

**GRADUATE POLICY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
September 16, 2013**

**The following members were present:** Lee Stepina, Business, Chair; Nancy Marcus, Dean, The Graduate School; Sudhir Aggarwal, Computer Science; Gary Burnett, Communication & Information; Peter Hoeflich, Physics; Jamila Horabin, Biomedical Science; William Fredrickson, Music; Diana Rice, Education; Linda DeBrunner, Engineering; Nancy Everhart, Communication and Information; Ron Doel, Arts and Sciences; Jasminka Ilich-Ernst, Human Sciences; Fred Huffer, Statistics

**The following members were absent:** Bong-Soo Lee, Business; Tomi Gomory, Social Work; Karla Schmitt, Nursing; Kaifeng Yang, Social Science; Brian Gaber, Film/Music; Sherry Southerland, Education; Stanley Gontarski, Arts and Sciences; Elwood Carlson, Sociology; Patricia Born, Business

**Also present:** Colin Creasy, The Graduate School; Jennifer Buchanan, Faculty Development and Advancement; Patrick Kennell, CIES

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

**Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** – With one change to a date, the minutes were entered into the record.

**It was moved by Dr. Fredrickson and seconded by Dr. Aggarwal to accept the minutes**

**Passed**

**Consent Items Inventory** – Dean Marcus provided a brief explanation of the consent items, noting the instructors and programs approved by the Graduate School throughout the previous semester.

**It was moved by Dr. Fredrickson and seconded by Dr. Horabin to accept the item**

**Passed**

**Pearson Test of English** – Dean Marcus explained that this test would serve as an alternative to the TOEFL test, but as of yet did not have a minimum score set by the university. Dr. Kennell provided a brief explanation of the test, its differences from the TOEFL and IELTS exams, and recommended a score of 55 as a pass for the PTE. Dean Marcus added that this was a benefit to students and the university as it provided increased flexibility and availability of testing for applicants.

Dr. Ilich-Ernst asked about machine scoring. Dr. Kennell explained that the results produced appeared to be similar to human graders. Dean Marcus explained that there were benefits and detriments to both human and machine grading.

Dr. Hoeflich asked about differences between these various tests predicting future success. Dean Marcus offered that these tests determined competency in English and not necessarily degree success. Dr. Stepina added that future success must be predicted using other tests and materials.

Dr. Aggarwal asked about other schools and their score requirements. Dr. Kennell explained that they used scores from 53 to 55.

Dr. DeBrunner asked about reviewing the test after periods of time. Dean Marcus explained that it would take several years to come up with good data for an accurate and useful review of the tests. Dr. DeBrunner suggested that SPEAK test scores and student feedback could be data points for evaluating the usefulness of the tests and the accuracy of the score requirements.

**It was moved by Dr. DeBrunner and seconded by Dr. Fredrickson to accept a minimum score of 55 on the PTE test and a required review of all language tests by the GPC every three years.**

**Passed**

**Dual Degree Policy** – Dean Marcus explained the current dual enrollment policy and her opinion that students who wish to pursue a second degree should apply prior to completing a substantial portion of the requirements for the second degree. She cited the example of non-degree seeking students who can apply not more than 12 credit hours toward a degree once formally admitted. Without a formal policy for dual enrollment she has been applying the non-degree seeking standards to students already in degree programs who have begun taking credits for an additional degree. Dean Marcus thinks that it would be helpful to formalize this in policy.

Dr. Stepina asked how many requests have come from students who have already taken all the courses required of a degree prior to applying. Dean Marcus explained that she had received two or three in the last 6 months and added that this appeared to be a backdoor entry to a degree.

Dr. Huffer explained that his department would be opposed to this policy as many students satisfy the requirements for a MS in Statistics degree before they realize it while pursuing a different degree. He added that advisement is not a large factor even for MS students accepted into the program prior to taking courses.

Dr. Stepina asked whether or not the 12 credit limit would be reached in a single semester. Dean Marcus explained that it was possible.

Dr. Hoeflich argued that this is not a university concern and should be left up to the departments and programs to decide on a per unit basis.

Dr. Horabin suggested that the number of credits be limited to that of half those required of the degree instead of 12. Dean Marcus explained that this would not be consistent with the non-degree seeking student policy.

Dr. Everhart expressed concerns that this could be a way for students to “sneak into” programs without being admitted. Dr. Stepina added that students would not receive adequate advisement.

Dean Marcus explained that this was no different from SACS concerns regarding certificate programs. Dr. Horabin asked to see the SACS materials addressing this issue and Dr. Buchanan explained that there

are no materials specifically but that Dr. Bradley's interpretation of SACS rules have brought the handling of certificate programs into question. Dr. Aggarwal argued that the new student tracking program should be able to be used to police these issues.

Dr. Rice suggested that departments should be contacted for their input. Dr. Stepina agreed to table the discussion until the next meeting.

**Blackboard** – Dean Marcus asked the GPC members about their preferred location for GPC information, including minutes and materials. She explained that the Blackboard site was being used to house these at the moment but that a public site could be created if desired.

Dr. Burnett explained that there are space constraints with Blackboard and that they could potentially hit a quota.

Dr. Aggarwal agreed that two years' worth of materials and minutes would be sufficient online, with older materials to be hosted on the Graduate School's internal servers and files.

**Future Topics** – Dr. Stepina explained some of the topics that could be addressed during the upcoming semester, including dissertation grading, undergraduate graders, collective bargaining's impact on GFS policy, co-listed 4000 and 5000 level courses, and the possibility of a PhD/MBA joint degree.

**With no new business to be presented, Dr. Stepina adjourned the meeting at 5:05 P.M.**