



Minutes of the Graduate Board

Thursday, October 20, 2005

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

Members Present:

Ann E. Barr, Saroj K. Biswas, Elizabeth Bolman, Daniel L. Canney, Rajan Chandran, James L. Daniel, Jay Fagan, Joyce A. Joyce, Elizabeth Moran, Roberta A. Newton, Michael Sachs, Jie Yang

Ex-Officio Member:

Zebulon Kendrick, Associate Dean, Graduate School

Graduate School Staff:

Cheryl Jackson, Assistant to the Dean
Kathryn Petrich-LaFevre, Senior Editor
Michael Toner, Research Associate

Approval of the Minutes:

Michael Sachs motioned to approve the minutes of September 21, 2005. Roberta A. Newton seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimously passed.

Business:

Associate Dean Kendrick welcomed the members, noting that Dean Iglesias was unable to attend because of a scheduling conflict. He informed the Graduate Board of the dissolution of Option B, which allowed non-matriculated students to take more than 9 credits if they were in the process of applying to a degree program. He noted that this allowance was at variance with the Graduate School policy that a maximum of 9 credits can be transferred into a degree program. Further, data analyses have shown that numerous students continue to take far more than 9 credits, accumulating 20, 30, and more credits before finally applying. To end this, Option B has been eliminated and Option A, which allowed students to continue to take courses for personal or professional enrichment, has been retitled “Request to Exceed 9 Semester Hours of Graduate Coursework for Personal or Professional Enrichment.” The change became effective October 13, following notification of the Associate Deans, who welcomed the change. A hold will be placed on all non-matriculated students taking in excess of 9 credits. They will then need to either file the personal/professional enrichment form or make application to a degree program to have the hold lifted. The goal is to ensure that only 9 credits are transferred into any prospective graduate student’s program in accordance with Graduate School policy.

The next item on the agenda was “Academic Good Standing.” Dr. Kendrick pointed out that the proper terminology is “academic good standing,” not “good academic standing.” In accordance with undergraduate policy, the Graduate School has finally defined “academic good standing,” setting the minimum at the 3.0 GPA required to graduate. The definition has been added to the Graduate School policy and procedure document as Policy 02.24.11.05.

Discussion turned to the required GPA for Academic Interns (AIs) and Graduate Externs (GEs). The rule has long been in place that Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants must have an undergraduate or graduate GPA of 3.25 to receive their awards. This rule has been applied less consistently for AIs and GEs. Effective January 1, 2006, the same rule will apply to all individuals receiving funding, be they TAs, RAs, AIs, or GEs. Dr. Kendrick noted that the appeal process will be applicable for those who fail to meet the minimum GPA but whose services are required by the department. On behalf of the School of Medicine, Betty Moran stated that the policy is a bad one because it is punitive against good students. Dr. Kendrick further noted that students are guaranteed funding for one year, which allows them time to improve their GPA. Ann Barr questioned why the discrepancy between the 3.0 for academic good standing and the 3.25. Dr. Kendrick explained that because AIs and GEs are employees of the University, they are “privileged citizens” (in the legal sense of the phrase) and the higher GPA can apply.

Dr. Kendrick moved on to substandard grades, noting that upon decentralization schools and colleges asked to be able to dismiss students for substandard grades. In a handful of cases, however, the schools/colleges have then turned around and readmitted students previously dismissed. In light of this, it has become necessary to take back the ability to readmit students. Thus, students dismissed for substandard grades must now appeal to the Graduate School for readmission. Dr. Kendrick explained that data searches have shown there are several students university-wide who have accumulated nearly all the credit hours necessary to graduate, but their GPAs are below 3.0 and will not attain that level upon completion of the few credits the students still need to take. Consequently, the Graduate School will now be monitoring students for substandard grades and will warn them upon attainment of their first substandard grade. When they receive more than two grades below “B-” or two “F”s, they will be dismissed. Further, Dr. Kendrick pointed out that while an undergraduate can repeat a course and the first grade is erased, graduate students may repeat the course, but paperwork must then be filed to have the higher grade counted—and the first grade does not disappear from the transcript.

Dr. Kendrick reported on the Board of Trustees’ recent actions. Noting that some committees were called into action over the summer to assist in readying materials for presentation to the Trustees, he advised of the approval for:

- The Executive M.A. degree in Criminal Justice, which is an executive degree based on the existing master’s.
- The M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Pharmacodynamics, which was originally designed as an emphasis but required approval of the Board of Trustees because the School of Pharmacy wanted it transcribed.
- The restructuring of the Ph.D. program in the School of Medicine, which utilizes a common core curriculum for all departments, with the balance of the courses offered by individual departments.
- The M.S. in Physical Therapy, which will be a default degree for the Ph.D. This degree had been eliminated, along with the M.P.T., when the D.P.T. degree was approved.

