

Minutes of the Graduate Board

Wednesday, November 16, 2005

3B Conwell Hall, Main Campus

2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Ann E. Barr, Saroj K. Biswas, James P. Byrnes, Daniel L. Canney, Rajan Chandran, James L. Daniel, Dimitrios Diamantaras, LeAnn Erickson, Joyce A. Joyce, Jagannathan Krishnan, A. Marjatta Lyyra, Elizabeth Moran, Roberta A. Newton, Michael Sachs, Donna Snow, Kariamuwelsh

Ex-Officio Member:

Aquiles Iglesias, Dean, Graduate School
Zebulon Kendrick, Associate Dean, Graduate School

Graduate School Staff:

Cheryl Jackson, Assistant to the Dean
Kathryn Petrich-LaFevre, Senior Editor
Tara Schumacher, Coordinator of Outreach
Michael Toner, Research Associate

Approval of the Minutes:

Before a vote was called, it was requested that a comment attributed to Betty Moran be clarified in the record. Roberta A. Newton motioned to approve the minutes of October 20, 2005, as amended. Saroj K. Biswas seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimously passed.

Business:

Dean Iglesias opened the meeting with a report on the appointment of Teaching Assistants. No change will occur in assignments for the 2006-2007 academic year. It will be necessary, however, to reallocate TA lines in support of the new general education requirements that go into effect for 2007-2008. All TA lines will be pulled back and then redistributed as necessary to the schools and colleges with an eye on departmental core courses to ensure that they are covered. The Dean requested the assistance of the Graduate Board in establishing guidelines for the distribution of the TAs. He noted that the TA lines currently have no relationship to anything. He observed that nearly a year's time is available to discuss the matter and have guidelines in place by December 2006.

The Dean next reported that the TUGSA contract is due to expire early in the Spring semester and that contract negotiations have begun. He explained that even if no new contract is reached, appointment letters will still be sent out. They will simply utilize the contract currently in existence. If modifications are then needed when the contract is settled, modified letters will be sent to the students.

The subject of recruitment was broached. The Dean explained that the number of graduate applications has decreased in many programs; only a handful of programs have experienced an increase. In some cases, applications are off by 50%. A large number of international students are not applying, which has particularly hurt the College of Science and Technology. He observed that

the Council of Graduate Schools is talking to the U.S. State Department in an effort to ease immigration for international students.

Tara Schumacher was called on to report on the Graduate School's recruitment efforts. She explained that the Graduate School is coordinating recruitment efforts across the university and paying for major items. She noted that the Fall semester was largely dedicated to recruiting in the field. Her itinerary included McNair Scholars conferences, the California Diversity Forum in the northern part of the state, the DC Consortium, the NYU fair, and various fairs at the Big 10 schools.

Tara explained that the Graduate School has received two large databases recently: the McNair Scholars database, which lists underrepresented minorities and first-generation Americans who are upperclassmen with a 3.0 GPA or higher; and the California Diversity Forum list. The information in these databases is forwarded to the appropriate recruitment committee members in the schools and colleges based on the students' expressed interest. Tara noted that departments will be encouraged to respond to the inquiries. The Dean pointed out that Mike Toner is now tracking the contacts Tara has developed at the various graduate fairs to determine if prospective students ultimately choose Temple.

Associate Dean Kendrick talked briefly about the PA-FIRST initiative. The Graduate School has made contact with each U.S. representative and senator for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania asking that they each nominate a student who meets certain qualifications in the basic sciences, medicine, and engineering. To date, responses have been received from the offices of four representatives. The goal is to educate students from Pennsylvania and foster their interest in staying in the state upon graduation. The intent is to offer fellowship monies to the nominated students based on their academic performance and match with the program.

The discussion next focused on ways to improve recruitment. Rajan Chandran suggested that a dormitory ought to be made available for graduate students. Many, particularly international students, have difficulty finding and affording a private apartment. Dr. Chandran noted that the Fox recruiters travel overseas and actively email, advertise, and chat with students online. Further, they target specialty business fairs. Tara pointed out that departmental contact names are important. Many prospective students want to be personally contacted. The Graduate School sends all leads two letters and two emails, but it is vital that the specific program of interest also make contact. Tara also announced that a foreign credentials seminar is being offered on December 8. The Dean noted that all international credentials are reviewed by the Graduate School if they have not already been done by an approved outside agency such as WES. He explained that the review entails more than calculating GPA. It also ensures that the institution providing the academic credentials actually exists and is not simply a diploma mill.

The next order of business was the recent competition for dissertation and master's project completion grants. The original intent was to fund four students at the doctoral level and four at the master's level. The Graduate School was able, however, to find additional monies and so seven dissertations and six master's projects were funded. LeAnn Erickson expressed concern at having to review proposals in the sciences when her expertise is in the arts. She was uncertain if the publications were notable and if the GPAs were good. She suggested that chairs ought to offer guidelines as to what is respectable in their discipline. Dean Iglesias agreed, but also noted that the onus is on the students to sell themselves to those not in their field. Saroj K. Biswas expressed his frustration at being given incomplete bibliographic information. Associate Dean Kendrick explained that this problem will be corrected as many degree programs are now adding grant-writing classes to their roster. Joyce A. Joyce questioned the departmental diversity of those receiving the

awards. She wanted to raise awareness that anyone submitting a proposal for African American Studies seems to be at a disadvantage because of the nature of the degree program. Roberta A. Newton suggested that one important way to sell an individual's work is to ensure that recommendation letters are strong. She noted that some of the letters submitted were "pitiful." Dr. Kendrick assured Dr. Joyce that the humanities have received their fair share in the past two rounds of fellowships as well as project completion awards. He explained that the full range of scoring was utilized and that a minimum of five members of the Graduate Board reviewed each application. Their ratings were fairly consistent, and the awardees ranked significantly higher than those who did not garner funding.

The final topic of discussion was the summer workload in schools and colleges covered by the TAUP agreement. The question posed was: What is the responsibility of faculty working with doctoral candidates? The Dean expressed concern that some students take a leave of absence because their advisor is gone for the summer. Ann E. Barr questioned the need for any doctoral student to take a leave of absence, believing that those at the doctoral level ought to be independent and able to anticipate key events such as a lab rotation and dissertation defense. Dean Iglesias asked if summer work with students ought to be credited to the academic year. Dr. Joyce responded that it should since time is money. Michael Sachs pointed out that time is time, whether summer, fall, or spring. Dean Iglesias also noted that students complain to the Graduate School that faculty are sitting on their drafts. LeAnn Erickson noted that the complaints could be reduced if students were held to timelines because students' expectations are too often unrealistic. Dr. Kendrick explained that this is now standard with students who are out of time. Students must provide a timeline with their committee's consent. The Graduate School then tracks the students' compliance monthly to ensure that deadlines are met. The Dean recommended that the issue of summer workload be taken to committee for discussion of guidelines.

Other Business:

A request was made to provide to the membership a biographical sketch for every member currently sitting on the Graduate Board.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned @ 3:55 p.m.

The next Graduate Board meeting will be held on Main Campus, 3B Conwell Hall, on Thursday, January 19, 2006, @ 2:30 p.m.