The meeting was called to order by President Mike Urban at 3:30 pm in N206 Memorial Union.

Senators and administrative representatives attending: Lloyd Barrow, Jane Bostick, James Endersby, Sanda Erdelez, Pat Friedrichsen, Mary Grigsby (substituting for Jere Gilles), Lynda Kraxberger, Glenn Leshner, Charles Nilon, Ken Shaw, Carol Snively, Mike Urban, Peter Vallentyne, John Wigger, Meredith Dorneker (Graduate Student Association), George Justice, Jana Moore, and Ruth Erwin (Graduate School).

Senators and administrative representatives absent: Sanjeev Khanna.

A motion and second were made to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2011. The motion was approved.

**Graduate School Report**

Dr. Justice indicated that the Dr. Wilkins is overseeing the fellowship competition this year. He indicated that this year the Graduate School has streamlined the Ridgel and Marshall review process and those decisions should be out to departments soon. Dr. Justice indicated that on Wednesday, February 23, there would be a Directors of Graduate Studies meeting on doctoral placement. Discussion would center on how the University tracks its graduates and do departments/programs prepare students to go where and do what they want to do after graduation. He indicated that some departments do a great job tracking their students’ careers after graduation. Dr. Justice next announced that Graduate Education Week will be April 16-23 this year. Events will include: Adventures in Education on Saturday, April 16; Graduate School Thank You Breakfast where one staff and Director of Graduate Studies will receive an award; GPC will host a Legislators Event which will show Legislators what we are doing in graduate education; and several seminars.

**Graduate Student Association**

Ms. Dorneker announced that GSA and GPC are co-sponsoring the cv/interview doc workshop on March 10. They need faculty members who can help between 12 – 5 pm. The GSA awards banquet will be Wednesday, April 13 to honor the Superior Graduate Achievement Award recipients and other awardees. GSA is working to create a template on how to write a thesis and dissertation and will be stored on the Graduate School website. Michael Moore is helping develop the template. He will be offering a class on formatting thesis and dissertations. It was thought that Research Methods courses should include formatting as a part of the methods courses.

Dr. Justice indicated as a related issue that Open Disclosure in Thesis and Dissertation was coming under scrutiny from a department on campus. He indicated to the Senate that they may have to revisit the policy in the future. Currently research must be published and can only be held for one year before it needs to be released. Dr. Urban indicated that the GFS would not review the issue without a formal request and he has not received one at this time.

**Committee Reports**

Dr. Snively indicated that the Academic Affairs Committee met last week and developed proposals to address graduate school management of topics courses and the differentiation of
undergraduate and graduate assignments in cross-level courses. She provided a handout on the two proposals. Discussion on the proposals will be held later in the meeting.

Dr. Bostick indicated that the Awards Committee had reviewed the Graduate Faculty mentor nominations, the Outstanding Dissertation nominations and would some be reviewing the GRA/GTA awards which are the last awards for review this year. The Committee would review the procedures used to review applications/nomination for the awards.

Old Business

Representative of Graduate Faculty Senate on Faculty Council

Dr. Urban indicated that he had talked with Leona Rubin, Chair of Faculty Council, and told her that GFS is interested in attending Faculty Council meetings but did not have individuals who could attend the meetings at this time. Dr. Barrow suggested that a possible solution would be for the Vice Presidents of both the GFS and Faculty Council be the representative to attend the other’s meetings. Dr. Urban indicated that this would be revisited before the GFS elections.

Graduate “Topics, Seminars and Problems” courses policy review request by Registrar

Dr. Snively indicated the Academic Affairs proposed the following recommendation related to Topics Courses:

1. Topics courses should be decided at the department level. (Discontinue Graduate School and Registrar checking for Topics courses or other subtitles.)
2. New graduate courses (7000 or above) will be monitored by the Graduate School for Graduate Faculty Senate approval or denial
3. Departments should be encouraged to submit permanent course proposals for Topics courses they plan to offer more than four times.

