

**GRADUATE POLICY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 26, 2012**

The following members were present: David Johnson, English, Chair; Nancy Marcus, Dean, The Graduate School; Gerrie Houlihan, Visual Arts; Stanley Gontarski, Arts and Sciences; Sudhir Aggarwal, Computer Science; Tomi Gomory, Social Work; Gary Burnett, Communication & Information; Kaifeng Yang, Social Science; Linda DeBrunner, Engineering; Elwood Carlson, Sociology; Peter Hoeflich, Physics; Jamila Horabin, Biomedical Science; Ron Doel, Arts and Sciences; Karla Schmitt, Nursing; Marc Gertz, Criminology; William Fredrickson, Music

The following members were absent: Elizabeth Burch, Law; Jasminka Ilich-Ernst, Human Sciences; Jeffrey Milligan, Education; Brian Gaber, Film/Music; Bong-Soo Lee, Business; Sherry Southerland, Education; Patricia Born, Business; Diana Rice, Education; Nancy Everhart, Communication and Information

Also present: Colin Creasy, The Graduate School; Judy Devine, The Graduate School; Jim Elsner, Geography; Elizabeth Slate, Statistics; Xufeng Niu, Statistics; Kelly McGinnity, Statistics; Maria Mendoza, ITA; Michael Lesser, Modern Languages; William Cloonan, Modern Languages; Bernd Berg, Physics

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

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – With no changes, the minutes were entered into the record.

QER: Statistics & Biostatistics – Dr. Elsner provided a brief overview of the subcommittee's report, praising the program's ability to place graduates in high quality jobs (both academic and applied), its commitment to evolving and adapting to the changing job market, and productive faculty with high publication output. He added that there is some concern regarding a lack of necessary faculty in some areas.

Dr. Niu agreed with the subcommittee's recommendations and expressed his desire to find ways to satisfy them in the future. He explained the increased focus on Biostatistics, noting that there was a strong demand both from students and in the job market for this kind of instruction. He noted that while the program has plans to increase the student population from 70 to 120 over the course of the next few years, there are space and faculty requirements that must be met in order to accomplish this.

Dean Huckaba explained that while the program has evolved from a sole focus on Statistics to a more interdisciplinary program over the last decade, there have been many positive gains. The number of students in the program has soared despite the loss of two faculty members to Cornell and space issues.

Dr. DeBrunner expressed concern regarding a recommendation that aimed to encourage where program faculty members might publish articles. Dr. Niu explained that this was a recommendation made by the outside reviewer but added that the program had no way to enforce this. Dr. Elsner explained that there was some concern with the external reviewer that the program might give up strength in core Statistics if they continued to shift more focus toward more applied (Biostatistics) journals and that this could

negatively impact their ability to attract more academically-focused students in the future. Dr. DeBrunner argued that this should be addressed through hiring rather than implementing publishing requirements.

Dean Marcus asked about the programs use of the GRE search filter as mentioned on page 3 of the subcommittee's report. Dr. Niu explained that this must have been a misunderstanding as the program has not employed the tool in question, choosing instead to draw from the strong applicant pool they already have. The report has been revised and clarified to reflect this.

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Burnett to accept the recommendation which reads:

To the extent that it is consistent with the mission and priorities of the College of Arts and Sciences and the University, the department should work with the administration of the College to hire additional faculty over the next two to three years.

Passed

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept the recommendation which reads:

The department should explore the possibility of a mandatory one hour per week seminar for incoming Ph.D. students in which all professors in the department present the research opportunities that they offer.

Dr. Niu explained that the department currently does something like this through their orientation and various colloquiums, but thought that students may be overwhelmed. Ms. McGinnity explained that some of the research topics could be too complicated for beginning students to grasp. Dr. Berg explained that students indicated that the information had not been presented systematically.

Passed

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept the recommendation which reads:

The department should split the double listed 4000- and 5000- level courses into undergraduate and graduate versions. If there are insufficient faculty the department should allow the best graduate students of the 5000-level course teach the undergraduate version.

Dr. DeBrunner asked if the courses were large enough to require such a split. Dr. Niu explained that these courses often had 50-60 students enrolled and that there were negative effects on both faculty and students, adding that something needed to be done to fix this but that employing students to teach 4000-level courses was not the answer.

Dr. Johnson asked if any course in particular needed this split immediately. Dr. Niu explained that there were two courses that would benefit from breaking into undergraduate and graduate sections. Dr. Johnson asked if either could be taught by an advanced Ph.D student, however Dr. Niu explained that this would probably not be possible. Dean Huckaba explained that it might be possible that a post-doc could step in and teach the undergraduate section.

Dr. Fredrickson suggested removing the second sentence from the recommendation. Dr. Johnson suggested adding the phrase “explore ways to” into the recommendation.

The department should explore ways to split the double listed 4000- and 5000- level courses into undergraduate and graduate versions.

Passed

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept the recommendation which reads:

The department should require Ph.D. students to give a short oral presentation of their academic activities to their supervisory committee each year with the summary of the presentation reflected in their annual evaluation.

