



Minutes of the Graduate Board

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

**Executive Conference Room
Student Faculty Center
Health Sciences Center Campus
2:30 – 4:30 p.m.**

Members Present:

Jasim Albandar, Elizabeth Bolman, Jeffrey Draine, Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek, Michael Sachs, Deborah Sheldon, Sandra Suarez, Paul Swann, Marla Wolfson

Ex-Officio Member:

Zebulon Kendrick, Vice Provost, Graduate School

Graduate School Staff:

Cheryl Jackson, Administrative Coordinator
Kathryn Petrich-LaFevre, Director of Graduate Information

Guest:

Andrew Mendelson, Department of Journalism, School of Media and Communication

Approval of the Minutes:

Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek motioned to approve the minutes of September 20, 2012. Michael Sachs seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimously passed.

Business:

The first order of business was the restructuring of the Master of Journalism. Andrew Mendelson explained that the M.J. degree will be reduced from 40 to 36 credits overall by reducing an introductory course from 4 to 3 credits and eliminating a 3-credit capstone course. The reduction in overall credits will enhance 4+1 and 3+2 programs and allow students to complete their undergraduate degree while working on their master's. Michael Sachs motioned to approve the restructuring of the M.J. Elizabeth Bolman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

On a related topic, the Vice Provost noted that, since the mid-1970s, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has mandated that completion of a master's degree require a minimum of 30 credits. As shown in the Graduate Bulletin, several Temple University master's degrees currently require fewer than 30 credits, including:

- Biology, M.S. (24 credits)
- Chemistry, M.A. (24 credits)
- Computer Science, M.S. (27 credits)
- English, M.A. (24 credits)
- Geology, M.S. (24 credits)
- History, M.A. (27 credits)
- Information Science and Technology, M.S. (27 credits)
- Physics, M.A. (24 credits)
- Special Education, Ed.M. (24-27 credits)

The Vice Provost proposed that the affected degree programs prepare a single-page document that outlines the old required courses along with the new required courses that will bring the total credits required to earn the master's degree to a minimum of 30 credits. The start date for the newly restructured degree programs will be Spring 2013 or Fall 2013, as determined by the department. Michael Sachs motioned that the Graduate School be permitted to expedite the restructuring process for the nine affected master's degree programs to bring them into alignment with Pennsylvania's degree requirements. Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was admissions criteria and admissions processes for graduate programs. The Vice Provost explained that he had been called to the Council of the Deans where he noted that admissions decisions rest with the deans of the schools and colleges, but preparing decision letters and entering admissions information into Banner lies with the Graduate School. He expressed concern about devolving INB recording responsibilities to the departments given the great potential for introducing errors into the system, and the deans are discussing the matter. With an eye on establishing professional master's degrees, the deans expressed concern about the minimum 3.0 GPA standard set by the Graduate School in 2004-2005. The Vice Provost advised that he had researched the language used by Indiana University, the institution from which incoming President Neil Theobald hails, and found that institution "ordinarily" requires a 3.0 minimum GPA. He also noted that some institutions are now considering students who have not completed a baccalaureate degree but are just a few credits short and have worked in industry.

Board Response:

One Board member asked how lower standards can be considered if Temple University wants to be a Research I institution. Another advised that a balance should be struck between maintaining standards and being forward thinking (i.e., allowing for life experience credits). A third consideration of adjusting for the state budget was also suggested, noting that Temple should not just be an institution driven by monies. Finally, a Board member asked if the Council of Deans has the authority to implement any changes it might be considering. The Vice Provost advised that any change in policy needs to be presented to the Graduate Faculty as a whole. He noted that the Interim Provost fears that students are being lost as a result of a minimum 3.0 GPA standard, but believes that he does not know that many exceptions are granted based on the standard allowable exceptions built into the minimum GPA policy.

The Vice Provost turned the Board's attention to a handout detailing information on the admitted graduate applicants for Fall 2012. He pointed out that most schools and colleges are not recording the GPAs of their admitted applicants. The exceptions are the College of Liberal Arts, which recorded 388 scores out of 437 (89%) and the College of Engineering, which recorded GPAs for 4 of 131 admits (3%).

Discussion turned to the pros and cons of increasing rejection rates. One Board member observed that when an institution is perceived as discriminating, that perception drives up the number of applications and tuition as well. Another noted that she had witnessed a post-baccalaureate certificate program that received numerous poor applications, of which most were rejected. She contrasted that to a master's program that received far better applications, of which most were

accepted. The Vice Provost stated that employability of graduates is key and noted that the Middle States Commission on Higher Education prefers stricter requirements.

In old business, the Vice Provost returned to the PTE Academic Test, which was introduced to the Graduate Board at the September meeting. The PTE is a test of English literacy offered by Pearson with quick turnaround time on score reporting. Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek motioned to add the PTE Academic Test to the currently accepted TOEFL and IELTS test options for writing and speaking for international students. Deborah Sheldon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Vice Provost next returned to the Leave of Absence (LOA) policy. A draft of the LOA policy for graduate students has been prepared. Dr. Kendrick stressed the importance of the policy, given that large numbers of graduate students fall off the radar and departments cannot identify where those students are or what their status is. At present, the number of doctoral students unaccounted for is 419 out of 2,148 (~20%). He noted that departments have responsibility for advising students when an individual's LOA quota has been reached. Michael Sachs motioned to accept the LOA policy as drafted. Marla Wolfson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Vice Provost advised that the Graduate Board's recommendation would be presented to the Interim Provost and then, with his approval, to the Acting President.

The last item in old business was funding for fellowship students. As discussed during September's meeting, the Vice Provost proposed reducing the number of credits funded by the Graduate School by providing support in the first and fourth years of a fellow's program. The goal is to increase the current 32 new fellowship offers to 50 annually. Michael Sachs motioned to approve the Year 1/Year 4 model of tuition remission offered by the Graduate School to fellowship students. Elizabeth Bolman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The motion will next be presented to the deans and Interim Provost.

In new business, the Vice Provost noted that having carefully kept watch on tuition dollars, he expects to fund 6 or 7 project completion grants and 10 or more dissertation completion grants at a cost of approximately \$100,000. An additional \$150,000 has been earmarked for doctoral students underrepresented in their field of study for the First Summers Research Initiative. These funds allow the students to finish their dissertation prospectus and/or dissertation research.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned @ 3:55 p.m.

The next Graduate Board meeting will be held on Main Campus, 3B Conwell Hall, on Thursday, November 15, 2012, @ 2:30 p.m.