Discussion followed with a motion and second being made to approve the recommendation made by the Academic Affairs related to Topics Courses. The motion was approved.

The second policy the Committee proposed related to Cross-level Courses. The proposal is: In cross leveled courses, at least one assignment should be qualitatively different than those required of undergraduates taking the same course and should be an extra assignment over and above what undergraduates are expected to do. The application form will require an explanation of how the assignment fulfills the departmental criteria for graduate education. A motion and second were made to approve the proposal. The motion was approved.

Discussion followed related to how graduate students find out about Topics and Seminars in other departments. Suggestions were made on how to make this more an easier experience for graduate students.

Clarification of the rule disallowing research hours in certificate programs

Dr. Urban provided a handout on the collaboration that he and Professor Kraxberger prepared with regard to research hours being used in certificate programs. Their proposal is: “While research experience may be included as a component of graduate certificate programs, research hours applied towards the completion of the thesis or dissertation may not be included. Coursework where students apply skills and practical knowledge such as practicum or laboratory experience may be included in the coursework required for graduate
certificate program. At least 9 hours of the certificate program must be in non-research hour coursework."

A motion and second were made to approval the rule. The motion was approved.

Remote Participation Policy for Comprehensive Examinations

Dr. Justice indicated that this was a frequent topic on listservs. Dr. Justice proposed that departments might want to allow remote access for committee members when student thesis and dissertation defenses are set up. Discussion followed and Senators wondered if most universities still have students come to campus at least once a year to meet with their advisor/committee. It was noted that both Nursing and Social Work have their online students come to campus at least once a year. It was decided that feedback should come from Directors of Graduate Studies on how often off-campus students are required to come on campus and who is required to be at the comprehensive exam and defense. Other policies that might need to be reviewed includes how long faculty members have to read thesis/dissertations and give feedback to students; and do faculty feel pressured by students to provided feedback in 3 or 4 days. An understanding of the expectations that faculty have to review thesis/dissertations should be made at the department level.

Program Review Discussion

Shared Services

Dr. Urban sent to the GFS the following statement related to Shared Services. He indicated that it did not need GFS approval but he would like GFS endorsement.

No matter what discipline graduate students enter MU to pursue, they all pursue projects that demand a high level of rigor, organization, and structure. While the definition of “rigor” will vary across disciplines, I know of no fields where rigor is not demanded. Students all at some point have to figure out how to conduct research and scholarly activity. Any training that students receive is either obtained through close interaction with their advisor or mentor, or it is through some sort of research design/ research methodology class they take in their home department.

At best, this means everyone is training graduate students in how to conduct research, organize and structure it efficiently, and communicate the results to the committee and their own discipline via publication. This would seem to represent an enormous duplication of efforts on campus. At worst, some units or individuals do this well and others perform poorly. In my experience, this problem is especially acute in smaller programs that have less resources and staff to provide support and workshops for graduate student training or programs that are not as well known nationally that get a more variable quality of graduate applicants. Instead, the burden for graduate student preparation is squarely placed on the shoulders of the major advisor. Looking through some of the information on the Phd Completion project website it seems clear that one of the most significant obstacles between graduate students and the completion of the degree is a clear sense of how to structure a research investigation and define the steps to take that will get them there. Though there is no direct evidence for this, I suspect the shorter “time to degree” experienced by the physical/biological sciences has as much to do with the fact that research design expectations are more formulaic and predictable and thereby easier to disseminate to students than anything else. It is a clearer route through the graduate program that it is for those in the humanities who have to often figure it out on their own.

This begs the question: “what is the potential transferability of knowledge and skills across disciplines?” For graduate students entering programs in the humanities/social sciences/physical sciences, are there any common aspects of their training and professional development that could be centralized in the Graduate School? I think there would be a great deal of value in providing centralized course offerings (for example: research design for the humanities, research design for the social sciences, and research design for the physical/biological sciences).

