dean from each University will send new graduate program proposals to campus constituencies for feedback. Each Graduate School Dean gets one vote and there will be no other university representatives. New Master’s programs will not require a vote for approval, but new Doctoral programs will require a vote. The graduate Council approved the proposed changes to the procedure. Mimi will report approval to General Administration.

**Approval of the Minutes** Motion and second to approve the minutes for the October 5, 2012 meeting. Motion passed.

**Standing Committee Reports**

 **Academic Policy and Graduate Faculty Review**

 The following persons were approved by the Graduate Faculty Review Committee as members of the graduate faculty and came as aseconded motion for approval.

 David Peifer Math Associate

 Interim Dean Fenton met with the committee twice. Larry Hammer attended the last meeting to provide input from the Registrar’s Office. Two Graduate School policies are currently under discussion and review by the committee:1) the Categories for Graduate School Admission policy and 2) the Enrollment in the Term of Degree Conferral policy. Once the committee has completed discussion and approved the policy revisions, the policies will be presented to the entire Graduate Council for discussion and review.

 **Curriculum Review**

The following curriculum items were reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. After a discussion with the department head, the MA Psychology program change was put on hold for further review and discussion by the Psychology faculty. The Construction Management program and course changes were also put on hold to make corrections to the AA-6 form.

 **AA-6**

**MA Psychology Program**

There would be one 3-hour section of PSY 599 (new course) required, and passing it would be a requirement for continuation in the program. Students would still be required to complete 6 hours (rather than 9) of PSY 699 Thesis credit.

**Construction Program**

Proposed change realigns courses and course content to provide better learning outcomes, better fit for future accreditation, and to increase the efficiency of program delivery.

**AA-5**

 PSY 599 Thesis Proposal (3)

 CM 552 Leadership in Construction Management (3)

 CM 688 Directed Project (1-3 Credit Hours, R-6)

 **Student Financial Assistance**

 Interim Dean Fenton met with the committee twice. The committee is reviewing the financial assistance awards procedures with the intentions of making the awards more inclusive, meeting more students’ needs, simplifying the application instructions and clarifying the review process. The proposed changes will open up the awards to more graduate student populations.

`` Chancellor’s Fellowship awards will be determined by the Colleges (each will have at least one Chancellor’s Fellowship to award). However the Graduate School will provide standard guidelines for the Colleges to follow in determining Chancellor’s Fellowship award eligibility. Chancellor’s Fellowship award winners will be recognized at the Research Symposium in March.

 The New Graduate Student Incentive Grants and Study Grants will be combined and renamed. Awards will be made to full-time and part-time students in resident credit and distance programs.

 After the first of the year, the committee will begin to review the process for allocating graduate assistantships. For the 2013-14 academic year the same allocation process from previous years will be followed; however, the committee will study the allocation process and recommend changes to Interim Dean Fenton.

 Interim Dean Fenton announced that she is now on the Steering/Advisory Scholarship Committee chaired by Brenda Holcomb, Director of University Scholarships at Western Carolina University. She shared that the committee is becoming more inclusive when considering the financial needs of all students, graduate and undergraduate.

 **Graduate Education Advancement Committee**

Interim Dean Fenton met with the committee twice to discuss the committee’s goals for the 2012-13 academic year.

 The committee will help form a Graduate Alumni Advisory Committee in order to gather information and engage alumni. The committee will also determine the activities of the Graduate Alumni Advisory Committee such as providing guidance with curriculum development, professional development and alumni engagement. A graduate Council member commented that their accreditation organization now requires information about what graduates are doing 18 months after graduation so follow up with alumni would be very helpful. Social media was mentioned as a means by which alumni could be contacted and engaged. After the Thanksgiving holiday, an e-mail invitation will be sent requesting suggestions for alumni members.

 In the spring term, the committee will research and review the role and responsibilities of graduate program directors. An attempt will be made to determine the duties and expectations of program directors across all graduate programs. The committee expects to find a wide range of support, compensation and workload expectations for program directors across graduate programs.

