

**GRADUATE POLICY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 14, 2011**

The following members were present: Nancy Marcus, Dean, The Graduate School; David Johnson, English, Chair; Eric Chicken, Statistics; Marc Gertz, Criminology; Tomi Gomory, Social Work; Gary Burnett, Communication and Information; Bob Pekurny, Communication and Information; Jamila Horabin, Biomedical Science; William Fredrickson, Music; Ike Eberstein, Sociology; Brian Gaber, Film/Music; Ithel Jones, Teacher Education; Patricia Born, Business; Rick Feiock, Social Sciences and Public Policy

The following members were absent: Stanley Gontarski, Arts and Sciences; Sudhir Aggarwal, Computer Science; Ron Doel, Arts and Sciences; Bong-Soo Lee, Business; Young-Suk Kim, Education; Rodney Roberts, Engineering; Dianne Speake, Nursing

Also present: Colin Creasy, The Graduate School; Judy Devine, The Graduate School; Anne Rowe, Dean of the Faculties; Marcy Driscoll, Education; Rob Contreras, Arts & Sciences; Joe Travis, Arts & Sciences; Ellen Granger, MST; Sherry Southerland, Education; Frederick Davis, History

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

Approval of 2-14-11 Meeting Minutes – With no changes requested, the minutes were entered into the record.

Program Review: FSU Teach/MST – Dr. Johnson introduced Dr. Davis who provided a brief overview of the subcommittee’s findings. The consensus of the reviewers was that the program has [and continues to] fulfilled its mission insomuch as it has successfully placed graduates in educational positions in the state of Florida. The subcommittee suggested that the program take a more active stance on recruiting, consider a stand-alone master’s program, and provide an alternative to “summer, externally funded course.”

Dr. Granger responded to the review by pointing out the “critical” need for “well prepared” math and science teachers and that this program is working to fulfill that need. She admitted that the program had been passive in their recruiting and would be working to fix this issue through marketing, but noted that the program is structured to only handle 12 students at a time due to resource constraints. The department is interested in developing a stand-alone M.S., and will be considering it for the future. Finally, she noted that the externally funded summer course is “not a problem” and that there are alternatives; the course itself is simply a method to provide research opportunities for teachers, and she noted that “scientists regularly provide research experiences in their laboratories;” the idea is to get some experience with hands on science.

Dean Travis agreed that the program should embrace a more active recruiting stance.

Dr. Horabin wondered what the difference was between FSU Teach and MST. Dr. Granger explained that the FSU Teach component is the bachelor’s portion of the 3+2 combined program. The department is, as they said previously, interested in developing a stand-alone program but noted that it could be difficult for

students, pointing to the difficulty that students experience as seniors accepted into the program. Dr. Davis added that they may look into attracting “in-service” teachers.

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

The MST program should consider moving from a passive recruiting stance to a more active one.

Passed

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

The MST program should consider branching out to include a separate, standalone graduate program.

Dean Driscoll suggested that the department look to see what area(s) needs to be served by looking at the other masters and Ph.D. programs offered by the university at present. She noted that this could culminate in a joint program between Education and Arts & Sciences.

Passed

It was moved by Dr. Gertz and seconded by Dr. Chicken 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 MST program should consider finding a suitable alternative to the summer, externally funded course.

Passed

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

Given the continued need for science teachers and the quality of the MST program, and its limited resource demand, we recommend that the MST program be continued.

Passed

Medical School PASS/FAIL policy change – Dean Marcus explained to the GPC that the Medical School’s proposed change to a PASS/FAIL system would be in conflict with the current policy stipulating that students falling below a 3.0 be placed on probation. She added that the Law School had a different

scale than the rest of the university, but noted that it is numerically based and has been in practice for some time.

Dr. Johnson wondered what the rationale for this change was. Dr. Horabin explained that it's an issue of student stress and that employing a PASS/FAIL system has been shown to reduce stress.

Dr. Gomory questioned why one set of students should be held to a PASS/FAIL standard while the rest of the university employs a numerical scale for their student assessment.

Dr. Gertz added that he felt that medical students especially should understand the feeling of stress, and was concerned about "setting a precedent" which could have additional repercussions throughout the university. However, he added that this PASS/FAIL scale did seem to be the new standard in medical programs and that the program has enough accreditations to justify this decision. Dr. Johnson pointed out that this seems to be part of "medical school culture," and that their student review committee seems to be particularly thorough.

Dr. Gomory wondered how the GPC could justify not allowing other programs to go to a PASS/FAIL system if they were to allow the Medical School to adopt this standard. He argued that "a PASS encompasses a huge range of quality" and that this should be of concern to the GPC. Dr. Gertz pointed out that the Law School does not have the same standard as the rest of the university. Dr. Gomory argued that, despite the Law School's different scale, it is still numerical and thus one can easily see the differences between students.

Dean Marcus noted that this seemed to be a difference in the way graduate students are evaluated and "professional" students are evaluated, with Law and Medical students being the only officially recognized professional students; because of this, graduate policy does not specifically apply to these students, but she noted that their specific policies and standards should be published and readily available.

Dr. Horabin explained that the percentages associated with a PASS are the same as those associated with passing grades in the rest of the university. Dr. Gomory argued that a PASS could be defined by the instructor, and thus could vary greatly, but was more concerned with establishing a strong rationale why the Medical School should be granted this "exception" so that other programs might not attempt to adopt similar standards. Dr. Johnson explained that any program looking to adopt such a policy would need to show that "other good programs" had established similar standards. Dr. Horabin added that "if they were being passed but weren't deserving of a pass," it would come to light when they would take their "national exams."

Dr. Eberstein expressed concern regarding the possibility that an instructor could "black ball" a student, since a grade of FAIL in any course will result in probation and there is no defined appeals process.

Dean Marcus suggested that the GPC invite representatives from the Medical School to be in attendance to answer these questions and address the concerns raised by the GPC.

Dr. Eberstein pointed out that the idea of "character" is mentioned in regards to an attribute that could lead to probation, and that this is of concern due to its nebulousness. Dr. Pekurny agreed with this point, wondering who would be charged with making these character judgments and even who would be eligible to put forth a student for review based on their conduct. Dean Marcus pointed out that this idea of a code of character is present in other programs, such as Social Work.

Dr. Horabin noted that medical students have faculty advisors/mentors who meet with them when they get failing scores on exams and/or have conduct concerns, arguing that these students are possibly “babied” more than regular graduate students.

Dr. Pekurny argued that the process and standards leading to a probation be explicitly listed in the handbook/bulletin, as well as the appeals process. Dr. Buchanan noted that the included documentation is likely an excerpt as the handbook for the Medical School is “quite extensive,” adding that their handbook also outlines a much different conduct code and method for resolving issues than the rest of the university.

Dr. Gomory reminded the GPC that the issue here is not one of professional behavior, it is of academic performance, which are “two different things.” Dean Marcus agreed, adding that this is the issue that the Registrar is trying to deal with.

Dr. Johnson questioned how the Registrar interprets the grades submitted by the Law School and proposed that a similar “translation” be created by the Medical School.

The committee asked the Chair to invite representatives from the Medical School to an upcoming GPC meeting so that their questions and concerns could be addressed.

With no new business to be presented, Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 4:20 P.M.