

University Council on Graduate Study
September 12, 2006
Minutes
3:00-5:00 p.m.
817 CL

Attending: Patricia Beeson (Chair), Nicole Constable (A&S), Sam Conte (Registrar), Judith Erlen (NUR), Eleanor Feingold (GSPH), Robert Gibbs (PHARM), Christin Glorioso (GPSA), Janelle Greenberg (A&S), John Hillier (A&S), John Horn (SOM), Margaret Mahoney (LAW), Malcolm McNeil (SHRS), Bob Parker (SOE), Lou Pingel (Education), John Prescott (KGSB), Mae Smethurst (A&S), Martin Staniland (GSPIA), Stephen Weber (A&S), Michele Colvard (Provost's Office)

Guest(s): Robert Goodman (GSPH)

I. Introductions

Vice Provost Beeson asked each Council member to introduce himself or herself.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 16, 2006 meeting were approved as written.

III. Approval of 2005-2006 UCGS Annual Report

The 2005-2006 Annual Report was approved as written. It will be posted to the UCGS website and available to the community.

IV. Announcements

A. Update on the National Research Council Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs

Vice Provost Beeson provided an update on the NRC's national assessment of research doctorate programs. After several years of discussion, the NRC has begun data collection for the assessment. Programs participating in the study have begun collecting data on program, faculty, and student characteristics. Data collection will continue through the fall semester and possibly into the spring. The study will result in a published, online database of program characteristics and rankings available for students and others to review and compare programs.

B. Graduate Student Recruiting and Financial Aid Workshops

Vice Provost Beeson asked the Council if members would be interested in a campus-wide workshop on graduate student recruiting. A sample workshop agenda from a national consulting firm, the Graduate and Professional School Enrollment Management Corporation, was provided to Council members. Stephen Weber noted that Chemistry worked with this consulting firm several years ago and found that they provided concrete suggestions for improving recruiting. Bob Parker suggested that the workshops be grouped by school interests to help tailor the content. Members suggested that the Provost's Office seek additional, outside references for the firm prior to scheduling a workshop on campus.

Council members also discussed the need for additional information on international recruiting. The Provost's Office will contact David Clubb from the Office of International Services to

discuss international recruiting and other issues at the next UCGS meeting.

Council members noted that a common resource for recruiting graduate students to the city of Pittsburgh would be helpful. Vice Provost Beeson informed Council that a centralized website is in development.

Vice Provost Beeson also informed Council that she would like to hold a workshop for Deans on the strategic use of financial aid in graduate student recruiting.

C. Student Self-Registration in PeopleSoft

Vice Provost Beeson informed the Council that the new PeopleSoft system will allow student self-registration. She asked members to discuss this with their programs/schools and inform the Registrar if they want to allow this option. Some members expressed concern that allowing self-registration would lead to students not discussing their plans with their advisors. Same Conte informed the group that the system has the capability of allowing advisors to manually enable a student's ability to self-register after talking with the advisor.

Within this discussion, some Council members noted that the add/drop date for graduate students is problematic because it is so early. They asked if it could be separated from the undergraduate add/drop date. This issue will be discussed further at a future meeting.

D. Update on Changes to the GRE

Michele Colvard provided an overview of the changes that will be made to the GRE beginning with the Fall 2007 administration. The primary changes will consist of the following:

- Verbal Section: Less reliance on vocabulary; more text-based materials such as reading passages; more emphasis on complex reasoning skills.
- Quantitative Section: Smaller proportion of geometry and "pure" items; larger proportion of data and "real-life" items; some questions will be fill-in-the-blank instead of multiple choice; students will be able to use an on-screen calculator.
- Essays from the Analytical Writing section will be available electronically to designated score recipients.
- New security measures will be put in place, including changing the test to a linear test where questions will only be used once and limiting the dates/times of administration to 29 fixed administrations each year.
- The time of the test will increase to just under 4 hours from the previous time of 2.5 hours.
- The score scale for the verbal and quantitative sections will change to between 100 and 200 in 1-point increments.

V. Proposal for Consideration

A. 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. Robert Goodman attended the meeting to answer questions about the proposal.

After initially considering the proposal at its May 16, 2006 meeting, Council members asked that the proposal be revised to address the following issues:

- the research portion of the proposal should be clearly defined for different types of students;
- the proposal should address recruiting students outside of GSPH and making connections to other programs and schools, such as the School of Medicine;
- the proposal should state that the certificate is not a research program.

Council members agreed that these concerns were addressed and voted unanimously to approve the proposal.

B. GSPH proposal to establish a Certificate in Evaluation of Public Health Promotion and Health Education Programs

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. Robert Goodman attended the meeting to answer questions about the proposal.

In his introduction of the program, Dr. Goodman noted that there are federal requirements to evaluate programs, and this certificate will train students for a variety of jobs that are available in the marketplace.

A Council member asked how the internship portion of the program would be administered. Dr. Goodman noted that there is a staff member currently serving as practicum advisor who will also administer the internships for this certificate. The Department has many established relationships with local community organizations which will be used to provide internships to students. Students will be assigned a faculty mentor to oversee the internship, and they will be required to attend regular group meetings to discuss progress in the internship.

A Council member asked how the program would be evaluated. Dr. Goodman responded that students will be required to develop a portfolio which demonstrates proficiency in the expected outcomes of the program.

Some Council members expressed concern that the stated objectives of the program were too ambitious to be completed in a certificate program. Dr. Goodman noted that the objectives are taken from the Association of Schools of Public Health.

Dr. Goodman was dismissed and Council members continued discussion of the proposal. They asked that the proposal be revised to include the following:

- A specific description of the competencies expected of students who complete the certificate program. In particular, Council members would like the proposal to include a description of what students will be able to do and what jobs they will be able to enter.
- A brief description of the student portfolios that will be used to assess the program.

Council voted unanimously to approve the proposal with the provision that a revised proposal addressing the above concerns is submitted to Vice Provost Beeson.

C. GSPH proposal to establish a Certificate in Recruitment/Retention in Public Health Research and Service Programs

Discussion of this proposal was postponed until the next meeting of UCGS because the person initiating the proposal was unable to attend the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. The next meeting of Council will take place on October 10, 2006.