

University Council on Graduate Study

December 12, 2006

Minutes

3:00-5:00 p.m.

817 CL

Attending: Patricia Beeson (Chair), Nicole Constable (A&S), Judith Erlen (Nursing), Eleanor Feingold (GSPH), Robert Gibbs (PHARM), Amanda Godley (Education), Barbara Repasi Heron (Registrar), John Hillier (A&S), Janelle Greenberg (A&S), John Horn (SOM), Gary Koeske (SSW), Margaret Mahoney (Law), Robert Parker (SOE), Louis Pingel (Education), Mae Smethurst (A&S), Michele Colvard (Provost's Office)

Guest(s): Reid Andrews (A&S/History), David Berman (Education), Bill Chase (A&S/History), Edward Muller (A&S/History), Ken Pawlik (Education), Marjorie Schermer (Education)

I. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 10, 2006 meeting were approved unanimously.

II. Program Proposal: School of Arts and Sciences and School of Education joint proposal to establish a Master of Arts degree in History Education

The purpose of the proposed MA in History Education is to guarantee that 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 will 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 teaching 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.

Several members of History Department and School of Education attended the meeting to present the proposal and answers questions from Council members. They explained that students are looking to blend more intensive work in a discipline with education certification. This will make students more marketable to school districts because history is the primary field for the social studies area of teacher certification. This new degree will also connect students more closely to the discipline they will be teaching.

Approximately six new students are expected in the program each year, and no new faculty resources were requested.

A council member asked if students can already do this. There is some credit overlap in the joint program, making the time-to-degree shorter.

A council member asked if students will be out-pricing themselves for the market by obtaining this degree. Many school districts are now hiring master's-level teachers, so this will not hurt a student's chance of obtaining a job.

A council member asked if students must have an undergraduate major in history to be admitted to the program. Students can be admitted with another degree if they have the appropriate background in history, such as a minor in history. The admissions committees from both the School of Education and History department will review applicants' files, then discuss applicants together to determine those who will be admitted.

Members of the History Department and School of Education were dismissed from the meeting. Council members agree that the idea of providing more in-depth disciplinary knowledge to teachers is very desirable, and the MA in History Education could serve as a model for other programs. There was some confusion among council members about whether students are receiving two degrees, one from education and one from history, or just one degree. If only one degree is awarded, council members asked for clarification regarding where the degree will be awarded from. Council members also questioned the difference in the number of credits taken for the Education portion of this new degree and those needed to earn the MAT degree.

After discussion, the program was approved unanimously with the understanding that questions raised during Council's discussion will be addressed through Dr. Beeson prior to final approval of the program.

III. **Presentation by the Office of International Services** (David Clubb, George Kacenga, Charles Nieman)

David Clubb, Director of the Office of International Services, provided several handouts to council members, including an Open Doors report which provided data on international enrollments in the United States. 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.

Approximately 94% of the University's international students are graduate students. OIS provides transcript evaluation services to departments and schools admitting international students. Once a department or schools reviews their applicants and determines which ones appear to be admissible, they should send the students' files to OIS for final verification of the student's academic credentials. The deadlines for providing information to OIS for evaluation are June 1 for fall term admission, October 1 for the spring term, and March 1 for the summer term. Information can be submitted after these deadlines, but if there are complications with a student's paperwork, they may not be able to enter by the beginning of the next term. Programs should contact OIS if they want to submit a student's paperwork after a deadline.

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 deadlines and information.

Council members asked if OIS could provide the following:

- An equivalency table for degrees from foreign institutions;
- A memo sent to all schools at the beginning of August, providing information about what steps are required for new international students, dates of student orientations, and the content provided to students at OIS orientation;
- An orientation session for University staff members who work with international students.

OIS will provide Council with additional information about these items as they are developed.

IV. **Other Business**

A. Announcements

1. Nominations for the Provost's Award for Excellence in Mentoring are due on December 15th. Council members asked if the Provost's Office could provide a letter to all of those who are nominated, copied to their Deans, praising their accomplishments in mentoring.
2. A workshop on recruiting graduate students will be held on January 11, 2007 for anyone interested on campus. Those interested in attending must respond by December 15th.

B. Childbirth policies for graduate student researchers

The University currently does not have a policy on delaying the statute of limitations for students to complete a degree in the instance of childbirth. The student affairs subcommittee will look into this issue during 2007 and make a recommendation for a University-wide policy.

C. Update on assessment at the University of Pittsburgh

During the fall semester, Council of Deans approved a standard set of procedures for documenting assessment in all programs at the University. These procedures will be discussed in further detail at the next meeting of UCGS.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m. The next meeting of Council will take place on January 9, 2007.