

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

MINUTES

5 September 2003

Meeting Number 341

Present: D. Arant (MALS), L. Bennett (CAS), S. Blanton (POLS), B. Ching (ENGL), L. Clemens (HMSE), C. Danhower (FCBE), D. Franceschetti (PHYS), R. Koch (LSN), K. Kreitner (Music), M. Logan (CCFA), T. Miller (MGMT), J. Pazar (GSA), A. Proffitt (TECH), E. Rakow (COE), S. Slack (Herff), L. Weiss (HMSE); K. Weddle-West (Assistant VPGS), J. Brownlee (GS)

Absent: J. Campbell (COMM), D. Kemme (ECON), J. Mo (MECH), D. Wark (AUSP), A. Meyers (VPR)

Guests: Grace Song (Director, IEI)

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 pm.

341.1 Announcements

- 341.1.1. N. Hurley announced that the minutes of Meeting 338, 7 March 2003, had been approved by e-mail vote. Copies were distributed for members' information.
- 341.1.2. N. Hurley reiterated deadlines for Curricular Revisions and explained the new policy about syllabi—that the Graduate School needs them in electronic format as well as hard copy. She also urged members to be sure that Dan Poje is notified as soon as a department or division begins considering any new degree programs, majors, or concentrations or any major changes to existing degree programs, majors, or concentrations. Letters of Intent must be approved before program development.
- 341.1.3. N. Hurley announced a change in December meeting to Thursday, 12/4/03, since the usual first Friday is the beginning of exams; there will be no May meeting, since the first Friday is after graduation.
- 341.1.4. K. Weddle-West announced that TBR is working on an RODP MSN and that she has been assured that the concerns raised by the Directors about the MEd (lack of clarity about qualifications of faculty at other institutions and lack of syllabi for their courses) will be addressed. Dr. Robbie Melton, Director of Regents On-line Degree Programs at TBR, will be at the October meeting to answer questions about new programs.

- 341.1.5 Members introduced themselves and Grace Song, Director of Intensive English for Internationals, was introduced.
- 341.1.6. K. Weddle-West thanked departments for providing copies of their protocols for administration and evaluation of comprehensive examinations; only 9 have not yet responded. She stressed that everyone needs to know and abide by the rule that only one dissenting vote is allowed for a pass on a doctoral comp; departments that require only a majority vote will have to change their regulations. These protocols need to be available at both the departmental and college levels; they are required by SACS.
- 341.1.7. K. Weddle-West distributed Graduate Brochures and sample Shells (special letterhead) for department information. The information should follow the template that is available from L. Allen (lallen) in the Graduate School. Brochures and shells are also available in the Graduate School.
- 341.1.8. N. Hurley reminded the Council that Graduate Bulletins are available in the old bookstore; call Jack Buchanan at 0857 to arrange for a pick-up.
- 341.1.9. K. Weddle-West distributed a definition of an electronic thesis/dissertation from Virginia Tech and announced that Jeffrey Kirk will produce our first ETD. The University already has all of the needed support functions in place. ETDs will not be required of all students, but the Graduate School will work with those students who want to use the technology; K. Weddle-West encourages students in appropriate fields to develop ETDs. After his dissertation has been accepted, J. Kirk will visit the Council to discuss his experience. The informed consent process will change, since videos are involved, but this is not a problem with the IRB.
- 341.1.10. J. Brownlee reminded the council of the 12-hour requirement for GAs and stressed that this is 12 hours of graduate credit (6 hours of thesis or dissertation). Undergraduate courses are approved only if they are being used to clear a deficiency. K. Weddle-West reminded the Council that the previous “dummy” courses can now be used for GTAs who are interested in earning the graduate teaching certificate. Such topics are retention, designing tests, assessing student progress, and writing grants are covered in these courses. To avoid the problems arising when students don’t come to campus until the last minute, she suggested that departments enroll new GAs for 12 hours of introductory courses and then process drop/adds when the student starts class. J. Brownlee noted that the Graduate School will approve a reduction to 9 hours in the semester the student plans to graduate, but that if the student does not graduate, s/he can lose the assistantship.
- 341.1.11. Janice Pazar, new president of the Graduate Student Association reminded the Council to nominate representatives from their colleges, so that the Association can begin functioning. She is now updating the GSA website.

341.2 Discussion Items

- 341.2.1. Grace Song addressed the Council about the SPEAK test and related rules and problems enforcing them. She pointed out that IGAs who haven't taken the test or who have failed it are nevertheless teaching—this must be rectified. Only about one third of those who took the test last year passed it. The test is much broader than necessary for classroom teaching. She said that a list of failures will be sent to each department; M. Logan suggested that the lists be sent to the colleges as well. English 6590, for International Teaching Assistants, has not made for the last several years in spite of the obvious need for it. Although departments may need teachers, we can not let this situation continue. She suggested not offering teaching assistantships in the first semester; K. Weddle-West pointed out that the GA can be an assistant to the teacher of record. G. Song explained that students have to be pretty comfortable in English to get a 50 on the test; most students seem to hit a plateau at 40-45. A 45 is probably sufficient for teaching, especially with some training on getting their point across; the inability to communicate is also frustrating for the assistant. A. Proffitt suggested correlating SIRS with SPEAK scores as another method of measuring success in communication. K. Kreitner suggested that sending a list of all scores, not just failures, to the department would help the department place the scores. This is a critical issue in retaining students in General Education courses. L. Bennett remarked that it is time to enforce the consequence of losing the assistantship when students do not enroll in 12 graduate hours or teach without passing the SPEAK test. There was general agreement with this. The Council wanted to see more information, such as hearing sample tests, before discussing lowering the bar to 45 with remediation. G. Song will attend the October Council meeting.
- 341.2.2. K. Weddle-West asked the council to consider whether there should be a maximum number of hours of transfer credit at the doctoral level. She suggested a limit of 12 hours, but wants the college councils to look into why there currently is no limit—is it a policy or a mere oversight?
- 341.2.3. She also asked if there should be a minimum number of members for thesis committees as there is for doctoral? Perhaps three, with a specified minimum from the department.

341.3 Old Business—None.

341.4. New Business

- 341.4.1. B. Ching announced the new schedule for interdisciplinary studies events and distributed a calendar/brochure.
- 341.4.2. S. Slack suggested that the Council consider, at the next meeting, increasing the number of voting Adjunct/Affiliate doctoral committee members to two.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nancy Hurley

