Graduate Council  
November 21, 2016  
Minutes

Voting members present: Jim Coakley, Ryan Contreras, Theresa Filtz, David Finch, Lisa Ganio, Anita Grunder, Lisa Price  
Voting members absent: Sourabh Apte, Pat Chappell, Rebekah Elliott, Marie Harvey  
Ex-officio member present: Graduate School – Jennifer Dennis

Reduction in Didactic Credit Requirements for PhD Programs – Discussion continued from November 7

- 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

- The original rationale was to have students here for one year, and 27 credits equals one year. Chemistry already has an exemption for 27 credits and other peer institutions have much less than 27 credits.
- Supports reducing the credits to 27 for all graduate programs, rather than granting exemptions.
- One member met with their unit graduate program committee which is fine with 27 credits being the blanket; they didn’t weigh in on the exemption. The Council member favored the requirement to be standard for all units, rather than an exemption for some.
- Another member agreed with lowering the credits from 36 to 27 SCH.
- The options are to vote on an exemption for those requesting it or changing the policy, which would require a Faculty Senate vote.

Action: Anita moved to reduce the number of didactic credits from 36 to 27 for all units and, if passed, the recommendation would be forwarded to the Executive Committee and, potentially, to be considered by the Faculty Senate on December 8; motion passed with no dissenting votes.

Action: Ryan moved to grant an exemption from 36 to 27 credits for all of the units requesting an exemption; there was no second.

Action: Lisa Ganio will contact the requesting units and advise them that the Graduate Council has agreed to forward to the Faculty Senate the recommendation to lower the didactic credits from 36 to 27. She will discuss this recommendation with Rosemary Garagnani to determine if there are other issues to be considered.

Because, if approved, this change would not take effect until Fall 2017, it was agreed that the Graduate Council would not address the exemption until or unless the motion is denied by the Faculty Senate.

Statistics graduate program review and action plan – Jim Coakley

- Statistics Graduate Program Review Report  
- Statistics Action Plan

- Responses to the recommendations in the Action Plan were not adequate; there were no actual action items – primarily they indicated that they would talk with people about the recommendations. Given the vague responses, there is no way to assess the current Action Plan in three years.
- Many of the recommendations require outside resources which means that some of the recommended actions are not in their power; Jim noted that they could develop proposals to achieve outside funding.
- They do have control over split of Masters and PhD – did they provide justification? Recommendation was to increase the PhD program. They responded that student support should be split between the two programs.

Action: The Council will send a letter to the unit head indicating that the Action Plan is inadequate and provide an opportunity for the unit to revise the Action Plan no later than
mid-end of February 2017; if they would like more clarity, they could request to meet with the Graduate Council.

**Action:** Jim and Sourabh will work with Ginny Lesser to improve the Action Plan to determine what they wish to achieve and how they plan to get there. Since Sourabh was also a reviewer, and absent from this meeting, Jim will determine whether he would like to participate.

**Matters Arising**

- **Graduate Student Contract** – With the newly negotiated graduate student contract, there have been changes in funding students that will take place in the next academic year. These changes will affect how the Laurels Block Grant is used for graduate students. This will change how graduate students can be funded.
- With the newly negotiated graduate student contract, there have been changes in funding students. Unclear why Laurels cannot be coupled with a stipend gift; they can only be coupled with an hourly rate that is not at a graduate rate. This will change how graduate students can be funded.
  - The Graduate School signed off on it because they thought that the funding would be different and there wouldn't be negative implications for students.
  - Another issue is offering appointments for a year rather than in sections. All of these things are employment focused, but has an enormous impact on academics. During negotiations, there should be someone who considers the academic side.
  - It was suggested that these issues be discussed during the upcoming Provost’s meeting with unit heads.
  - The contract has not been ratified – can it be reopened?

*Minutes recorded by Vickie Nunnemaker, Faculty Senate staff*