

Minutes of the Graduate Council Meeting Held on February 19, 2014

Present: Chair: Caramello; Members: Bauer, Beise, Cabrera, Delwiche, DeShong, Dietrich, Dugan, Eno, Fox, Joseph, Laskowski, Macready, Paolisso, Popper, Simpson, Sprinkle, Steele, Tits, Wang, Wong

Staff: Chen, Franke, Leone, McAdams, Shayman, Woolston

I. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of October 29, 2013 were approved with no emendations.

II. Updates

Assistant Dean Jeff Franke updated the Council on several topics. International applications outpace domestic applicants (52%/48%) for Spring 2014 applications. The GS is launching a two-year pilot program with Math and English to provide funding to “buy out” TA courses, allowing TAs more time and hopefully reducing time to degree. The GS will fund this program with \$200,000 over the two-year period and report findings to the council.

Dean Caramello informed the Council that the average 10-year completion rate for UMD PhDs has increased from 61.8% in 2012 to 62.9% 2013; the national average for 2013 is 56.6%. The median doctoral time to degree for UMD candidates has reduced from 5.76 years (2012) to 5.3 years (2013). Dean Caramello stated he believes both these trends will continue at UMD. The NSF recently reported that UMD is second among AAU institutions in awarding doctoral degrees to African Americans for the period 2008-2012. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* ranked UMD first among AAU institutions in awarding doctoral degrees to African Americans for 2013.

Dean Caramello updated the Council on the GS’s progress toward creating a comprehensive communication and development strategy, including establishing full-time positions of Communications Officer and Development Officer. The new Communications Officer begins March 3, and a national search is underway to fill the Development Officer position before summer.

III. Progress Reports from Working Groups

PhD and Professional Doctoral Degrees (Councilor Sprinkle)

Councilor Sprinkle updated the Council on this working group’s progress. The group met with representatives from the College of Education regarding the EdD. The working group agreed that EDUC’s recommendation should be considered in the context of professional doctorates in general. The working group is drafting a report to this end. The working group will have a report by the end of this semester.

Professional Preparation for Multiple Career Tracks (Councilor Popper)

Councilor Popper reported that this working group will consider strategies for preparing doctoral candidates for multiple career paths. Once formed the working group will hold an initial meeting with Dean Caramello in the coming weeks. The working group will research best practices on campus and at peer institutions and make recommendations that the GS could begin to implement as early as Fall 2014.

In the ensuing discussion, councilors shared what their departments and colleges are currently doing to address this national issue. Councilor Delwiche indicated that CMNS has created five-minute web videos documenting alternative research and career paths in the science field, and Councilor DeShong indicated

that the Chemistry program invites successful alumni in many professions to campus to speak with students about their success.

Teaching Assistant Training (Councilor Bauer)

Councilor Bauer reported that this working group was charged with examining what TA training structures are currently in place on campus and at peer institutions and making recommendations for improvement to build on the current structure.

The working group reviewed data gathered by the GS in 2009 and will distribute a survey tool to departments to update this information. The working group met with Stephen Roth, Center for Teaching Excellence, who noted that Undergraduate Studies had hosted representatives from the University of Illinois and Indiana University in Fall 2013 to discuss their TA Training programs. The working group will have a report by the end of this semester.

IV. Report on Doctoral Degrees Requested by Dr. Loh

Dean Caramello informed the Council that these working groups' reports will be considered in the Dean's report to Dr. Loh on *Reimagining Doctoral Education for the 21st Century*, which Dr. Loh requested in his *State of the Campus Address*. This report will be provided to Dr. Loh in the Summer of 2014.

V. Discussion: Language Courses in Doctoral Education

Councilor Colon-Cabrera discussed problems encountered by graduate students who want to take language courses relevant to their degree. Students perceive a lack of flexibility when the course is not required for their degree program. Associate Dean Chen explained that GS policy extends the tuition remission credit to undergraduate courses, but the GS does not accept undergraduate credits toward graduate degree requirements. Councilor Simpson noted that implications for students on external grants must be considered, since the PI would need to substantiate that the language course is central to the project funding the student.

Following the discussion, Dean Caramello charged Associate Deans Chen and Shayman to research language requirements across campus, relevant GS and campus policies, and examples of individual cases that have been handled successfully. Dean Caramello also asked Assistant Dean/COS Franke to determine how much tuition remission is currently being used for language courses. Once this information is gathered and reviewed, the Council can determine if policy changes are needed, or if better communication across campus about current policies will resolve the issues.

Dean Caramello also concurred with Councilors that issues related to language courses might be considered in a broader context of any courses (such as statistics) that may benefit a student's degree program while not being a requirement of it.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 12 Noon.