University Council on Graduate Study
February 13, 2007
Minutes
3:00-5:00 p.m.
817 CL

Attending: Patricia Beeson (Chair), Pat Card (A&S), Nicole Constable (A&S), Judith Erlen (Nursing), Eleanor Feingold (GSPH), Robert Gibbs (PHARM), Amanda Godley (Education), Barbara Repasi Heron (Registrar), John Hillier (A&S), John Horn (SOM), Gary Koeske (SSW), Malcolm McNeil (SHRS), Jay Rajgopal (SOE), Mark Roberts (SOM), Anne Robertson (SOE), Martin Staniland (GSPIA), Martin Weiss (SIS), Michele Colvard (Provost’s Office)

Guest(s): Helen Burns (Nursing), Elizabeth Schlenk (Nursing)

I. Approval of Minutes
The minutes of the December 12, 2006 meeting were approved unanimously.

II. Program Proposal: Certificate in Clinical Research (School of Nursing)
The Certificate in Clinical 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.

Elizabeth Schlenk and Helen Burns from the School of Nursing presented a brief overview of the proposed program and then answered questions from UCGS members.

A Council member asked if any hands-on training outside of the classroom was built into the proposal. A practicum can be done as part of the electives in the curriculum.

Council members asked about the admission criteria. Specifically, they suggested that a more precise definition of a “satisfactory” resume or CV may be helpful for potential applicants. It was determined that the admissions requirements for the certificate are the same as those for the MSN degree, so Council suggested copying the wording used for the master’s degree and using it for the certificate.

Council members asked why the title does not include the word “nursing.” The School of Nursing would like to maintain the option of broadening the audience for the certificate in the future, so they decided not to include the word nursing. A follow-up question asked if students without a BSN degree would be able to complete the curriculum as proposed. The answer was yes.
A Council member asked what else someone could do with a certificate other than serve as a clinical coordinator. Those who complete the certificate will be able to do continuous quality improvement and evidence-based practice projects, and the program will give students the skills to thoroughly search the literature for projects.

Elizabeth Schlenk and Helen Burns were excused. During the following discussion, Council members noted that the University already offers a Certificate in Clinical Research through the Clinical Research Training Program. It was recommended that the School of Nursing change the certificate’s name to lessen confusion, and it was also recommended that the school provide a clear statement of how the new certificate differs from the one offered by the Clinical Research Training Program. Council members also questioned why only two students per year are projected for the program. They asked if the need could potentially be met with other programs since the projected demand is so small.

After discussion, a vote on the program was tabled until further information can be obtained to answer the questions raised by Council.

III. Subcommitteee Reports
Graduate Student Affairs (Judy Erlen)
The Graduate Student Affairs subcommittee has been researching policies on childbirth accommodations, and the subcommittee has decided to recommend that a policy be established at the University of Pittsburgh. The committee has collected information from graduate students and the Deans of graduate schools as well as reviewed policies from other schools. They are currently working on basic guidelines as part of their recommendation for a policy.

Graduate Procedures (Eleanor Feingold)
The Graduate Procedures subcommittee is working to update the Regulations Governing Graduate Study. There are a number of minor issues to be changed, such as changing QPA to GPA, as well as more major additions, such as information on electronic theses and dissertations. The subcommittee will bring some issues forward to UCGS, such as changes made to guidelines on professional doctorates.

IV. Other Business
A. Recruiting Workshop
Council discussed the graduate student recruiting workshop offered to all schools in January. Most people felt the workshop was worthwhile and offered many useful tips, but it could have been done in a shorter time period. A number of programs would like to follow up to get more specific advice for their programs. It was suggested that we create a handout of the most useful tips from the workshop for programs to share.

One suggestion made during the workshop was to purchase lists of student names, specifically from the GRE, to increase a program’s prospect pool. Council members asked if it is possible to purchase the GRE list centrally so it could be shared by all programs. Council members also asked what happens to a student’s information if s/he indicates on the GRE that they would like to have their information sent to Pitt. The Provost’s Office will look into this.
When asked about other workshops, Council members suggested that something on recruiting minorities would be helpful. They also suggested structuring a workshop to have a half-day open presentation, then individual sessions where the presenter would work with each school.

B. Foreign Educational Credentials Workshop
The Office of International Services is considering offering a workshop on foreign educational credentials analysis. Council members agreed that there would be interest in this type of workshop, but they would like additional details such as the length of the workshop.

C. Proposed policy on Study and Research in Countries Under State Department Warning
Council members discussed a recent policy change restricting student 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 of 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.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m. The next meeting of Council will take place on March 13, 2007.