One way to reinforce measures of quality and rigor in graduate programs across campus while also perhaps decreasing average “time to degree” would be to expand the Graduate School’s role in organizing a series of courses that units could plug their students into to aid in their professional development as researchers and scholars. The areas I had specifically in mind would be courses outlining how to conduct and organize research: 1) research design - separate courses for the humanities, social sciences and physical sciences; 2) a suite of short-courses or workshops covering specific research methods – depending on demand could be anything from “hermeneutics” to “Bayesian experimental
design”; 3) perhaps even some sort of technical writing courses specifically aimed at graduate students intent on publishing their findings. Also beneficial would be some set of courses delineating “best practices” in research and scholarship such as a research ethics course. Perhaps some of these offerings could be organized as courses, perhaps some more focused topics would be best covered in short workshops. One additional appeal for “collaboration” is that workshops could be marketed and attended by graduate students in graduate programs outside MU-Columbia. Have grad students descend on Columbia for workshops or short courses in specific topics such as “Content analysis” or “bifurcation theory” (or anything else…). This would be an excellent way to highlight (and illustrate) the flagship role of this campus and the expertise of our faculty across the state as well as improve graduate education in Missouri. Instruction could be either farmed out to faculty and departments with specific expertise in these areas, or for the more general core courses the Graduate School could perhaps expand on the “faculty fellow” model currently in use and have some of the fellows teach.

I’m not sure if this “collaborative model” of graduate education would really be something new or simply a way to maximize efficiency, improve the overall professional preparation of graduate students on the MU campus, and reinforce a common student community outside of disciplinary borders. It may even increase contact and interaction between units and faculty on campus. But I do think it would “raise the floor” for smaller departments across campus, allowing them to introduce the sort of rigor that is difficult to attain in situations where only a small number of graduate level courses devoted to methods and professional prep can be taught by an ever-shrinking faculty base. I suspect it might also lower time to degree if the classes were structured correctly and taught well. Not all departments or units would be interested in having their students take such courses, but I suspect a great deal would. As with any other elective course offered on campus, there would be no inherent requirement for students to take them. The Graduate School would need to have programs “buy-in” and endorse the classes for their students. It would also be appropriate in the case of the core interdisciplinary courses such as “research methods” to have an advisory committee or panel of experts help to develop the syllabi or at the very least, a series of topics to emphasize throughout the course of the semester.

A motion was made and second to table the discussion on the statement to a future meeting. The motion was approved.

Peer Institution Graduate Program Evaluation

Dr. Wilkins provided Drs. Nilon, Endersby, and Friedrichsen information on the NCR data to assist them in their preparation on a resolution on what GFS can do to assist with discussion related to program reviews and reductions of programs. Dr. Nilon indicated that he had questions related to the interpretation and meaning of the data. Dr. Justice indicated that he could do an hour presentation on relationship between program review and how they affect local/state/and federal standings. Dr. Justice indicated that he would be glad to meet with the ad hoc Committee and discuss the data.

Special Business

Graduate Certificate Program Proposal in Geriatric Care Management

A question was raised that the Human Development and Family Studies Department has another certificate in Gerontology (Great Plains) and would students know the difference in the two HDFS certificates. Another question that was raised was if the two certificates could be put together. The Geriatric Care Management certificate is a web-based four course certificate and includes a financial planning course that is not included in the Gerontology certificate. It was noted that the Gerontology certificate is a broad certificate with many areas that students can choose from. The new Geriatric Care certificate is designed to provide independent case management services to elder Americans with a definite focused 12 hours of specific coursework. A question was raised if the Geriatric Care Management certificate would make the Gerontology certificate obsolete. It was noted that the business plan was underdeveloped and the courses had not been fully developed. In order to have the certificate reviewed as soon as possible by the campus and system a motion and second were made to send the Geriatric Care Management proposal forward based on the academic requirements for the certificate. The motion was approval.
It was noted that this meeting would be Jana Moore last one as she was taking a new position with the University System Academic Affairs office.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Submitted by

Ruth Erwin
Graduate School