Passed

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept the recommendation which reads:

The department should institute a procedure for making sure each student meets at least once a semester with his/her advisor.

Dr. Aggarwal argued that the recommendation “seemed bureaucratic.” Dr. Elsner explained that students often had multiple advisers and that this would help establish more distinct responsibilities. Dr. Niu added that this most often happens, and is a concern, with coursework-only Master’s students.

Passed

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept the recommendation which reads:

The department should explore ways to offer electives on a more regular basis.

Dr. Niu explained that oftentimes the teaching load is too much to offer electives.

Passed

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept the recommendation which reads:

The faculty should be encouraged to give higher priority to publishing in statistics journals.

Dr. Hoeflich argued that the faculty would be best suited to know where their research should be published. Dr. Elsner explained that faculty members must be encouraged to think about the program’s NRC ranking.

Dr. Niu felt that the recommendation was a good one.

Dr. DeBrunner argued that faculty members do not like being told where they should be publishing.

Dr. Berg explained that this recommendation came from the external reviewer and added that the NRC focused on core Statistics journals and this could be an issue for programs wishing to diversify their areas of study.

Dr. Niu provided the GPC with a history of the program, explaining that it was ranked in the top 10 during the 1980s but has dropped to the mid-30s (out of 60+) since, due to faculty retirements and other factors not related to publications and Biostatistics. He added that the department is attempting to strike a balance between core Statistics and Biostatistics.

Dr. Johnson explained that the point of the recommendation was not to force anyone to do anything; instead the goal would be to encourage faculty members to think about their publication choices.

Dr. Aggarwal echoed Dr. DeBrunner's previous statement that this could be solved better through hiring faculty members whose research interests lie in core Statistics.

Dr. DeBrunner suggested an amended recommendation:

The faculty should be encouraged to explore ways to increase visibility and NRC rankings.

Dean Marcus argued that the recommendation was unusual and could likely be made of almost every program to come under review in the future since nearly all do not fall within the top quartile. Dr. Schmitt argued that just because this recommendation wasn't made in the past doesn't mean that it shouldn't be made. Dr. Johnson agreed that if it comes up as a concern, it should be addressed.

Dr. Aggarwal argued that the faculty size correlated with the program's NRC rankings and that publication type had little to do with it. Dean Huckaba added that external funding also plays a factor and that the interdisciplinary focus of the program brings in significant funding. Dr. Niu argued that the NRC rankings were outdated and flawed.

Dean Marcus suggested that expectations about publishing venues should be related to the program's mission and goals and that perhaps this should be the focus of such a recommendation rather than the NRC rankings.

Dr. Gomory compared this recommendation to "teaching to the exam" concurring with Dean Marcus and suggested that they focus on what they want the program to accomplish, which might not necessarily be related to NRC rankings.

Dr. Gertz noted that the recommendation does not address rankings and argued that the discussion was moving away from its intentions.

Dr. Elsner and Dr. Niu agreed that the program must find a better balance between academic and applied studies.

Amended recommendation: Failed (6 for, 11 opposed)

Original recommendation: Failed (5 for, 12 opposed)

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept the recommendation which reads:

To the extent that it is consistent with the mission and priorities of the College of Arts and Sciences and the University, the department should work with the administration of the College to find space so that the 1st-year graduate students are housed in the same building as the rest of the students.

Passed

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept the recommendation which reads:

The department should provide more professional training for M.S. students through additional applied statistics courses.

Dr. Carlson questioned if this would come at the expense of the PhD program.

Dr. Johnson suggested this revision:

The department should explore ways to provide more professional training for M.S. students.

Passed

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept the recommendation which reads:

The programs have been very successful over the years and there is no doubt that the programs in Statistics and Biostatistics should be continued.

Passed

Modification of Spoken English Certification (SPEAK) Standards for TAs in Modern Languages and Linguistics – Dr. Cloonan explained the request and the issue with the current ITA standards not being appropriate for MLL TAs due to the fact that the courses are almost entirely presented in the ITAs native language rather than English.

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Born to accept the request for modification of the ITA standards.

Dean Marcus asked about the tasks of the ITAs and their courses. Dr. Cloonan explained that these students were teaching basic French and Spanish courses. Dean Marcus asked if these were all language courses or if they also included culture. Dr. Cloonan explained that some are culture courses, but all are presented in the target language.

Dr. Horabin questioned whether or not the courses taught were in the student's native language. Dr. Cloonan explained that this was almost always the case.

Dr. Schmitt asked for a definition of "foreign" student. Dean Marcus explained that in the context of the ITA English competency requirement, this was a student who came from a country where the native language is not English.

Dean Marcus argues that this modification does not stipulate that the course taught must be in the student's native language. Dr. Mandoza agreed but explained that the ITA policy was only concerned with English competency, not competency in any other language other than their native language.

Passed

With no new business to be presented, Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 4:30 P.M.