

## **University Council on Graduate Study**

### **Report on 2006 - 2007 Activities**

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As stated in its bylaws, the University Council on Graduate Study is to communicate its decisions to the faculty, students, and administrative officers of the University. If you have comments on the activities as reported here or suggestions for agenda items, please contact Vice Provost Patricia Beeson at 412-624-0790 or via email at *beeson@pitt.edu*.

#### **Issues Discussed by UCGS**

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##### **Health Insurance for Funded Graduate Students**

Council discussed the annual negotiations for the graduate student health insurance plan. With continually rising costs, Dr. Beeson asked the Council for input regarding possible cost-saving measures.

Council members agreed that the current plan is a significant recruiting tool, and the level of healthcare provided through the plan is important for maintaining a healthy graduate student population. Council members made several suggestions, including increasing wellness programming for graduate students on campus and providing other education to help students make choices regarding doctor's visits, prescription drugs, etc., that will not drive up costs.

##### **Proposed policy on Study and Research in Countries Under State Department Warning**

Council members discussed a recent policy change restricting students from studying in countries under State Department warning. Vice Provost Beeson asked the Council for feedback on if/how this policy will impact graduate student research. Council members indicated that this will have a great impact on graduate student research, as many students study peace, war, disease, and other issues in war-torn countries and countries that may otherwise be on a State Department warning list. These are topics that University wants students to engage in, and Council members felt that graduate students should be treated differently from undergraduate students in this policy. Some suggestions included having graduate students sign a waiver when they study in places under State Department warning. Another suggestion was to offer an online training course on high-risk travel that students must complete before going to these areas.

#### **Reports Given to UCGS**

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##### **The Revised GRE**

Council received an update on proposed changes to the Graduate Record Exam. However, ETS decided that issues with a new testing administration system would potentially create problems and limit access to the test, so the changes were not implemented.

## **Update on International Recruiting and Other Issues from the Office of International Services**

David Clubb, Director of the Office of International Services, provided information to Council on trends in graduate student enrollments at the University and nationally. Nationally, the overall numbers of international graduate students have been dropping since 2004, but there was an increase of 3% in 2006. The decrease in numbers has been a national trend, but more recently the process of getting a visa has become more regular and stable and may be contributing to the increase in students in 2006. There is also some evidence that international students are more frequently choosing to study in places such as the UK, the EU, and Australia, and India has been aggressively building its own infrastructure.

Mr. Clubb provided information on transcript evaluation services that OIS offers to departments and schools admitting international students. He also discussed how to handle a situation if a current international student is placed on probation or suspension. The program must notify OIS so they can advise the student of the timelines for visa status and other important information. Council members asked if OIS could provide an equivalency table for degrees from foreign institutions, and Mr. Clubb said they would work to develop one.

## **UCGS Committee Activities**

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The **Graduate Procedures Committee**, chaired by Eleanor Feingold, was charged with updating the University's Regulations Governing Graduate Study. The committee reviewed University policies and updated the Regulations where appropriate. Among other things, changes included switching from QPA to GPA, updating the English language proficiency information, and adding information on electronic theses and dissertations. The committee brought some issues forward to UCGS, such as changes made to guidelines on professional doctorates.

Council members suggested that the Regulations be available only online. They suggested a PDF version of the document so it can be easily printed.

The **Graduate Student Affairs Committee**, chaired by Judith Erlen, was charged with making a recommendation about whether the University should consider adopting a childbirth accommodation policy for graduate students. The committee decided to recommend that a policy be established at the University. The committee was working to develop a set of basic guidelines as part of their recommendation for a policy. The committee collected information from graduate students and the Deans of graduate schools as well as reviewed policies from other schools. The committee will discuss their recommendation with the Council during 2007-2008.

The *ad hoc* **Doctoral Mentoring Award Committee** was charged with carrying out the second year of awarding the Provost's Award for Excellence in Mentoring, including the review of applications. A formal request for nominations was sent out in Fall 2006, and the committee received 37 nominations. Four awards were given at a reception held on April 16, 2007. The 2007 awardees were Kathleen Blee, Nancy Day, Robert Drennan, and Noreen Garman.

## **Review of Proposals**

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### **Certificate in Minority Health and Health Disparities**

#### **Graduate School of Public Health**

Approved September 12, 2006. Approved by the Provost September 28, 2006.

