Graduate Council Meeting Minutes  
Friday, August 22, 2014 12:00 PM

Council Members in Attendance
Andres Jauregui (DATCOB), Radhouane Chouchane (DATCOB), Kevin Burgess (COLS), Ellen Roberts (Academic Affairs), Margie Yates (COEHP), Tina Butcher (Academic Affairs), Kimberly Gill (CALS), John Ellisor (CALS), Andrew Zohn (COA). Cheryl Smith (Chair) (COEHP).

Visitors
Tonya Wright (UITS), Bob Diveley (UITS), Valerie Alexander-Spicer (UITS), Keith Grier (UITS)

1. Welcome, Lunch, and Approval of Minutes.
Welcome given by Cheryl Smith. Minutes from June 19, 2014 are incomplete. Will add more information and send via email for approval. Dr. Smith announced a change to the minute’s process. Hereafter minutes must be more thorough and furnished to council members one week after a meeting so additions and corrections can be made in advance of the following meeting.

2. News from the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
Dr. Roberts reminded the council of the graduate assistant training session to be held at Lumpkin Center on Sept. 5. Twenty-nine grad assistants and 10 supervisors have signed up so far but more are needed. To encourage participation, the Graduate School has agreed to pay the costs for those signing up by August 22nd.

Cheryl Smith reminded the group that the session would be good training for the changing demands on graduate assistants and encourage all GAs to attend.

Andres Jauregui asked if departments could require graduate assistants to attend the session. Dr. Roberts said attendance should only be an expectation on the part of graduate programs and she encouraged council members to put out the word on the meeting.


a. Workflow Process for Submission of Graduate Faculty Qualifications: Dr. Roberts announced that she had consulted with Bob Diveley and his UITS staff on this matter. They are here to report on their work. Valerie Alexander-Spicer reported that she and her assistants have developed a way to run the graduate faculty application documents through Nolij. Tonya Wright explained how to assemble the documents and Keith Grier explained how to upload the documents from the departments to Nolij. The various parties in the approval process could then view the documents and enter their comments on each candidate.

A.J. asked about the role of the council in the document review process and Dr. Roberts explained that the application materials would move from the faculty member to the department head to the appropriate college dean and then to the council. Cheryl Smith, as the chair, would then enter the decision of the council on the documents and they would proceed for review to Ellen Roberts and Tina Butcher. Dr. Roberts stated that there would be relatively few faculty members coming up for review this year because of the work done last year to update the list. Dr. Roberts thanked the members of the UITS team for their hard work. A presentation will be made at the Chairs Assembly at the next meeting in order to start the new process with the chairs.
b. Adding an ex-officio member from the Admissions Office to the graduate council. Dr. Roberts explained that the Admissions Office would like to have an ex-officio member on the council so the office can be better informed on council business and decisions and to enable better communication with the graduate council members on important matters.

Dr. Roberts proposed that the SACSCOC liaison also be an ex-officio member of the Graduate Council. Dr. Kimberly Gill informed the council that the addition of these two new members would require a change to the council by-laws. However, she has spoken to the Provost and he would not have to approve the change. He only requires notification of any changes.

Dr. Gill made the motion that the council approves the addition of the two new ex-officio members. Andrew Zohn seconded the motion. However, the rules require a two week waiting period before the council can vote on the motion. This means the council will vote at the next meeting, September 12, 2014.

c. Process and wording of graduate grade appeals. Dr. Jauregui asked who should get the student’s grade appeal first, the graduate director or the department head. More generally, Dr. J. wanted to know what is the program director’s oversight authority in the appeal process. Dr. Roberts said that the written rules require that the appeal go directly to the department head and then the dean, but chairs may seek the advice of program directors in handling the appeal.


Dr. Smith announced the dates for all the upcoming council meetings for the school year. These dates are listed on the August 22, 2014 graduate council meeting agenda.

5. Graduate Council Committees.

Dr. Smith asked for volunteers to serve on the council’s two major committees during the 2014-2015 school year. These committee members are as follows:

Graduate Faculty Committee – Kevin Burgess, Greg Blalock, Andrew Jauregui, Andrew Zohn, and Margie Yates (committee head).

Curriculum/Program Committee – Radhouane Chouchane, Cheryl Smith, John Ellisor and Kimberly Gill (committee head).

6. Old Business

a. Graduate Assistants: Stipends, Job Responsibilities. Dr. Roberts informed the council that the number of graduate assistants approved at CSU is currently 86. Dr. Roberts also informed the council that the Graduate School has made some exceptions to the 10% rule for departments getting assistants. Notable exceptions have occurred, for example, in the Biology and Music departments because of the unique needs of these departments. Furthermore, in one area, assistants are working less than the required nineteen hours a week. Since there are good reasons for some of these exceptions and because some programs have had difficulty obtaining Graduate Assistants, Dr. Roberts suggested that the council think about a compromise proposal to the 10% rule. She suggested that it might be better to have the rule apply to each of the colleges in terms of the numbers of assistants they can employ rather than the individual disciplines. This change would allow for the creation of more graduate assistantships. Further, the
change would allow the colleges to transfer a number of assistantships from disciplines that do not need or use GAs to places of real need in other disciplines. Finally, Dr. Roberts said she would take the idea of the 10% rule change to the provost and also bring it back to the Graduate Council for possible action in the future.

Dr. Roberts raised the issue of graduate assistant stipends, indicating that stipend amounts varied widely from department to department. She suggested that the graduate council designate a minimum stipend amount. Cheryl Smith then asked that Dr. Roberts supply to council with a chart of stipend amounts presently paid to graduate assistants to better assist members in making a decision about proper pay for GAs. Dr. Roberts agreed to do so.

Finally, Dr. Roberts raised the question about whether some graduate assistants are improperly employed at present, doing jobs outside of academic work. She also raised the question: Should the graduate council regulate or set standards for graduate student work in some way? At that point, Kimberly Gill made the motion that the council form an ad hoc committee to look into the ways various departments are using graduate assistants. Also the committee will look at what graduate assistantships other universities are providing and how they are being used. The council seconded and approved the motion and Dr. Gill, Dr. Jauregui and Dr. Burgess volunteered to join the ad hoc committee on graduate assistant job responsibilities.

b. Graduate Assistantships for International Students – Visa Issues. Dr. Jauregui voiced some concerns from Athletics that the Grad Assistant Tuition waiver requires too many (eight to be exact) signatures from around the campus. Consequently, Athletics is concerned that for an international student it might take a long time to get all the signatures ready in time to show at the embassy when applying for a visa. Dr. Roberts suggested that international students should not be obtaining the required signatures but someone in the program should have the responsibility.

7. Adjournment And Unfinished Business: At 2 p.m. Dr. Gill made the motion that the meeting close. The motion was approved and the council, for want of time, adjourned without finishing deliberation on some remaining agenda items. These unfinished items are as follows:

Under Old Business: c. CSU Thesis and Dissertation Guide; Separation of Documents (Kimberly Gill). d. Graduate degree programs/Similar programs; Admission criteria; Dual degrees (Ellen Roberts).