MINUTES
MEETING OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
October 11, 2017

The Graduate Council met on Wednesday, October 11, 2017, at 3:30 p.m. in 229 Terrell Hall.

Members present: Hamid Arabnia, Fikri Avci, Nicholas Berente, Houjian Cai, Georgia Calhoun, Gary Green, Cindy Hahamovitch, Tina Harris, Janette Hill, John Hulland, Denise Lewis, Javad Mohammadpour, Masaki Mori, Jessica Muilenburg, Jeffrey Mullen, Craig Osenberg, Amy Pollard, James Reap, Kaori Sakamoto, Welch Suggs, Aaron Thompson, and Katherine Thompson. Suzanne Barbour, Ron Walcott, Cheri Bliss, and Robin Bingham represented the Graduate School.

Members absent: Mary Caplan, Victoria Hasko, Jennifer Lindstrom, Amanda Murdie, Daniel Perez, Patricia Reeves, Marc Van Iersel, Dehai Zhao, and Johnita Daniel (GPSA).

Dean Suzanne Barbour called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

Minutes of the September 13, 2017, Graduate Council meeting were approved as posted on the Graduate School website.

Graduate Council Committees Reports and Action Items

A. Administrative Committee
   Welch Suggs, Chair
   Since the last meeting of the Graduate Council, the Administrative Committee has not met.

B. Program Committee
   Welch Suggs, Chair
   Since the last meeting of the Graduate Council, the Program Committee has not met.

C. Curriculum Committee
   Mary Caplan, Chair (report read by Cindy Hahamovitch)
   Since the last meeting of the Graduate Council, the Curriculum Committee has approved 39 new courses, 28 course revisions, and 3 course deletions.

D. Appeals Committee
   Nicholas Berente, Chair
   Since the last report to the Graduate Council, the Appeals Committee met once on October 4, 2017. Committee members present were Nicholas Berente, Jennifer Lindstrom, Jessica Muilenberg, Amanda Murdie, Amy Pollard, and Dehai Zhao. Ron Walcott, Cheri Bliss, and Kristin Lawrence from the Graduate School were present. The committee met to hear two dismissal appeals. Both appeals were upheld.
E. Strategic Planning Committee

Tina Harris, Chair

Since the last meeting of the Graduate Council, the Strategic Planning Committee met on September 28, 2017, to continue the discussion on the concept of Graduate Faculty. No consensus yet in order to present an action item.

Old Business

Under the topic of old business, a question was raised regarding whether the Curriculum Committee checks for duplication of effort when reviewing proposals. At present, there is no way to know without outside knowledge. Two concerns raised were course overlap and course access.

The Administrative Committee is reviewing the Curriculum Committee’s current role and looking at other institutions and how they operate, so the process is under discussion. A new system is also coming online at UGA that might aid in discovery of course content being taught on campus. The Dean will seek further information on this new system.

New Business

Two items were brought forward under new business:

1. Commencement: marching before degree completion. The President’s Faculty Advisory Committee held discussion on the matter of marching before degree completion by graduate students. Currently, students may appeal to the President’s Office to walk at commencement before degree completion, but have uniformly been denied. Ultimately, the decision is made by the President’s Office. The Graduate Council does not have the authority to change the rules, but the body can make a recommendation. No consensus was arrived at by the present members, so no vote was taken on making a recommendation to the President’s Office. The Dean’s opinion is in line with the President, but will relay feedback (both for and against) to the President’s Office.

2. Retired faculty as dissertation committee chairs. The issue was raised due to retired faculty who lose Graduate Faculty status after going part-time, which led into the first information item below.

Information Items

Two items were brought forward under new business:

1. The future of Graduate Faculty at UGA. In looking at other institutions (comparator peer, aspirational peer), the bulk of comparator peer institutions have Graduate Faculty at institutional level; aspirational peer at program level. Questions raised: Is there value in Graduate Faculty? Should Graduate Faculty be at the institutional or program level? What constitutes official expertise at program level?

Graduate Council members have discussed the issue of Graduate Faculty with peers from other institutions. Those that had Graduate Faculty didn’t conceive it any other way. Those that didn’t have it, had a hard time understanding the concept of Graduate Faculty. Overall: no one wanted to change it.
Under the revised Graduate Faculty guidelines, the Graduate School basically “rubber stamps” it on its way to the President’s Office. Role of Graduate School is to provide guidance, not approval. Programs know what they need in terms of expertise.

Question was raised regarding Graduate Faculty removal/revocation policy, which is appealable to the Graduate Council. Even if Graduate Faculty is shifted to program level, appeal piece would still be with the Graduate Council.

The Strategic Planning Committee sees schools/colleges developing their own Graduate Faculty procedures if at the school/college level. Schools/colleges would decide whether it is a school/college decision or program decision. Some might decide to not have a Graduate Faculty. Do you trust your colleagues to make these decisions?

Suggestion was made to meet with deans and chairs to let them weigh in on the Graduate Faculty discussion.

The Strategic Planning Committee will meet again on Monday, October 30, to continue their discussion.

(2) Graduate degrees for faculty. This is not a USG issue. A statement was only found in the UGA Bulletin stating that any faculty above the rank of instructor cannot get a doctoral degree from UGA. Question raised: Should people above the rank of instructor be allowed to get a graduate degree from UGA? Could be a conflict of interest if getting a graduate degree from the department in which they work. Could be a conflict of interest if interferes with doing your job at UGA. It is assumed that the institutional role came from the changes which occurred in the 1980s. Faculty can use tuition assistance to take classes. Why not use to extend their expertise and knowledge base? Suggestion was made to include a statement that says you cannot get a degree from your own department. Eliminate barriers rather than erect them.

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.