The purpose of this certificate is to provide students with a foundation for eliminating disparities by conducting research in the area of minority health and by working in communities where disparities exist. Members of minority groups in the United States die more frequently than their white peers from preventable diseases such as heart disease, obesity, and HIV. This program addresses the systemic underpinnings of health disparities and trains students to design interventions that are appropriate to minority populations.

### **Certificate in Evaluation of Public Health Promotion and Health Education Programs**

#### **Graduate School of Public Health**

Approved September 12, 2006. Approved by the Provost November 13, 2006.

This certificate program provides students with a core set of courses that will enhance their skills in program evaluation. Evaluation of health promotion and education programs is a core competency for behavioral and social science departments in schools of public health, and its importance is recognized through the major national accrediting bodies. Students in this certificate program will gain the skills and knowledge necessary for effective program evaluation, including formulating appropriate and measurable objectives and outcomes, assessing community concerns and needs, developing appropriate data collection and analysis methods, and interpreting data on program performance.

### **Certificate in Recruitment/Retention in Public Health Research and Service Programs**

#### **Graduate School of Public Health**

Approved October 10, 2006. Approved by the Provost October 12, 2006.

This program will provide students with the knowledge and training necessary to carry out a wide range of successful recruitment programs. The recent focus on health disparities by the NIH and other government agencies requires practitioners skilled in recruiting targeted populations for study. This certificate program will provide students with the training and skills necessary to do effective recruitment and retention, including knowledge of relevant social marketing and community organization literature, health literacy, focus group methods, research ethics, creating and maintaining community advisory boards, recruitment strategies like direct mail and internet recruitment, publication design, and public relations.

### **Master of Arts degree in History Education**

#### **School of Arts and Sciences and School of Education joint proposal**

Approved December 12, 2006. Approved by the Provost February 2, 2007.

The purpose of the MA in History Education is to help students develop strong identities within the discipline and strong ties to academic historians as part of their teacher training, thus giving them a firm foundation in history before they begin their careers as teachers of history and social studies. Students complete 24 credits of coursework in History during the first year of the program, followed by 30 credits of Education coursework and field experiences during the second year of the program in preparation for certification. Students who complete the program and receive teacher certification will be prepared to teach History in public secondary schools

with the benefit of disciplinary expertise nearly identical to that of traditional master's students in History.

### **Certificate in African Studies**

#### **University Center for International Studies**

Approved March 13, 2007. Approved by the Provost March 23, 2007.

This certificate program was jointly developed by UCIS and the Department of Africana Studies in the School of Arts and Sciences. The program will be administered through UCIS. The purpose of the certificate is to provide students who have a research interest in Africa with an opportunity to acquire a critical base of knowledge in African Studies. Students in the program are required to complete a series of courses related to their primary area of interest or specialization, and they must demonstrate proficiency in an African or related language. The program will be open to all students currently enrolled in a master's or doctoral program at the University of Pittsburgh. It will draw on courses and faculty from Arts and Sciences, Education, Law, GSPIA, Social Work, and Public Health.

### **Certificate in Nursing Research**

#### **School of Nursing**

Approved May 8, 2007. Approved by the Provost May 17, 2007.

The Certificate in Nursing Research program is a multidisciplinary, post-baccalaureate and graduate-level certificate program for health care workers who are seeking a focus on research. Clinical research is becoming an increasingly important component of health care, and health care workers need to understand how to conduct and coordinate clinical research. This certificate program will prepare health care workers to conduct and coordinate clinical studies sponsored by the federal government, industry, and foundations for phase I, II, and III studies of drugs, devices, and biologics as well as behavioral interventions across the life span. For health care workers with appropriate clinical coordinator experience, the certificate program will provide the educational preparation necessary to sit for the Association of Clinical Research Professionals' examination for Certified Clinical Research Coordinators.

### **MSW-JD Joint Degree Program**

#### **School of Social Work and School of Law**

Approved May 8, 2007. Approved by the Provost May 17, 2007.

The MSW-JD joint degree program focuses on a variety of areas in which social work and law converge, including child welfare, aging, health, mental health, juvenile and criminal justice, family issues, and housing. Each school has noted that their students sometimes seek both degrees independently, so a formal, joint program will ease that process and attract additional students. The program requires four years for completion with a minimum of 75 credits in the School of Law and 46 credits in the School of Social Work. Upon graduation, students will be prepared to work in a number of related fields, including direct legal services, advocacy, administration of social service organizations, and governmental and policy areas.