 The question was asked whether such a study has been conducted in the past by the Provost’s Office. The Provost’s Office suggested that information be gathered directly from program directors by asking general questions. Responses will be collected and discussed with the Deans. The intent is to advocate support for program directors without raising false expectations regarding the outcomes. The committee anticipates that raising awareness about what program directors do may help determine how best to support them.

**Agenda Items**

Sarah Alspaw, president of the Graduate Student Association (GSA), updated the Gradate Council about GSA activities. GSA has participants on many university committees, organizes social events and provides conference travel awards to graduate students. GSA would like the support of faculty to encourage more students to join GSA. GSA uses Facebook, orientation, e-mail and My Cat announcements to recruit and encourage participation, but any additional suggestions about ways to recruit new members are also welcome.

Ellen Sigler, Chair of the Faculty Advisory Scholarship Committee, presented information about changes to the three awards decided and administered by the Faculty Advisory Scholarship Committee.

 1) Faculty Research and Creativity award- Five awards of $5000 each

 2) University Scholar award- One award of $1000

 3) Graduate Student Research and Creative Projects Stipend (Non-work study employment)- 20 awards of $1000 each

Ellen Sigler said she will forward copies of the summary with all of the award descriptions and criteria to the Graduate Council. The essence of each award still exists, but the changes made removed duplication, made the application information more concise, and provided continuity between the website and the application information. A rubric has been developed for consistent evaluation.

The announcement about the Student Nonwork Study Research award will come from the Faculty Advisory Scholarship Committee.

The only change to the University Scholar award was removal of the blind review of applicants. Because the applicants submit CVs and letters of recommendation, the review cannot be blind. The University Scholar award should not be confused with the Hunter Scholar award administered by Hunter Library and awarded during Faculty Scholarship week.

A Graduate Council member asked if all of the funding is awarded each year. Ellen Sigler responded that not all of the funding is awarded each year. Funding not awarded went to support new grant initiatives so the funding was spent on faculty. Due to confusion over the criteria wording for the Faculty Research and Creativity award, the Faculty Advisory Scholarship Committee removed the wording “preference will be given to grant research” in order to open up the awards to all faculty doing research.

A Graduate Council member commented that the Faculty Research and Creativity award is a great award, but asked if the funding could be disbursed earlier during the summer. The funding is awarded on a fiscal year schedule so funds are not available until the fall term. Could funding come from a carry forward account? Is there a way to buffer the funds?

A Graduate Council member requested a centralized website with all of the information about faculty award opportunities. The concern expressed is that faculty are not aware of all of the faculty awards and do not know where to go to find information even though e-mail notifications are sent and website information is kept up-to-date. The Provost’s Office was suggested as the administrative office to contact about a creating and maintaining a centralized website. Mark Lord would be the contact person to submit a request to regarding the possibility.

**Future Agenda Items**

Discuss the definition of “full-time graduate student” as 9 graduate credit hours. Would Western Carolina University consider changing the definition of “full-time graduate student” by lowering the required credit hour limit? Some Graduate Schools define “full-time graduate student” as 6 graduate credit hours. What trade-offs are required to change the definition of a “full-time graduate student?”

Discuss the issue of graduate level teaching loads. Do the Colleges have a differential for graduate and undergraduate teaching loads or is workload a departmental decision? Do teaching load requirements vary department by department? Some departments are exclusively graduate or undergraduate while other departments may have both undergraduate and graduate teaching load requirements. Program needs determine teaching loads and SCH and FTE generation is also a factor.

Interim Dean Fenton suggested the Council of Graduate Schools may have a recommendation about graduate faculty load. She said she would investigate and report back to the Graduate Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Submitted by – Elizabeth Frazier

Please note: All attachments are on file in the Graduate School with the Graduate Council meeting minutes.