

Graduate Council
January 12, 2009
226 University Hall
Meeting Minutes

Graduate Council Members Present:

Ana Azevedo, Jim Bartholomew, Ginny Bumgardner, Teresa Early, Mike Lairmore, Rattan Lal, Walter Lempert, Jason Marion, Ruth Peterson, Constantine Psimopoulos, Jim Phelan, John Sheridan, Harald Vaessin

Graduate School Staff Present: Patrick Osmer, Ann Salimbene, Elliot Slotnick, Kathleen Wallace, Susan Reeser (recorder)

Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from the December 8, 2008, Graduate Council meeting were approved as submitted.

A. Announcements –Dean Pat Osmer

- The Task Force on Life Sciences has developed a survey for faculty, research scientists, postdoctoral researchers, and graduate students to collect information on current strengths and emerging frontiers in the life sciences at Ohio State. The survey deadline is January 20.
- The Graduate School is scheduled to give a one year report on doctoral program quality at the April Board of Trustees meeting.
- The Graduate School received a request from Provost Alutto to review the college strategic plans to determine if they demonstrate responsiveness to the doctoral program review.
- The National Research Council (NRC) report methodology was not released in December as hoped. There has been no word yet as to whether it will be sent out in January as planned in the alternate release schedule.

B. Graduate Council Curriculum Committee Reports and Actions

There were no curriculum issues reviewed.

C. Review Items:

- **Electronic submission of master's theses**

Jim Phelan explained the rationale behind a letter sent to Dean Osmer from the Association of Writers and Writing Programs about concerns expressed by faculty and student in the MFA creative writing program in English about the implementation of the publication of electronic theses. He indicated that even though there is an embargo of 5 years before the theses can be released, and extensions can be requested, this policy creates a burden to creative writing professionals whose theses never become outdated and can negatively affect the publication of their work.

- **Jim Phelan, Ruth Peterson, and Walter Lempert will convene a subcommittee to discuss if the MFA program in English should be exempt from the public dissemination of their electronically submitted theses and report on their finding at the next Graduate Council meeting.**

- **Fellowship updates**

Elliot reported that the Graduate School will once again allocate one-half of its first-year fellowship awards for distribution at the college-level to assist them in recruiting top students. Notification about the 2009 Graduate School University Fellowship Awards allocations will be sent to colleges by the end of the week.

- **Credit hour change**

The Graduate School is drafting a policy to establish a new total credit hour minimum for graduate programs for students who fall short of meeting the 135 hour Ph.D. requirement due to the three credit post-candidacy enrollment policy. The policy will be reviewed at the February 9 Graduate Council meeting.

- **Guidelines for formatting dissertations and theses**

Ann Salimbene explained the proposed changes to the Graduate School guidelines for formatting dissertations and theses to streamline the formatting guidelines from 12- to 4-pages by making them more concise and providing only information directly related to document formatting. The proposed guidelines will allow students more flexibility to incorporate discipline-specific publishing practices.

- **Council members express approval and appreciation for reducing bureaucracy.**

D. For introductory discussion:

- **Setting goals for time to degree and Ph.D. degree completion**

Dean Osmer discussed the issue of establishing norms by discipline for time-to-candidacy and time-to-degree. The norms should be based on best practices at the national level.

E. Other topics of discussion expressed by Council members were:

- Several members are concerned about the titles used by the Office of Human Resources for individuals on training grants or NIH K awards identifying them as postdoctoral researchers (instead of graduate research associates) because they are highly paid for these prestigious awards. Such titling creates multiple levels of problems such as tax and benefit status, and some students are reluctant to take appointments because of their perceived financial drawbacks. Dean Osmer asked that documentation about these cases be sent to him so he can review the issue at a future Vice Provost staff meeting.

- Jason Marion mentioned that many graduate students still have concerns about the 3 credit hour full-time post-candidacy policy and that there needs to be clarification in the guidelines and better communications relative to the courses that students are allowed to register for. The Council of Graduate Students may be preparing a resolution to this effect.
- Concern was expressed about some students in Biological Sciences who are being hired as teaching associates in positions outside of their programs where they are being paid stipends but not receiving tuition and fee authorizations as required by the Graduate School. Dean Osmer asked that documentation about the situation be sent to him in order to determine what steps need to be taken to assist the students.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

The next Graduate Council meeting is scheduled on Monday, February 9, from 3:30-5 p.m. in 226 University Hall.