Attention turned next to the proposal for an M.S. in Financial Engineering. This had been delayed because “Engineering,” which signifies that mathematical models are utilized for financial issues, appears in its title. Before bringing the proposal to the Graduate Board, the Dean of the College of Engineering had to review the document to determine if the title presented a conflict. Given that no conflict exists and that the proposal had earned the support of the Program Review Committee, a

vote was called for. Michael Sachs motioned to approve, and Roberta Newton seconded. The vote tally was 11 for, 0 against, with 1 abstention.

The next item was the preliminary proposal for the M.S. and Ph.D. in Biomedical Neuroscience. Before this new program can get off the ground, each of the four departments presently offering doctoral programs in neuroscience—biology, pharmacology, physical therapy, psychology—must agree to the use of the “neuroscience” name. The proposed curriculum is similar to programs in the School of Medicine and consistent with other neuroscience programs. Eleven semester hours constitute the core, with 6 to 8 additional semester hours taken in specialized areas. Dr. Kendrick asked if the Graduate Board would agree to an electronic vote after the Program Review Committee meets and reviews the proposal next week. He expressed his desire to move on the proposal because the new program has the potential to bring in graduate students. He further noted that the proposal has brought the other neuroscience programs to the table, which has revitalized each of those programs.

The Board members looked quickly through the proposal. One concern expressed was that classes will be held on the Health Science Center Campus, while research will be conducted on Main Campus. A second concern was the admission requirements. It was opined that an undergraduate degree in a related field should be required. A third concern was the conflicting information about the new department’s ranking. Betty Moran asked that Barrie Ashby be asked to sit in on the Program Review Committee’s meeting. A vote was called for about engaging in an electronic vote on the proposal after it earns the support of the Program Review Committee. Michael Sachs motioned to approve, and Jie Yang seconded. It passed unanimously.

Other Business:

Joyce Joyce took exception to Dr. Kendrick’s earlier statement that Temple University does not close in the summer. She pointed out that faculty are under a 10-month contract, although they are paid over 12 months. She explained that summers allow faculty to work on their own projects, that writing recommendations and working with students on dissertations take time away from the faculty’s own creative projects. She asked for the Graduate School’s support for faculty. Dr. Kendrick noted that some faculty tell students after finals that they are unavailable until fall unless they are teaching and offered that this is an issue for the Faculty Senate. Betsy Bolman noted that at Bryn Mawr a letter is circulated to graduate students announcing that professors are unavailable during the summer.

Ann Barr explained that sometimes funding is received in the summer. Committee work interferes with research during the year and is not welcome in the summer. Dr. Kendrick responded that individuals are not required to participate in the summer, but that electronic correspondence facilitates the work that needs to be done. Dr. Joyce rejected the idea that this is a matter for the Faculty Senate, pointing out that it deals with graduate student work. Many faculty suffer from guilt at not assisting graduate students and yet they need to be concerned at maintaining their own publication schedule. Thus, the issue needs to be clarified at the level of the Graduate School. Dr. Kendrick agreed to put the matter on the November agenda for further discussion. He acknowledged that graduate students often consider their chair as an advisor 24/7, but faculty members may not feel that way.

Dr. Joyce inquired about the Graduate Faculty criteria that were voted down at the May meeting. Dr. Kendrick noted that the deans of each school/college set the standards and they are following them. He advised that the bylaws of each school and college state that all committees are advisory to the deans. Daniel Canney suggested that because the matter was voted down, many believe the

criteria do not apply to them. Dr. Kendrick reiterated that because the deans signed off, the matter again lies in the hands of the deans since it was voted down by the Graduate Faculty body.

Ann Barr suggested that the matter ought to be revisited to determine why dissent was so strong. She opined that faculty do not feel they are part of the process. Dr. Kendrick reminded all that union negotiations were ongoing last spring and that the decision was made to not add to that burden with this matter. Roberta Newton recalled that the policy is from 1975 and does not include clinicians and other professionals among the faculty. Dr. Kendrick reiterated that the Graduate School is following the guidelines established by the various deans for their colleges because the deans have signed off on those criteria.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned @ 4:10 p.m.

The next Graduate Board meeting will be held on Main Campus, 3B Conwell Hall, on Wednesday, November 16, 2005, @ 2:30 p.m.