### **Doctor of Public Health in Environmental and Occupational Health**

#### **Graduate School of Public Health**

Discussed May 8, 2007. Vote postponed for further discussion.

This program was previously reviewed by UCGS at the February 14, 2006 meeting. The program's aim is to provide advanced professional education for individuals who desire

leadership positions in high-level administration and/or decision making in an Environmental Health setting. Council members requested further clarification about the nature of the DrPH; specifically, whether it is considered to be a research degree or a professional practice degree.

### **Documents Circulated to the University Community**

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Report on 2005-2006 Activities, University Council on Graduate Study, University of Pittsburgh.  
<http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/UCGSAnnualReport05-06.pdf>

Regulations Governing Graduate Study at the University of Pittsburgh, University Council on Graduate Study, University of Pittsburgh. <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/reg.html>

Online Graduate and Professional Bulletin, 2004, Office of the Provost, University of Pittsburgh.  
<http://www.umd.pitt.edu/bulletins/graduate/index.html>

Policy Statement for Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows, and Graduate Student Assistants, Office of the Provost, University of Pittsburgh.  
<http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/TATFGSAPolicyStatement.pdf>

Policy Statement for Graduate Student Researchers, Office of the Provost, University of Pittsburgh. <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/GSRPolicyStatement.pdf>

Elements of Good Academic Advising, University Council on Graduate Study, University of Pittsburgh. <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/advising.html>

The Guide to Graduate and Professional Programs, Office of the Provost, University of Pittsburgh. <https://www.pitt.edu/Graduate/>

Graduate Faculty Membership Roster, Office of the Provost, University of Pittsburgh. Updated three times a year at <http://www.ir.pitt.edu/gradfac/homepg.htm>.

Choosing A Dissertation Advisor, Office of the Provost, University of Pittsburgh.  
<http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/advisor.html>

ETD Format Guidelines Manual, Office of the Provost, University of Pittsburgh.  
<http://www.pitt.edu/AFShome/g/r/graduate/public/html/etd/pdf/ETDformat.pdf>

Thesis and Dissertation Word Templates  
<http://technology.pitt.edu/Students.aspx?mp=2&body=etd/etd.html>

ETD LaTeX Template  
<http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/etd/latextemplate.html>

## **2006-2007 UCGS Members**

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Patricia Beeson, Office of the Provost/UCGS Chair  
Pat Card, Arts and Sciences/Interdisciplinary  
Nicole Constable, Arts and Sciences  
Judith Erlen, Nursing  
Eleanor Feingold, Public Health  
Robert Gibbs, Pharmacy  
Christin Glorioso, GPSA  
Amanda Godley, Education  
Janelle Greenberg, Arts and Sciences/Social Sciences  
Desmond John Hillier, Arts and Sciences/At-Large  
John Horn, Medicine  
Gary Koeske, Social Work  
Margaret Mahoney, Law  
Malcolm McNeil, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences  
Robert Parker, Engineering  
Louis Pingel, Education  
John Prescott, Katz Graduate School of Business  
Jayant Rajgopal, Engineering  
Dennis Ranalli, Dental Medicine  
Mark Roberts, Medicine  
Ann Robertson, Engineering  
Mae Smethurst, Arts and Sciences/Humanities  
Martin Staniland, Public and International Affairs  
Stephen Weber, Arts and Sciences/Natural Sciences  
Martin Weiss, Information Sciences

### Observers:

Barbara Repasi Heron, Associate Registrar  
Michele Colvard, Assistant to the Provost

## **2006-2007 UCGS Standing Committees**

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### Graduate Procedures:

Eleanor Feingold (Chair)  
John Horn  
Margaret Mahoney  
Malcolm McNeil  
Robert Parker  
Lou Pingel  
Mark Roberts  
Martin Staniland  
Stephen Weber

Graduate Student Affairs:

Nicole Constable  
Judith Erlen (Chair)  
Robert Gibbs  
Christin Glorioso  
Amanda Godley  
Gary Koeske  
Martin Weiss

**2006-2007 UCGS Ad hoc Committees**

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Doctoral Mentoring Award:

Patricia Beeson  
Celia Brownell  
Kate Floros (Arts and Science, Graduate Student)  
Janelle Greenberg  
Malcolm McNeil  
John Prescott  
Alan Sved (Arts and Sciences/School of Medicine)