

**GRADUATE POLICY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
February 24, 2014**

**The following members were present:** Elwood Carlson, Sociology, Substitute-Chair; Nancy Marcus, Dean, The Graduate School; William Fredrickson, Music; Fred Huffer, Statistics; Gary Burnett, Communication & Information; Diana Rice, Education; Stanley Gontarski, Arts and Sciences; Peter Hoeflich, Physics; Linda DeBrunner, Engineering; Anne Barrett, Sociology; Tomi Gomory, Social Work; Steven Webber, Interior Design; Ron Doel, Arts and Sciences.

**The following members were absent:** Karla Schmitt, Nursing; Jamila Horabin, Biomedical Science; Bong-Soo Lee, Business; Kaifeng Yang, Social Science; Sherry Southerland, Education; Sudhir Aggarwal, Computer Science; Jeannine Turner, Education; Jasminka Ilich-Ernst, Human Sciences; Patricia Born, Business; Brian Gaber, Film/Music; Nancy Everhart, Communication and Information.

**Also present:** James Beck, The Graduate School; Jeffrey Kahn, Law; Jennifer Buchanan, Assistant Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement; Judy Devine, The Graduate School.

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 P.M by Woody Carlson, Substitute-Chair.

**Previous Meeting Minutes** –With no revisions in mind, the meeting minutes for February 17, 2014 were approved.

**Revised Proposal: Juris Master (“J.M.”)**- Dr. Kahn provided an overview of the revisions made to the Juris Master proposal. To address the concerns of the Graduate Policy Committee, Dr. Kahn explained that a standardized test requirement and a GPA requirement have been added to the program. In order to complete the J.M. program, a student would have to complete a total of 25 credit hours and the student must have a cumulative GPA of 80 or higher. Courses in which a J.M. student receives less than an 80 will not count toward the J.M. degree. A J.M. student whose cumulative grade point average for courses taken at Florida State University College of Law falls below 80 at the end of a term will be placed on academic probation. If an 80 cumulative grade point average is not attained by the end of the next full term of enrollment, the student will not be permitted to re-register for J.M. study. Furthermore, Dr. Kahn explained that a zero credit comprehensive exam has been added to the program as well. This required comprehensive exam will cover the basic principles of the program and must be taken before the student graduates. Finally, on page 11, four SACS learning outcomes along with their assessment plans have been added to the proposal.

**With no further questions, the Proposal (moved and seconded at the previous meeting of the Committee) for a Juris Master (“J.M.”) was APPROVED.**

**Discussion: Revision to the Language Requirement for International Students-** In response to the Graduate Policy Committee’s desire to see more information on this policy, Dean Marcus prepared some amended language and suggested this revised policy wording:

*International applicants whose native language is not English are required to have a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based or 80 on the Internet-based TOEFL examination, 6.5 on the IELTS examination, or 77 on the MELAB examination. Some departments may require a higher*

*score or may waive the test requirement if the student has received a bachelor's degree or master's degree from a U.S. institution or other institution where English is the language of instruction. International students expecting to receive appointments as teaching assistants are required to pass the SPEAK test which evaluates the English-speaking ability of non-native speakers of English and is administered at Florida State University. Students who receive a score of 26 or higher on the speaking section of the Internet-based TOEFL examination meet the University requirement to serve as a teaching assistant; however, some departments may still require that the student take the SPEAK test.*

**It was moved by Dr. Hoeflich and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to adopt this modified language on pg. 40 of the Graduate Bulletin regarding the English language requirement for students from non-English speaking countries.**

Dr. Carlson proceeded to discuss the comments notated by Dean Marcus concerning this policy.

Dr. Burnett advised the committee that he would not be in favor of adding a comment concerning online degrees because he is not convinced that there is a radical difference in the need for language mastery. He explained that he would not be comfortable with a standards differentiation that could potentially affect the quality of online degrees.

Dr. Debrunner stated that she is comfortable with allowing the departments to decide on the waiving of the test requirement because each department should be aware of what each student needs in order to be successful in their graduate program. She explained that it would be preferred if the department could contact the student and speak to him/her prior to approval to confirm English-proficiency.

