

**GRADUATE POLICY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 27, 2014**

The following members were present: Lee Stepina, Chair; Nancy Marcus, Dean, The Graduate School; William Fredrickson, Music; Fred Huffer, Statistics; Sudhir Aggarwal, Computer Science; Jamila Horabin, Biomedical Science; Diana Rice, School of Teacher Education; Anne Barrett, Sociology; Elwood Carlson, Sociology; Peter Hoeflich, Physics; Brian Gaber, Film/Music; Linda DeBrunner, Engineering.

The following members were absent: Jeannine Turner, Education; Tahirih Lee, Law; Steven Webber, Interior Design; Gary Burnett, Communication & Information; Karla Schmitt, Nursing; Stanley Gontarski, English; Jasminka Ilich-Ernst, Human Sciences; Tomi Gomory, Social Work; Ron Doel, History; Patricia Born, Business.

Also present: James Beck, The Graduate School; Judy Devine, The Graduate School.

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 P.M. by Lee Stepina, Chair.

Previous Meeting Minutes –With no revisions or additions in mind, the meeting minutes for October 13, 2014 were approved.

Proposal- Revision of the University-Wide Standards for Teaching Assistants: Dean Marcus summarized the revisions made to the University-Wide Standards for TA's document. She explained that after her subcommittee meeting with Dr. Aggarwal and Dr. Rice last Friday, they were able to compress the different levels of instruction from 7 levels down to 4 levels. Levels 1 and 2 are not for graduate teaching assistants who are Instructors of Record (IOR). The fundamental difference between level 1 and level 2 is the standard for English language competency. Level 1 cannot involve routine direct contact with a group of undergraduate students in face-to-face or online instructional support roles. A graduate TA might have one-on-one contact, but generally they are not associating with a group. Normally, at level 1, graduate TA's are just engaging in activities related to course management (e.g., setting up a laboratory, grading, etc.). The language has been amended so that for level 1, a score of at least 40 on the SPEAK exam is acceptable for an appointed TA. This standard is lower than what is currently required. A graduate TA can remain at level 1 with a SPEAK score of 40, but if he/she wants to move-up, an improved SPEAK score would be necessary. Level 2 assumes a greater degree of interaction with undergraduate students than level 1 and thus requires a higher level of competency in spoken English. Dean Marcus explained that the revised language for levels 1-2 lays out the expectation of attending day 1 of the Fall PIE Teaching Conference before the commencement of one's teaching duties. For course levels 3 and 4, the graduate teaching assistant is presumed to be the Instructor of Record (IOR). Level 3 is for lower-level undergraduate courses (1000-2000 level) and level 4 is for upper-level undergraduate courses (3000-4000 level). For level 3, a minimum of 18 hours of graduate coursework in the teaching discipline is required, while for level 4, a Master's degree or at least 30 hours of graduate

coursework in the teaching discipline is required. The revised language now necessitates for graduate teaching assistants in levels 3 and 4 to attend day 1 and 2 of the Fall PIE Teaching Conference before the commencement of one's teaching duties or an equivalent offered by the academic unit that has been approved by the Graduate School. A caveat has been included towards the end of the document which covers the process that would need to be implemented for situations involving students who are unable to attend the Fall PIE Teaching Conference prior to commencing their first semester of teaching. Dean Marcus noted that the Graduate School will be responsible for approving the equivalent training options provided by academic programs to be sure the alternative training encompasses all the necessary topics covered at the Fall PIE Teaching Conference.

Dr. Horabin suggested switching the second sentence with the first sentence for the language below:

Level 2. This level includes a variety of duties e.g., grading, tutoring, proctoring of computerized exams and laboratories, assisting with laboratory sections, leading recitation and discussion sections. This level assumes a greater degree of interaction with undergraduate students than Level 1 and thus requires a higher level of competency in spoken English (see p. 5).

Dr. Horabin recommended revising the language to read:

Level 2. This level assumes a greater degree of interaction with undergraduate students than Level 1 and thus requires a higher level of competency in spoken English (see p. 5). This level includes a variety of duties e.g., grading, tutoring, proctoring of computerized exams and laboratories, assisting with laboratory sections, leading recitation and discussion sections.

Dean Marcus agreed that this revision was worth making.

PASSED

Dean Marcus explained that a few years ago, Maria Mendoza from the Center for Intensive English Studies brought some tapes to show the differences between a student who scores a 45 or 50 on the SPEAK test. The differences were quite distinct. Dr. Stepina showed interest in viewing these tapes.

Dean Marcus stated that it has been observed for students who score a 45 on the SPEAK test that it can take about 1-2 semesters for them to elevate their skills to reach a 50. If, by the end of these two semesters, the student's skills have not improved sufficiently to achieve a score of 50 on the SPEAK exam, the student will be eligible to teach only at level 1. Dean Marcus explained that it can potentially take longer than two semesters for students who achieve a 40 on the SPEAK test to elevate their skills. The language has been worded in a way so that when a

student reaches a 45 on the SPEAK test, the clock starts. No clock is set for students who achieve a 40 or below on the SPEAK test.

With no further discussion a vote was placed. All were in favor.

PASSED

With no further business to be presented, Dr. Stepina adjourned the meeting at 4:35 P.M.