GRADUATE POLICY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 21, 2014

The following members were present: Elwood Carlson, Sociology, Substitute-Chair; Nancy Marcus, Dean, The Graduate School; William Fredrickson, Music; Fred Huffer, Statistics; Diana Rice, Education; Peter Hoeflich, Physics; Linda DeBrunner, Engineering; Sudhir Aggarwal, Computer Science; Jamila Horabin, Biomedical Science; Tomi Gomory, Social Work; Stanley Gontarski, Arts and Sciences; Gary Burnett, Communication & Information; Patricia Born, Business; Anne Barrett, Sociology; Ron Doel, Arts and Sciences; Jeannine Turner, Education

The following members were absent: Bong-Soo Lee, Business; Kaifeng Yang, Social Science; Steven Webber, Interior Design; Sherry Southerland, Education; Karla Schmitt, Nursing; Jasminka Ilich-Ernst, Human Sciences; Brian Gaber, Film/Music; Nancy Everhart, Communication and Information.

Also present: James Beck, The Graduate School; Judy Devine, The Graduate School; Jennifer Buchanan, Assistant Vice President, Faculty Development and Advancement; Kathleen Burnett, School of Information; Linda Swaine, School of Information; Lawrence Dennis, Dean, Social Sciences and Public Policy; Ashley Bush, School of Information; Ulla Sypher; School of Information; Tom Blomberg, Dean, Criminology and Criminal Justice; Margarita Frankeberger, Criminology and Criminal Justice.

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 April 14, 2014 were approved.

QER- School of Information (iSchool) - Dr. Sypher gave a brief overview of the report for the School of Information. She stated that the School of Information seemed relatively "healthy" and that all of the issues identified by the subcommittee were not really problems the School of Information would be able to address by itself, but rather, by working with other units (a point noted in the recommendations). She explained that serious budget issues have arisen for the School and the unit has lost approximately 1/3 of its waiver allocation with little notice when its market rate program no longer counted towards FTE. She stated that these budget issues can only be resolved by implementing more E&G allocations or possibly adjusting some of the online fees. She stated that the curriculum seemed very "solid" with the unit spending a lot of time making sure the content is up-to-date. Dr. Sypher also noted that the student testimonials were all generally positive. Many of the issues identified have to do with the fact that the School of Information is very different from other departments and has a large amount of online course-offerings that are very technology-focused. Some problems that have ascended from this pertain primarily to wireless networking complications in their buildings. Dr. Sypher stated that "communication flow issues" are a universal concern that is being actively addressed within the unit. She suggested the possibility of adding more doctoral students to the program, but budget issues and outside competitive stipends could pose a problem for this prospect.

Dr. Burnett advised the committee that a few minor errors currently exist in the GPC Subcommittee report that needs to be addressed. Dean Dennis explained that a lot of these errors are merely due to the technical terminology behind the descriptions of market rate versus auxiliary accounts described in the document.

Dr. Aggarwal asked where the Ph.D. students from the School of Information were getting hired. Dr. Burnett stated that the majority of their students go to academic faculty positions in Library and Information Studies programs. Dr. Gomory was curious what universities were hiring. Dr. Burnett explained that the University of Syracuse, the University of Oklahoma, the University of North Texas, and the University of Maryland were considered among the top universities that are currently hiring.

Dr. Burnett advised the committee that she is aware of only two doctoral students who have taught predominantly in the IT programs. Dr. Sypher explained that the external reviewer seemed very complimentary of the program upon his campus meeting but his report contained a number of negative comments.

Dr. Aggarwal was curious how much grant funding the School of Information is receiving. Dean Dennis explained that the number varies, but if he had to approximate, it's historically been between $1 ½ -$4 million since about 2008.

Dean Marcus asked for further clarification regarding a comment on page 3 of the GPC Subcommittee report: "*Students who are not making satisfactory progress must develop a plan for improvement. If students receive a rating of unsatisfactory two years in a row, they may be dismissed from the program.*" Dean Marcus asked whether there has been a culture within the program of assigning "I's" for dissertation research. Dr. Sypher simply stated "no."

Dean Marcus asked for further clarification regarding a comment on page 5 of the GPC Subcommittee report: "*The MS in Library and Information Studies (MS LIS) is accredited by the American Library Associated (ALA) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).*" Dean Marcus explained that this statement is incorrect as SACS accredits the university and not individual programs. She advised Dr. Sypher that this needs to be corrected.

Dean Marcus asked if there is a graduate student handbook available to prospective students. Dr. Burnett explained that the School of Information has a doctoral program site that has a link to "doctoral student guidelines," which contains policy-type information for the doctoral program and might serve as a doctoral student handbook. As far as the Master's students are concerned, Dr. Burnett explained that because they are primarily online, all of the information for them is housed on a Blackboard Organization Site. Dean Marcus advised Dr. Burnett that the graduate student handbook needs to be readily available to prospective students and not just uploaded on Blackboard for the current students in the program. Dr. Burnett explained that the School of Information is currently migrating a lot of its information back to the public website, which should resolve this issue.

