

## University Council on Graduate Study

May 16, 2006

Minutes

3:00-5:00 p.m.

817 CL

**Attending:** Patricia Beeson (Chair), Carolyn Ban (GSPIA), Troy Boone (A&S), Jeff Brodsky (A&S), Patrick Card (A&S), Nicole Constable (A&S), Judith Erlen (NUR), Eleanor Feingold (GSPH), Robert Gibbs (PHARM), Christin Glorioso (GPSA), John Hillier (A&S), John Horn (SOM), Gary Koeske (SW), Margaret Mahoney (LAW), Mark Roberts (SOM), Anne Robertson (SOE), Barbara Repasi Heron (Registrar), Michele Colvard (Provost's Office)

**Guests:** Rafael Engel (SW), Robin Grubs (GSPH), Ken Jaros (GSPH), Nina Markovic (GSPH), Anthony Silvestre (GSPH), Ronald Stall (GSPH), Martin Staniland (GSPIA), Stephen Thomas (Center for Minority Health), Sandra Wexler (SW)

### I. **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the February 14, 2006 meeting were approved as written.

### II. **Announcements**

Dr. Beeson announced the winners of the first Provost's Award for Excellence in Mentoring: Celia Brownell, Kathryn Linduff, Esther Sales, and Alan Sved. The winners were chosen from approximately 70 nominations. Those who were nominated in 2006 have been given the option to keep their applications active for the 2007 award process.

Dr. Beeson briefly discussed the NRC Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs. Data collection will occur during the second half of 2006. A website is being developed to provide information about the NRC assessment at the University of Pittsburgh. It will be rolled out within the next month.

### III. **GSPIA proposal to establish a Major in Human Security for the MPIA and MID degrees**

The purpose of this new major is to expand the opportunities for MPIA and MID students to study issues such as peacekeeping, state-failure and nation-building, human rights, governance and the rule of law, economic security, humanitarian action, the protection of refugees, and peace-building in war-torn societies. Studies of human security are typically concerned with threats that do not involve military action, such as abuse of human rights, global epidemics, forced labor, and malnutrition. They may also include threats arising from civil war or genocide. Students who complete the Human Security major will be uniquely prepared to play a role in policy development to address these threats. Carolyn Ban and Martin Staniland attended the meeting to answer questions concerning the proposal.

Council members questioned the resources available for this program, with a stated expectation of 25 students in the major and the addition of one new faculty member. Dr. Staniland explained that the major will draw some new students to GSPIA, but many who initially enter the major will transfer from other majors in the school.

The council discussed the basic credit requirements for the major depending on the student's degree program (MPIA or MID). Council members requested that the proposal clarify the number of credits required for the major depending on the student's degree program.

Dr. Staniland was excused. After further discussion, there was a motion made to approve the proposal. The motion was seconded. Council voted unanimously to approve the Major in Human Security.

#### IV. **GSPH proposals for five new programs**

GSPH submitted proposals for five new programs to be reviewed and approved by UCGS. Prior to discussion of the proposals, Dr. Eleanor Feingold presented a rationale for the expansion of programs and certificates in the school. Dr. Feingold explained that the new programs responded to changes in the field of public health and national calls for schools to address specific content areas.

Council heard all five of the proposals, then voted on them following presentation of all proposals. For organizational purposes, the results of Council's votes are presented after discussion of each program below.

##### **GSPH proposal to establish a Dual Degree program in Public Health Genetics (MPH) and Genetic Counseling (MS)**

The purpose of this dual degree program is to prepare students to combine clinical and public health skills to work in such areas as program development, evaluation, and policy. The MS in genetic counseling is a clinical practice degree in which students are trained to be practicing genetic counselors. The MPH in public health genetics provides students with the basic science of genetics but emphasizes public health training. The dual degree program will train students to integrate science and policy knowledge to better prepare them for positions in fields such as health care, health policy, and insurance. In addition to Eleanor Feingold, Robin Grubs attended the meeting to answer questions about the proposal.

Members of Council inquired about whether there are similar programs at other institutions. Dr. Grubs replied that some have certificate programs, but no others offer the dual degree program.

A question was raised about the amount of overlap between the two programs. Dr. Feingold said the overlap was 18 credits.

Council suggested that the GSPH may wish to extend the statute of limitations on time to degree for students in the program. GSPH can send an amendment to the proposal if they decide to do so.

Following the presentation of all GSPH proposals, there was a motion made to approve the proposal. The motion was seconded. Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the Dual Degree program in Public Health Genetics (MPH) and Genetic Counseling (MS).

#### V. **GSPH proposal to establish a Certificate in Public Health Genetics**

The purpose of this program is to give public health professionals the core genetics competencies that they need to integrate genetics into any public health discipline. Genetic

information is playing a rapidly-increasing role in both the promotion of health and the treatment of disease, and advances in genetics are occurring at a rapid pace. This certificate will make GSPH students more attractive to public and private sector employers and more competitive in the public health job market by training them to incorporate knowledge of how genes, together with the environment and behavior, influence health. In addition to Eleanor Feingold, Robin Grubs attended the meeting to answer questions about the proposal.

