2013-2014 Graduate Council
Meeting Agenda: April 16, 2014 | 3:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m. | 102 Kern Graduate Building
Coffee available: 3:10 p.m.

1. Minutes of the March 19, 2014, Meeting
2. Communications to Graduate Council
3. Announcements/Remarks by the Chair - Regina Vasilatos-Younken, Interim Dean of the Graduate School, Chair of Graduate Council
4. Reports of Standing Committees of Graduate Council
   a) Committee on Programs and Courses – Christina Grozinger, Chair
      Informational item (Appendix A):
      1) Graduate Council Curriculum Report, 4/9/2014
   b) Committee on Academic Standards – Jon Nussbaum, Chair
   c) Committee on Committees and Procedures – Kenneth Davis, Chair
      Item for discussion/vote (Appendix B):
      1) Recommendations for policy decisions during the implementation of the new student information system (Project LionPATH)
   d) Committee on Fellowships and Awards – Robert Edwards, Chair
   e) Committee on Graduate Research – David Spencer, Chair
   f) Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues – Lori Francis, Chair
5. Reports of Special Committees
   a) Graduate School’s Graduate Exhibition Subcommittee – Libby Tisdell, Graduate Council liaison on the Subcommittee
6. Special Reports
   a) Graduate Student Association
7. Unfinished Business
8. New Business
9. Comments and Recommendations for the Good of the Graduate Community
2013-2014 Graduate Council
Minutes of the Meeting: March 19, 2014

Graduate Council met on Wednesday, March 19, 2014, at 3:30 p.m. in 102 Kern Graduate Building. Dr. Regina Vasilatos-Younken, Interim Dean of the Graduate School, chaired the meeting. The minutes of the meeting of February 19, 2014, were approved.

Communications to Graduate Council
None.

Announcements/Remarks by the Chair
None.

Reports of Standing Committees of Graduate Council

Committee on Programs and Courses
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Christina Grozinger, Chair, Committee on Programs and Courses.

Dr. Grozinger presented to Council for discussion/vote one item on behalf of the Committee with a motion and a second to approve: proposed revisions of the Graduate Council definition of an option (Appendix A). Following a brief discussion, the proposed revisions were approved by Council.

Dr. Grozinger also presented one informational item to Council on behalf of the Committee on Programs and Courses:

Graduate Council Curriculum Report, 3/12/2014 — Appendix B

Committee on Academic Standards
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Jon Nussbaum, Chair, Committee on Academic Standards.

Dr. Nussbaum reported that the Committee had met earlier in the day and had continued its discussion of preliminary recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Graduate Faculty Membership to revise the Graduate Faculty membership guidelines and nomination process. A draft report was presented to the Advisory Committee for Graduate Education (ACGE) and the Senate Committee on Research (SCOR) and feedback was relayed to the Committee on Academic Standards by Ad Hoc Subcommittee chair Dr. Denise Solomon and Dr. Nussbaum, who also is a member of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

The Ad Hoc Subcommittee will review all feedback and present a final report to the Committee on Academic Standards. The Committee will discuss and revise the recommendations as appropriate; after ultimate approval by the Committee, the proposed revisions to the guidelines and process will be presented to Graduate Council (anticipated no later than the May Council meeting). Dr. Nussbaum urged Council members to review closely the proposed revisions when the item appears on the Council agenda and to share them broadly for comment, as what is being proposed is significantly different than the current guidelines and process.
Dr. Nussbaum also presented to Council for discussion/vote one item on behalf of the Committee with a motion and a second to approve: a proposed new policy regarding the maximum period of time after grades are submitted for an instructor to submit corrected grades for graduate courses via eLion (currently, one year based upon the default in the student information system), as well as related revisions of the existing Graduate Council policy regarding deferred and missing grades (Appendix C). Current Graduate Council policy allows 25 weeks for a deferred (DF)/missing grade (NG) to be reconciled before the grade defaults to an “F”; the proposed revision would allow 8 weeks for reconciliation. The proposed new policy also would provide 8 weeks during which an instructor could change a grade directly in eLion without submitting a request with justification to the Graduate School. Following discussion, an amendment was made to change the time period in both the new policy for the maximum period of time allowable for changing a grade and the revised policy for DF/NG from 8 weeks to 12 weeks. Following additional brief discussion, the amended new policy and the amended revisions of the existing policy were approved by Council.

Committee on Committees and Procedures
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Kenneth Davis, Chair, Committee on Committees and Procedures.

Dr. Davis reported that the Committee would have an item for discussion/vote at the April Council meeting regarding an expedited process for approving changes to graduate policies or creating new policies that may be needed within relatively short timeframes during implementation of the new student information system (SIS).

Committee on Fellowships and Awards
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Robert Edwards, Chair, Committee on Fellowships and Awards.

Dr. Edwards reported that the committee is in the process of reviewing applications for the Academic Computing Fellowship and the AT&T Graduate Fellowship and will decide on the recipients before the April Council meeting.

Committee on Graduate Research
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Mr. Doug Whalen, a graduate student member of Graduate Council representing the Graduate Student Association and a member of the Committee on Graduate Research, which meets in conjunction with the Senate Committee on Research (SCOR), who reported on behalf of Dr. David Spencer, Chair, Committee on Graduate Research.

Mr. Whalen reported that SCOR met on March 18 and several topics were covered in the meeting. Interim Vice President for Research Neil Sharkey reported on the Association of American Universities (AAU) meeting. Dr. Sharkey reported that the meeting focused on funding issues, increasing the visibility of science, tracking how research dollars drive local and state economies, and the anticipated prioritizations/support of research by Penn State’s incoming president, Dr. Eric J. Barron.

