

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR GRADUATE STUDIES
AND RESEARCH**

MINUTES

3 October 2003

Meeting Number 342

- Present:** 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. McInish (FIR), J. Mo (MECH), J. Pazar (GSA), E. Rakow (COE), S. Slack (Herff); K. Weddle-West (Assistant VPGS), J. Brownlee (GS)
- Absent:** D. Arant (MALS), J. Campbell (COMM), T. Miller (MGMT), A. Proffitt (TECH), D. Wark (AUSP), L. Weiss (HMSE); A. Meyers (VPR)
- Guests:** S. Brackstone (Assistant Vice Provost, Ext. Programs), R. Melton (Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, TBR), Jane Sipes (Asst. Dean, Distance Learning), G. Song (Director, IEI), Noel Schwartz (Registrar)

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm.

342.1 L. Bennett moved (2/M. Logan) that the minutes of Meeting 341, 9-5-03, be approved with corrections as noted. The motion passed by voice vote.

342.2 Presentations

342.2.1 Dr. Weddle-West introduced Dr. Grace Song by saying that the Graduate School will monitor non-native English-speaking TAs more closely to ensure that they have passed the SPEAK test, which is required for teaching. Dr. Song recommended that departments encourage applicants to take the Test of Spoken English in their own country before coming here if they want to use them as teaching assistants. She distributed a spreadsheet showing that the majority of TAs (14 of 36) earned a score of 45. She also demonstrated SPEAK Test scoring by playing tapes representative of each scoring level. There was a definite difference between scoring levels. She did point out, however, that this is a general test and TAs often are better at communicating within their own discipline, which is why she suggests lowering the passing score to 45.

Several points were raised during the general discussion. a) Basic teaching skills are also very important for all TAs. b) A score of 45 with remediation should be sufficient. c) Instructor of record should earn 50, but an assistant to the instructor (lab instructor, etc.) could probably get by with a 45. d) Although the lower score is understandable for the most part, it would be wearing for the students after a hour. e) Since SIRS is confidential except for the instructor and the chair, it is difficult to correlate with TAs' SPEAK scores unless the chair will do it.

Dr. Weddle-West called for a motion to accept 45 plus remediation for non-native speakers of English who are assistants to the instructor of record, as suggested by Dr. Franceschetti. L. Bennett (2/E. Rakow) so moved. However, during discussion the Council decided that more information was necessary: such as, what percent improve after remediation and by how much; what is the percent of those with a score of 45 who are currently assistants to the instructor of record. Dr. Song agreed to provide the data on the percent of students who improved from 45-50

342.2.2 Dr. Robbie Melton distributed copies of the RODP Guidelines, Procedures, and Process for Graduate Level Programs and Courses after S. Brackstone introduced J. Sipes, Assistant Dean for Distance Learning who is the RODP contact on-campus. Dr. Melton went over the Guidelines with the Council members. She stressed that there has to be a statewide need for a program to be added. Currently, TBR is concentrating on four needs:

- The need to produce more than 200,000 college graduates to meet national norms.
- The need to increase workforce development, particularly in information technology such as computer operation, information processing, and drafting technology. All 27 technology centers are online and the virtual college has a headcount of 4200, more than two community colleges combined.
- The need to address the P-12 teacher shortage, particularly in math, sciences, literacy, and special education.
- The need to address the lack of qualified nursing faculty, which the new RODP MSN will do.

Lab and clinical experiences (chemistry, biology, nursing) will be addressed on-ground through summer institutes, weekend workshops, etc. Faculty who teach graduate courses must meet SACS requirements as well as individual institutional requirements. If the institution has no graduate program, it must accept faculty from institutions that do. There are currently no plans to begin an on-line MBA program. She also discussed the approval process that was instituted for the MEd and stressed that the University Council will not be asked to approve future programs (e.g., MS in Nursing) without the appropriate documentation (syllabi) and qualifications of instructors of record. She concluded by saying that RODP is one of the top three virtual universities in the US.

342.3 Discussion Items

342.3.1 Enrollment Data by Major—see the website for Academic Programs and Assessment (<http://academics.memphis.edu/assessment>) for completion data (degrees awarded).

342.3.2 Electronic Dissertations—encourage e-theses and e-dissertations where appropriate. The University has all the necessary backup already in place. Interested students should contact Dr. Weddle-West, who will connect them with the proper people.

342.3.3 Maximum Number of On-line Courses Applied to the Doctoral Degree—How important is contact between student and faculty? Dr. Weddle West

distributed a statement pertaining to this situation and asked that council members to take it to their departments. Exceptions, as for on-line degrees, are possible.

342.4 Announcements—Dr. Weddle-West drew Council members' attention to the following information:

- 342.4.1 Retention Survey—Perceptions of Graduate Teaching Assistants—Student Focus Group Results
- 342.4.2 Graduate Scholarship Announcements
- 342.4.3 Phase II Funding Opportunities—there is a little bit of money still available
- 342.4.4 Opportunities for Funding Stellar Graduate Students—Provost's Pre-doctoral Diversity Awards—October 15th Deadline

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nancy Hurley.