Dean Marcus asked if it is problematic for junior faculty to take-on doctoral students only after their 3rd year. She explained that junior faculty working with doctoral students can often be helpful and beneficial to their progress. Dr. Burnett explained that junior faculty can serve on committees, but simply cannot serve as a major professor. Dr. Sypher stated that the junior faculty showed a deep interest in receiving more access to doctoral students through some sort of formalized process (i.e. forming research teams). Dean Marcus explained that this could be problematic if there is a shift in the distribution of junior and senior faculty because it could place a much heavier burden on a more restricted number of senior faculty members. Dr. Burnett clarified that the School of Information is presently more "top-heavy" than "bottom-heavy" at the moment and the unit currently has a number of mechanisms in place to avoid this difficulty.

Dean Marcus asked if the new faculty hires are seeking external funding and have support for graduate students. Dean Dennis stated "yes." Dean Marcus explained that it is odd then that they can support a student, but not serve as his/her major professor. Dean Dennis showed support for this notion.

Dr. Sypher explained that as a separate unit in the same college, they have a similar rule to generally discourage the sharing of doctoral committees, but if someone wishes to do it, they can petition the graduate faculty in the department. She advised the committee that this should be a consideration on the table should a new recommendation be proposed. Dr. DeBrunner provided a general outline of other alternatives to the regulation.

Dr. Carlson asked for discussion on recommendation 1:

> *The unit should revisit the tasks assigned to staff and, where necessary, seek resources for additional staff support.*

Dean Marcus was concerned that this recommendation was not fully addressed in the GPC Subcommittee report. Dr. Sypher agreed that the subcommittee did not address this recommendation much throughout the report. However, she explained that many tasks the current faculty is dealing with could be done by a staff member and this would free-up faculty members and allow them to do more research, prepare their courses, etc. This same problem is occurring among staff members, specialized faculty members, and tenure-track faculty members. Dean Marcus suggested rewording the recommendation to read:

> **The unit should revisit the tasks assigned to faculty versus staff and, where necessary, seek resources for additional staff support.**

Dr. Sypher and Dean Dennis agreed that they would accept this recommendation.

<u>PASSED</u>

Dr. Carlson asked for discussion on recommendation 2:

> *The unit should assess communication and information flow between several groups and develop mechanisms to increase the amount of interaction and/or information shared. At a minimum, these groups should include:*
> > a. *active researchers -> graduate students (about available research opportunities, paid or unpaid);*
> > b. *administrators and program directors -> graduate students (about decision processes involving the graduate program incl. TA assignments);*
> > c. *CCI dean <-> iSchool director (to improve the match between school's and college's views on graduate versus undergraduate emphases, and operational issues)*
> > d. *faculty -> master's students (to improve programmatic advising)*
> > e. *master's students -> faculty (to bring in professional experience)*
> > f. *specialized faculty <-> tenure track faculty (to continue working on reducing remnants of a prior perceived class system)*

Dr. Sypher advised Dr. Carlson that -> meant "communicating with."

Dr. Gomory asked for clarification on this recommendation. Dr. Sypher explained that many graduate students requested more communication from the active researchers in the School of Information regarding new career opportunities, volunteer programs, etc. She further clarified that many graduate students have questions for administrators and academic program directors regarding processes, but sometimes felt that communication was lacking. Dr. Burnett stated that he feels this statement makes the problem seem much worse than it truly is. He clarified that the communication issues described in this report and the ones that are present among the unit, have come about due to a past program director who

did not feel communication was a top priority. He also advised the committee that these issues are actively being addressed at the moment. Dr. Burnett explained that this is a primary concern for the School of Information, but unfortunately the challenge is that the majority of the students and faculty are not in the same physical space at the same time because a lot of the courses are online. However, she stated that while this is challenge, the School of Information is definitely working on this concern.

Dr. Carlson introduced the notion to treat everything in parenthesis in the recommendation as an "additional comment," rather than as part of the recommendation.