Mr. Whalen also reported that funding issues surrounding the humanities were discussed, as was the tradition of extramural funding. The final item on the agenda was the presentation of the recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Graduate Faculty Membership to revise the Graduate Faculty membership guidelines and nomination process.
Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Lori Francis, Chair, Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues.

Dr. Francis reported that the two subgroups of the Committee had met earlier in the day. The subcommittee focused on professional development opportunities discussed the possibility of planning a weekend workshop for graduate students. The subcommittee focused on mentoring is developing a project proposal, the details of which will be provided at the April Council meeting.

Dr. Francis also thanked Council members for passing along her request about identifying professional development opportunities that are offered by individual academic units and institutes across the University; she has received numerous informative email communications since the February Council meeting that are helpful references for graduate students.

Reports of Special Committees

Graduate School’s Graduate Exhibition Subcommittee

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Libby Tisdell, Graduate Council liaison to the Graduate School’s Graduate Exhibition Subcommittee.

Dr. Tisdell reported that the 2014 Graduate Exhibition is two weeks away—the performances are April 6 at the Playhouse Theatre in the Theatre Building and the poster exhibition is April 8 in the HUB-Robeson Center. This year’s event features 256 poster submissions, 17 visual arts submissions, and 7 performances. The overall number of participants is decreased slightly from last year’s Exhibition, but with ongoing construction at the HUB-Robeson Center, the lower number works well with the slightly reduced space available for the Exhibition.

Dr. Suzanne Adair reported that additional judges are needed for the Exhibition and urged Council members to consider volunteering; she asked them to encourage their colleagues to volunteer as well.

Special Reports

Graduate Student Association

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Ms. Katherine Kragh-Buetow representing the Graduate Student Association (GSA).

Ms. Kragh-Buetow reported that the chief concern of the GSA continues to be the proposed change in health insurance coverage offered to graduate assistants. Ms. Kragh-Buetow noted that the GSA continued conversations with representatives of the Controller’s and Budget offices, as well as the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School, to voice the concerns of graduate students regarding the impending changes. Mr. Whalen added that more informal groups of graduate students have contacted the GSA to voice their concerns; however, they are being encouraged to unify with the GSA. Final changes to premiums and the level of subsidization of graduate assistant health insurance are still being assessed by the University, with all due consideration of the concerns raised by graduate student representatives.
Unfinished Business
None.

New Business
None.

Comments and Recommendations for the Good of the Graduate Community
None.

There being no further comments or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Next Meeting:
Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., 102 Kern Graduate Building
Graduate Council Curriculum Report

The Graduate Council Curriculum Report (GCCR), which includes all graduate program curricular proposals approved through the Graduate Council curricular review process, is published 12 times each calendar year.

Questions/comments regarding the GCCR or its contents may be directed to the Executive Director of Graduate Education Administration, Elizabeth Price.

April 9, 2014

No graduate program proposals have been approved through the Graduate Council curricular review process for publication in this edition of the Graduate Council Curriculum Report.

Note: Graduate course proposals approved through the Graduate Council curricular review process, as well as information about postbaccalaureate/graduate credit certificates approved by college/school administrators for graduate education, are published in the Senate Curriculum Report.
Recommendations for Policy Decisions During the Implementation of the New Student Information System

Charge to the Committee:
This special meeting was called to discuss an expedited process for approving changes to graduate policies or creating new policies that may be needed within relatively short timeframes during implementation of the new student information system (SIS). During implementation, policy decisions may need to be made based upon different capabilities of the new system (versus the current system, ISIS) that will not be able to proceed through the standard Graduate Council approval timeline without potentially costing the University substantial sums of money each day that consultants are waiting for a final disposition. In some cases, a decision may be needed with respect to selecting from among new features or capabilities, whereas in other cases, the new SIS may not be able to support a policy that currently exists. Such decisions may need to be made in a matter of days, or may be needed to be made during the summer when Graduate Council and its committees are not in session.

Recommendations of the Committee:
It is the recommendation of the Committee that a temporary, special procedure be put in place to respond to requests for changes to policies that may be required during the implementation of the new student system, as follows:

All requests for policy decisions by Graduate Council for the implementation of the new student information system that cannot proceed through the standard Graduate Council approval timeline as referenced above be received by the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School. The Office of the Dean will determine if the request may result in or require an administrative change, a minor academic policy change, or a substantial academic policy change.

If it is determined that the request may result in or require an administrative policy change or minor academic policy change, the Office of the Dean will make a final decision (for administrative policies, as is normally the case), or a provisional decision for minor academic policy changes.

If it is determined that the request may result in or require a substantial academic policy change, the Office of the Dean will call a meeting of the Executive Committee of Graduate Council. The Executive Committee will be put on notice that, at any point during the implementation of the new student information system, it may be necessary to call a meeting with short lead time for this purpose. The Executive Committee will make a provisional academic policy change decision based on a consensus of the available participants. If the Executive Committee of Graduate Council is not able to assemble, whether in person or by phone, prior to the date that the requested decision is needed, the Office of the Dean will make the provisional decision.

In all cases, any decisions will be presented to the appropriate committees of Graduate Council at the next available meeting of the respective committee. Provisional academic policy decisions will be reviewed by the appropriate committee, with all available information to understand the
rationale for the change, as well as any constraints to altering the change, including potentially prohibitive costs (i.e., once a decision has been given to the implementation team, a further change, particularly if it requires customization, may be cost prohibitive). Each provisional academic policy change would be altered or approved as final policy changes following normal Graduate Council procedures.

This temporary procedure will expire once the new Student Information System development project is completed.