Dr. Carlson addressed the notion about whether a standardized test, like the TOEFL, is a more reliable measure than having attended an English-speaking university. Dr. Rice commented that she has become aware of various situations in Asia where high TOEFL scores did not correlate with a student's mastery of English very highly. Dr. Rice explained that she is not sure whether a TOEFL examination is a more dependable source.

Dr. Debrunner described a situation in which one of her students, who spoke almost no English, ended-up being one of the best students in her class. She insinuated that this is a difficult topic to reach a resolution on.

Dr. Carlson clarified that if one looks at the language of this proposed change, the TOEFL exam is still the principal standard for international applicants and what is being discussed here is the option to allow departments to actively waive the test requirement in the case of specific students. He explained that the department can still choose to require the TOEFL examination. Dr. Carlson noted that he understands this policy change as the university recognizing "departmental autonomy."

Dr. Fredrickson stated that he is in favor of allowing departments to make these determinations. Dr. Carlson explained that he feels if the departments are allowed to waive the test requirement for specific students, perhaps they should also be allowed to determine the sufficient time for which a student has developed a mastery of English.

Dr. Gomory mentioned that he believes the TOEFL score somehow reflects a more rigorous examination of a person's English language development rather than having completed a degree at an English-speaking university.

Dr. Gontarski asked if the word “principle” could be added after the word “English” in the revised policy language to read: “institution where English is the principle language of instruction.”

Dr. Gomory proposed a “friendly amendment” be made to the revised policy wording. He asked if instead of the word “principle,” that the word “required” be added to the policy in order to be 100% clear and avoid any confusion. The amended policy would read as follows:

*International applicants whose native language is not English are required to have a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based or 80 on the Internet-based TOEFL examination, 6.5 on the IELTS examination, or 77 on the MELAB examination. Some departments may require a higher score or may waive the test requirement if the student has received a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree from a U.S. institution or other institution where English is the required language of instruction. International students expecting to receive appointments as teaching assistants are required to pass the SPEAK test which evaluates the English-speaking ability of non-native speakers of English and is administered at Florida State University. Students who receive a score of 26 or higher on the speaking section of the Internet-based TOEFL examination meet the University requirement to serve as a teaching assistant; however, some departments may still require that the student take the SPEAK test.*

**It was moved by Dr. Fredrickson and seconded by Dr. Burnett to accept this “friendly-amendment,” proposed by Dr. Gomory, to add the word “required.”**

**PASSED**

**Discussion: Probation Notation on Transcript-** Dean Marcus explained that she spoke to Kimberly Barber to find out how regular probation would appear on a graduate student’s transcript and her response was that it would say “placed on academic probation.” Dean Marcus offered the idea that the probationary status for graduate students be noted on the academic transcript in the form of 2 different statements: (1) “academically dismissed reinstated on probation” and (2) “placed on academic probation.” Dean Marcus explained that the statement “academically dismissed reinstated on probation” would be for students who are dismissed from the university and then return, while the statement “placed on academic probation” would be for students who’s GPA fall below a 3.0.

Dr. Carlson was curious if a member from the Registrar’s Office could attend an upcoming Graduate Policy Committee meeting to inform them why this request is being made.

Dean Marcus explained that she feels that this probation notation on a student’s transcript is simply about being accurate about the academic record of the student. Dr. Gomory agreed with Dean Marcus’s comment and accepted the idea to have parallel paths for both graduate and undergraduate probationary documentation. He explained that a probation status on a graduate student’s transcript is a factual and automatic description of a student’s academic performance that is not meant to stigmatize or serve as a judgment of a student’s career.

Dr. Hoeflich and Dr. Carlson stressed some concern for this. Dr. Carlson explained that he personally does not see a need to add this additional statement on a graduate student’s transcript because one can merely look at a record and see that a student was on probation even if it is not marked on the transcript.

Dr. Gomory stated that he feels if a student receives probation, this distinction needs to be obvious and not hidden. He explained that this is a procedural issue and this is simply a statement that will help instructors and employers understand the academic status of a graduate student.

**Dr. Gomory requested a motion that the procedure for reflecting probationary status of graduate students parallel the procedure in place for undergraduate students.**

**It was moved by Dr. Gomory and seconded by Dr. Gontarski.**

**With no further discussion, a vote was placed. 8 were in favor of the motion, while 3 were not in favor.**

**PASSED**

**With no further business to be presented, Dr. Carlson adjourned the meeting at 4:20 P.M.**