

Minutes of the Graduate Board

Wednesday, September 23, 2009

3B Conwell Hall, Main Campus

2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Members Present:

William Aaronson, Elizabeth Bolman, Daniel J. Canney, Boris Datskovsky, Joseph DuCette, Thomas Gould, Michael Hagen, Renee Hobbs, Barbara Hoffman, Deborah Howe, Richard H. Immerman, Luke Kahlich, Daniel Kern, Jagannathan Krishnan, Roberta Newton, Wes Roehl, Jeffrey Rush, Michael Sachs, Deborah Sheldon, Paul Swann, Pablo Vila

Ex-Officio Member:

Richard M. Englert, Interim Dean, Graduate School
Zebulon Kendrick, Associate Dean, Graduate School

Graduate School Staff:

Cheryl Jackson, Assistant to the Dean
Kathryn Petrich-LaFevre, Director of Graduate Information
Margaret M. Pippet, Assistant Dean
Michael Toner, Research Associate

Approval of the Minutes:

Michael Sachs motioned to approve the minutes of April 22, 2009. Luke Kahlich seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimously passed.

Business:

The Interim Dean opened the first Graduate Board meeting of the year with a welcome. The Associate Dean greeted the incoming Board members, including Richard Immerman and Daniel Kern, who are serving on the Graduate Board for the first time. The Board was informed of the success of the first annual Temple University Graduate Fellows Research Symposium, which was held on Main Campus on September 12, 2009. The Interim Dean congratulated the Associate Dean and, in absentia, Jacqueline Tanaka, Associate Professor of Biology, for their hard work on bringing the symposium to fruition.

The first order of business was the report of the Learning Alliance on support for graduate education at Temple. The Interim Dean explained that the consulting group is based at the University of Pennsylvania and headed by Robert Zemsky. He noted that one definitive action has been taken in the wake of the report: a search committee has been appointed to hire a Senior Vice Provost for Research Administration and Graduate Education. He summarized the report for the Graduate Board, which engaged in discussion as noted below:

1. Graduate education lacks coherence and consistency in its policies and practices. The accumulation of individual decisions over many years has resulted in “confused patterns,” even from the vantage point of graduate students themselves.
2. The primary areas of confusion lie in:
 - a. Designation and distribution of assistantships.
 - b. Provision of tuition remission for Research Assistants working on externally funded projects.

- c. Tracking of graduate student support, which currently totals approximately \$45 million per year.

Board Response:

Competitiveness in recruiting graduate students was one issue. It was noted that top students are being recruited away from Temple. Investing in recruiting was another issue raised. A third concern was the issue of providing tuition remission to graduate students who serve as adjunct professors, given their employee status.

- 3. Five major recommendations were offered:
 - a. Develop a system to track funding support.
 - b. Redefine the role of “Teaching Assistant” by limiting assistantships to those pursuing the terminal degree held by faculty members in their department (i.e., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.F.A.) and using assistants primarily for recitation, discussion, and lab sections.

Board Response:

When the Interim Dean noted the report’s finding that approximately 30% of teaching assistantships are awarded to students enrolled in a master’s program, it was asked how courses would get taught if the degree program has a small doctoral contingent. Further, it was suggested that Teaching Assistants be limited in their use as “instructor of record,” with training provided so their teaching skills develop and they can grow into the role.

- c. Change the policies and incentives for tuition remission for Research Assistants.
 - d. Transfer some of the Graduate School’s financial responsibilities to the Schools and Colleges.
 - e. Redefine the role of the Graduate School to chiefly provide program review, distribute central funds, and monitor and report on the state of graduate education at Temple.
- 4. Three key questions were raised by the report:
 - a. What is the best rationale for distributing assistantship and fellowship funds?
 - 1) How can undergraduate teaching needs be met?
 - 2) How do we attract and recruit the best students?
 - 3) How can we best mentor outstanding graduate students?
 - 4) What tools are needed to strengthen the programs?

Board Response:

- 5) How do we attract and retain high-quality research faculty to mentor our graduate students?

- b. How can support for doctoral students be adequately provided – and for how long?
- c. What functions should be centralized and which others should be decentralized in reorganizing the Graduate School?

The Interim Dean listed a variety of functions currently carried out by the Graduate School that should be considered for decentralization, including funding assistantships and fellowships; monitoring academic standards; providing institutional research and data reports; overseeing new programs; overseeing graduate student union relations; working with the Graduate Board; coordinating

periodic reviews; assessing international credentials; overseeing graduate program admissions; granting degrees at graduation; monitoring human resource issues such as payroll, visas, etc.; handling student appeals; and uploading official standardized test scores.