Council asked if this certificate would be of interest to students in other fields. Dr. Feingold responded that it would, but admission to the certificate program requires basic public health knowledge or experience.

It was noted that there is significant overlap between the certificate and the MPH degree. Dr. Feingold explained that the number of credits a student must take beyond their degree program in order to complete the certificate depends on the specific degree program. The certificate is structured to require students to complete some work beyond the requirements of the degree program.

Dr. Feingold was asked if adequate funding is available for the program. She responded that initially there will be adequate funding, but future growth of the program may require a review of resources.

Following the presentation of all GSPH proposals, there was a motion made to approve the proposal. The motion was seconded. Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the Certificate in Public Health Genetics.

#### **VI. GSPH proposal to establish a Certificate in Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Practice**

The purpose of this certificate is to provide students with a foundation for eliminating disparities through conducting research in the area of minority health and 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. Stephen Thomas attended the meeting to answer questions about the proposal.

Council members discussed a number of confusing aspects of the proposal. In particular, Council members felt the research portion of the proposal was not clearly defined for different types of students.

Council asked that the proposal address recruiting students outside of GSPH and making connections to other programs and schools, such as the School of Medicine.

Council members asked that the proposal be clarified to state that the certificate is not a research program. They recommended that the name of the certificate be changed to Certificate in Minority Health and Health Disparities.

Council asked that Dr. Beeson request a response to the concerns stated above. A vote on the

proposal was postponed pending that response.

**VII. GSPH proposal to establish a Certificate in LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Health and Wellness**

The mission of the LGBT Public Health and Wellness Certificate is to offer a public health perspective on social, cultural and individual factors that influence the health and well-being of LGBT communities and to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the special public health challenges of LGBT populations. LGBT populations face many adverse health disparities, as compared to the populations from which they are drawn, across many different infectious and non-infectious diseases. This training certificate will help give GSPH students the tools that they need to address these health disparities. Nina Markovic, Anthony Silvestre, and Ronald Stall attended the meeting to answer questions about the proposal.

Council members asked for clarification on the type of certificate being offered and the admissions requirements. Dr. Markovic responded that the certificate is both a post-baccalaureate and a graduate certificate. For students taking the certificate as a post-baccalaureate program, admission requirements are the same as the basic requirements for admission to programs in GSPH.

Council members asked if a research project is required for all students taking the certificate. Dr. Markovic responded that all students must do a research project. She said that some students who are also enrolled in degree programs may choose to do their thesis on a topic drawn from the certificate curriculum.

Council members suggested that this certificate may be of significant interest to students outside of GSPH, including those in the School of Medicine.

Following the presentation of all GSPH proposals, there was a motion made to approve the proposal. The motion was seconded. Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the Certificate in LGBT Health and Wellness.

**VIII. GSPH and the School of Social Work proposal to establish a joint MPH-MSW degree program**

The purpose of this joint degree is to prepare students in both social work and public health to more accurately intervene in the complex social problems affecting the health and social functioning of all populations. Many practitioners in public health settings are facing major changes and considerable unpredictability in their practice settings. The changes include changes in the health and social service delivery systems, shifting responsibilities, and movement from direct to indirect services. This program will better prepare students to navigate these changes, and it will prepare them for leadership roles in public health, social welfare, and other related organizations and systems. Ken Jaros, Sandra Wexler, and Rafael Engel attended the meeting to answer questions about the proposal.

Council members asked why students do not have to be admitted to both programs at the same time. Dr. Jaros explained that this will allow students to enter one program and decide after entry that they would like to also complete the other program.

Council members asked if students will have advisors in both schools. Dr. Wexler responded that they would.

Council members asked what the advantage would be for students to take the degrees as a joint program. Dr. Jaros explained that there are fewer courses required for the joint program than if a student would take the programs separately. Council members requested that in the future, proposals for joint and dual degrees explicitly state the overlap between the degrees and the benefits for completing them as a joint or dual degree.

There was some discussion of the financial arrangements for the joint program, including where the tuition will be paid in different semesters and how that would be enforced. Dr. Beeson will ask for clarification on this issue.

Council members asked that the proposal refer consistently to the program as a joint degree program. The document currently refers to the program as both a joint program and dual degree program.

Council suggested that the GSPH may wish to extend the statute of limitations on time to degree for students in the program. GSPH can send an amendment to the proposal if they decide to do so.

Following the presentation of all GSPH proposals, there was a motion made to approve the proposal. The motion was seconded. Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the joint MPH-MSW degree program.

## **IX. Discussion**

Council members requested that future proposals provide more consistent information about the programs being proposed. In particular, Council asked that proposal clearly define how existing programs will be impacted by the creation of new programs. Council members also requested that all joint and dual degree proposals explicitly state the overlap between the degrees and the benefits for completing them as a joint or dual degree. Dr. Beeson will review the current requirements for proposals and bring suggested additions to the Procedures Committee in the fall.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of Council will take place in Fall 2006.