Graduate Council
November 7, 2016
Minutes

Voting members present: Sourabh Apte, Pat Chappell, Jim Coakley, Ryan Contreras, Rebekah Elliot, Theresa Filtz, David Finch, Lisa Ganio, Anita Grunder, Lisa Price
Ex-Officio Members: Graduate School – Dorthe Wildenschild
Guest: Andrew Buermeyer, Julie Gess-Newsome (via phone), Andy Karplus, Kerry McPhail, Martin Schuster

Reduction in Didactic Credit Requirements for PhD Programs

Guests will include Kerry McPhail from Pharmaceutical Sciences, and may include representatives from Biochemistry and Biophysics, Environmental and Molecular Toxicology, and Microbiology.

- Related materials:
  - June 3, 2004 Graduate Council minutes
  - Biochemistry & Biophysics Graduate Program Directive
  - Exemption Request from Pharmaceutical Sciences, Biochemistry and Biophysics, Environmental and Molecular Toxicology, Integrative Biology, and Microbiology

- Kerry McPhail noted that moving the Laboratory Research Intensive program from 36 to 24 hours provides much needed flexibility. The College of Pharmacy has identified graduate programs as the number one issue in their Strategic Planning.
- Andy Karplus remarked that Chemistry has had a waiver for only 27 credits since 2004; prior to 1994, 27 credits were required, and then the university increased to 36 credits.
- Peer institutions are around 24-27 credits.
- If the credits are reduced, what will be lost? For Pharmacy, 18 core credits are required and the remainder are electives.
- How many credits per course? Generally, courses are three credits. There is some movement toward one-credit courses for specialized topics.
- The number one recommendation for the recent Biochemistry & Biophysics Graduate Program Review was to minimize the number of credits in the program. The approved Action Plan indicated limiting the number of non-blanket credits to 27. An identified action was to apply to the Graduate Council to reduce the number of credits.
- The 1994 minutes indicated that the Graduate Council will explore the broader philosophical issues associated with university minimum standards for doctoral programs.
- Assuming that there are different Learning Outcomes for each program, would lowering the number of credits be reflected in the Learning Outcomes? Kerry responded that assessment would occur in a number of different ways: during the preliminary oral, defense exam, conferences, internships, publications, etc.; they are blanket-numbered courses, and these are the credits used for assessment.
  - Andrew Buermeyer stated that, regarding theoretical learning, there is a core of 24-27 credits. Students come in with toxicology knowledge and that core is maintained with this exemption request; there would be additional courses that are valuable to the student; and they would like flexibility with lower overall residency credit requirements for students who come in with a Master’s.
- Is Strategic Planning occurring in all associated programs? Those units represented either have or are in the process of engaging in Strategic Planning.
- If this exemption is approved, the graduate program could recommend requirements but the Graduate Committee has the ultimate say.
- If electives are not well subscribed, electives could be made more broad, one-credit courses could be created, collaboration with other units could occur, or streamline and focus electives to be more attractive.
- Will students create a portfolio? Each student has an individual professional development plan; the idea is that the student and mentor develop the plan and participate in an annual review to update the plan. The proposal would provide more flexibility and allow students to begin research earlier.
• A downside to one-credit courses is that instructors may have the temptation to pack content from a three-credit course into one credit.

Graduate Council Discussion:
• One understands the need for flexibility and would support a waiver. The justification that they are lab-intensive programs, is confusing.
• One-year full time is 27 credits, not 36. It would be more difficult to justify 24 credits.
• One felt that this should be considered as a change in policy rather than a waiver.
• There is no requirement for professional development. Noted that not all students will be involved in research.

Action: Graduate Council members were asked to think about the request and be prepared to continue discussion next week, with a possible vote.

Courtesy or Emeritus Faculty Advising Requirement
Further discussion of a proposal to develop a formal mechanism for assuring that students who are advised by courtesy or emeritus faculty are provided up-to-date and accurate information on OSU and program-level requirements.

Action: Not discussed

Proposed Standing Rules Revisions
Discussion of a potential change to the Standing Rules to specify faculty status for Graduate Council membership and formal addition of an ex-officio member from the Cascades campus. The proposed additions and deletions appear below:

The Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and the Chair of the Graduate Admissions Committee, and a representative from OSU Cascades shall be ex-officio, non-voting members.

Action: Not discussed

Approval of October 24, 2016 Minutes
Because these are bare bones minutes based on recollections in Vickie Nunnemaker’s absence, so please feel free to send edits to Theresa, including information that you feel should have been captured.

Action: Not discussed

Crop Science Graduate Program Review - Update
Regarding last week’s discussion of the Crops Science program review, the program director and department chair would like to revise the action plan by January 17, 2016 and then return to the Graduate Council in winter term.

Action: No discussion

Soil Science Graduate Program Review - Update
With respect to the review of the Soil Science report and action plan: During Council’s discussion, there was a question about what to do with the report. In the past, the unit had three years after meeting with the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs to follow recommendations. Given that the report is only now being accepted, do they have three years from today or from when they wrote the report? Because the timeframe was unclear, Jennifer Dennis agreed to check with Susan Capalbo.

Minutes prepared by Vickie Nunnemaker, Faculty Senate staff