Dr. Carlson suggested revising the recommendation to read:

> **The unit should assess communication and information flow between several groups and develop mechanisms to increase the amount of interaction and/or information shared. At a minimum, these groups should include:**
>   **a. active researchers -> graduate students;**
>   **b. administrators and program directors -> graduate students;**
>   **c. CCI dean <-> iSchool director**
>   **d. faculty -> master's students**
>   **e. master's students -> faculty**
>   **f. specialized faculty <-> tenure track faculty**

<u>PASSED</u>

Dr. Carlson asked for discussion on recommendation 3:

> *The unit should collaborate with the dean's office and ODL to re-calculate distance learning and market rate fees to reduce the student to TA ratio in online courses.*

Dr. Aggarwal suggested revising the recommendation to read:

> **To the extent that it is consistent with the mission and priorities of the College of Communication and Information and the University, the School of Information (iSchool) should collaborate with the dean's office and ODL to re-calculate distance learning and market rate fees to reduce the student to TA ratio in online courses.**

<u>PASSED</u>

Dr. Carlson asked for discussion on recommendation 4:

> *In response to the drastic growth of its undergraduate programs coupled with the growing MS IT program, the unit should seek additional faculty lines via college priority hiring initiatives.*

Dr. Carlson suggested revising the recommendation to read:

> **To the extent that it is consistent with the mission and priorities of the College of Communication and Information and the University, the School of Information (iSchool), in response to the drastic growth of its undergraduate programs coupled with the growing MS IT program, should seek additional faculty lines via college priority hiring initiatives.**

<u>PASSED</u>

Dr. Carlson asked for discussion on recommendation 5:

> *The unit is encouraged to continue raising awareness with other university units (e.g. ODL, ITS, financial aid, and others) of the unit's unique needs. These needs include but are not limited to,*
>   a. *higher-level technology support (incl. wireless, cutting edge technology, online learning tools, etc.),*
>   b. *improved campus services for online students (incl. online processes for distance learning students who are unable to submit paperwork in person, waivers for distance learning students, consistent fee structures, equal rights for distance learning students, etc.), and*
>   c. *more support from the university for graduate recruitment of distance learning students.*

Dr. Carlson introduced the notion to treat everything in parenthesis in the recommendation as an "additional comment," rather than as part of the recommendation.

Dr. Carlson suggested revising the recommendation to read:

> **The unit is encouraged to continue raising awareness with other university units (e.g. ODL, ITS, financial aid, and others) of the unit's unique needs. These needs include but are not limited to,**
>   a. **higher-level technology support,**
>   b. **improved campus services for online students, and**
>   c. **more support from the university for graduate recruitment of distance learning students.**

PASSED

Dr. Carlson asked for discussion on recommendation 6:

> *The review committee recommends "approval," meaning continuation of all graduate programs with GPC recommendations for improvement. The unit should provide a follow-up report in two years to ascertain progress/compliance.*

Dr. Carlson suggested revising the recommendation to read:

> **The committee recommends "approval," meaning continuation of all graduate programs in the School of Information.**

PASSED

Dean Marcus advised Dr. Sypher that after the corrections have been made to the GPC Subcommittee report, it needs to be resubmitted to The Graduate School.

Discussion: Reconsideration of Criminology's Request to Waive the GRE for the Online Master's-
Dr. Blomberg gave a brief overview of his request to waive the GRE for the online Master's program. He explained that the new document shows that this spring semester, 59% of the students enrolled in the online programs have 5 or more years of experience in the field of Criminology and Criminal Justice. He advised the committee that "course-relevant" professional experience will be looked at in replacement of the GRE. Dr. Blomberg reiterated that many of the peer-programs including the University of Cincinnati and the University of Arizona (all ranked universities) do not have GRE requirements nor do they have a 5 year professional experience requirement. The new requirement will be that a student will need to have

a 3.0 GPA or above and 5 years or more of professional experience from a relevant criminal justice field in order to waive submission of the GRE. Ms. Frankeberger also explained that the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice will not be waiving the GRE automatically. It is not an "automatic" waiver and will be determined on a "case by case" basis after reviewing the student's resume and qualifications.

Dr. Carlson clarified that a student will not be claiming the waiver of the GRE, but rather, the department will be granting it. Dean Blomberg confirmed this.

Dean Marcus explained that the deciding factor seems to be left in the hands of the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice to waive the GRE based on a student's qualifications and evaluation of their 5 years' experience. She advised Dean Blomberg that it is very important to have clear and defined criteria for every student who applies to the program. She explained that by having the guideline that "you are going to waive the GRE if you have 5 years of relevant professional experience in the field of criminology and criminal justice," it will provide a pool of students with work experience for the unit to evaluate for admission. Dean Blomberg clarified that there will be two pools of students who apply for admission: 1) a pool that takes the GRE and 2) a pool that doesn't take the GRE, but has 5 years of professional experience in Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Dean Marcus requested to move a motion:

> **The GRE for the online Master's program can be waived if an applicant presents 5 years of professional experience in a relevant Criminology and Criminal Justice field.**

The motion was seconded by Dr. Gomory.

<u>PASSED</u>

With no further business to be presented, Dr. Carlson adjourned the meeting at 5:01 P.M.