Board Response:

The notion of decentralization raised the question of hiring individuals for each school and college to handle decentralized tasks. Does this not create redundancy? Is there adequacy of resources? Another concern is the decision to admit a student out of expediency (e.g., need someone to teach a particular class) vs. adhering to the University's strategic mission (e.g., bring in the best student). As for international credentials, it was suggested that prospective students be required to submit WES evaluations. It was noted, however, that such evaluations cost \$200 each and are cost prohibitive for many.

The Interim Dean interjected and reiterated that the only decision made thus far is to hire a Senior Vice Provost for Research Administration and Graduate Education. He suggested that the Faculty Senate Steering Committee should be briefed on any decision making and that any decisions be brought to the Graduate Faculty at large for review. The Board thought it prudent to not wait for the Senior Vice Provost to be hired. It was suggested that Assistant and Associate Deans for Graduate Education be included in the discussions. Another suggestion was that Graduate Chairs be involved as well. At any rate, it was recommended that an open door policy be followed with regard to the Graduate Board discussions.

The issue of tuition was then raised. What, it was asked, had occurred in light of the Graduate Board's recommendation this past Spring that all Research Assistants and Teaching Assistants be charged in-state – or a lower rate of – tuition, regardless of residency prior to matriculating at Temple? The Interim Dean advised that that discussion is moving forward.

One Board member suggested that the “fog” of confusion with regard to graduate education may have resulted from having numerous Acting Deans lead the Graduate School for so many years. He also cautioned that research and graduate education will perhaps not have equal importance in the Senior Vice Provost's job. Another Board member recommended that the ideal candidate for the job should have a broad view of graduate education and not be singularly focused on the sciences.

Another Board member asked if the mission of graduate education is to fill classrooms, not be scholarly. Another suggested that the hiring of faculty should be a focus, because if strong faculty are recruited, then the students will follow.

When one Board member cautioned that we need to learn from the past with regard to centralization of graduate education, the Interim Dean advised that Bob Zemsky had noted in his report that decentralization is the current trend. Is this then, another member asked, why the Graduate School has been “demoted” on the University's website from “Schools and Colleges” to “Programs” (see http://www.temple.edu/academics/schools_campuses.htm)?

One Board member sought to draw the discussion away from the issue of decentralization and have the topic of assistantships solely targeted in the coming months. Another member agreed. But a third noted that limiting the Graduate Board to one issue is a mistake; rather, graduate education should be looked at holistically.

In the essence of time, the Interim Dean made two suggestions:

- Board members should advise him of their thoughts and concerns via email, phone, or visit.
- The Graduate Board should convene in early October prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting on October 22 to keep the conversation moving ahead.

The next order of business was the Fellowship Committee's recommendation that funding for the M.F.A. Project Completion Grants be increased. Thus, a motion was made to increase funding from \$3,000 to \$4,500 to assist M.F.A. students in underwriting the cost of their master's projects with the following allowances: the students will be paid as the bills come due, with reimbursement provided within 24 hours; up to three credits of tuition remission will be provided for course completion in their curriculum; and department employment will be permitted in the last semester. Deborah Howe moved to approve the motion, which Michael Sachs seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Next, the Associate Dean briefed the committees on upcoming actions:

- A. The Appeals Committee will be called into session as one appeal to date requires their consideration.
- B. The Fellowship Committee was thanked for its work on the Project Completion Grant recommendation, given the approaching Fall deadline for the competition. It was noted that the Spring semester will be busier, with two rounds of Fellowship awards and another for Project Completion Grants.
- C. The Policy Committee will be called on to deal with proposed changes in Graduate School policies when the Senior Vice Provost for Research Administration and Graduate Education is hired.
- D. The Program Review Committee was advised that a doctorate of Nursing will be forthcoming and, more immediately, a master's of Accountancy will be posted to Blackboard following today's meeting.

Statistics related to graduate education for Fall 2009 were discussed next. Michael Toner presented the Graduate Board with three tables. The first demonstrated a rise in undergraduate grade point average (UGPA) and combined GRE scores for all incoming graduate students this Fall in comparison with last year. The second showed that, in general, the UGPA of those accepted by each School/College was slightly higher than for those who actually enrolled at Temple. The third revealed similar results with regard to combined GRE scores.

Finally, no old business and no new business were raised.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned @ 4:10 p.m.

A special mid-session meeting of the Graduate Board has been scheduled for Main Campus, 3B Conwell Hall, on Wednesday, October 7, 2009, @ 3:00 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Graduate Board will be held on the Health Sciences Center Campus, in the Executive Conference Room on the 4th floor of the Student Faculty Center, on Thursday, October 22, 2009, @ 2:30 p.m.