University Council on Graduate Study  
February 15, 2011  
Minutes  
3:00-5:00 p.m.  
817 CL

Attending:  Catherine Bender (Nursing), Kay Brummond (A&S), Stephen Carr (A&S), Yanan Chen (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly), Nicole Constable (A&S), Sudipta (Nila) Devanath (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly), William Dunn (Public and International Affairs), Lucy Fischer (A&S), Eleanor Feingold (Public Health), Maggie Folan (Pharmacy), Ellice Forman (Education), Paula Grabowski (Interdisciplinary), Henry Goodelman (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly), John Horn (Medicine), Daniel Jimenez (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly), Margaret Mahoney (Law), Robert Parker (Engineering), Anthony Petrosky (Education), Jayant Rajgopal (Engineering), Joan Rogers (Health Rehabilitation), Alberta Sbragia (Provost’s Office and A&S, Chair), Stephanie Hoogendoorn (Provost’s Office)

Introductions
Alberta Sbragia welcomed the new members and asked each Council member to introduce himself or herself.

Approval of the Minutes
The minutes of the May 18, 2010 meeting were approved as written.

2009-2010 Annual Report of UCGS
The 2009-2010 Annual Report will be posted to the UCGS Web site at the following url:  
http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/reports.html.

Program Proposal: Ph.D. in Film Studies with six areas of concentration from the School of Arts and Sciences. The proposal was tabled.

Two Proposals to Terminate Graduate Programs in the School of Education
The School of Education has not offered these programs for some time and does not plan to offer them again in the future. Council voted anonymously in favor of terminating the following degree programs from the School of Education:

- Doctor of Psychology (PSYD) degree type: within this program there is one major and ten areas of concentration;
- Health Physical/Recreational Education major leading to the Master of Arts in Teaching: within this program there are four areas of concentration;
- Instruction and Learning major leading to the Master of Science: within this program there are 25 areas of concentration; and
- Instruction and Learning major leading to the Master of Arts: within this program there are 30 areas of concentration.
Announcements
In fall 2010, the Council of Deans approved the Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Guidelines which were drafted and recommended by Council. There is one substantive change to the guidelines. It is the length of the accommodation for mothers who give birth and who hold eligible student appointments. The guidelines state that: “Eligible graduate students with TA, TF, GSA and GSR appointments who experience the health consequences of pregnancy will be excused from their regular duties for a period of time to be determined by a health care provider not to exceed the student’s appointment period.” In the version recommended by Council, the length of the accommodation in this case was six weeks.

Also the guidelines mention a “Request for Graduate Student Parental Accommodation.” The Office of the Provost will provide a draft form that schools can modify. There is no University-wide approval process. The intent is that this form documents good communication between the student, advisor, principal investigator, graduate chair, and any other relevant stakeholders in the school.

In 2010-2011, the University started to provide graduate and professional students and their eligible family members with the opportunity to purchase group medical, dental and vision insurance if they do not receive this option as part of an academic appointment or fellowship. Students are responsible for the full cost of the insurance premiums. There are three levels of coverage plans that are available for purchase. The Benefits Office has some suggested language that they encourage schools to use in their admissions letters to let students know about these options. A council member commented that this benefit could help recruitment and asked if Benefits could provide a summary of available plans.

Graduate Procedures Subcommittee chaired by Robert Parker
Members of this subcommittee will be asked to consider the following issues and make any recommendations as needed:
- Review the credit sharing policies as stated in Regulations Governing Graduate Study
- Review how to evaluate three-year Bachelor’s and two-year Master’s combined degrees from abroad, including eligible transfer credit
- Any recommendations from last year that need to be finalized

Graduate Student Affairs Subcommittee chair TBD
Members of this subcommittee will be asked to consider the following issues and make any recommendations as needed:
- How to increase our student’s success in obtaining national fellowships and awards
- How to increase the visibility of the awards that our students receive

Members are asked to sign-up to serve on either the Graduate Student Affairs and Graduate Procedures subcommittee.

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GPSA) Activities
The GPSA 2009-2010 annual report of activities was circulated by past-President Daniel Jimenez. The report is available online at [http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/reports.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/reports.html). One highlight is a summary of their travel grant program that provides funding to graduate students who travel to attend or present at academic conferences. In 2009-2010, GPSA distributed 410 awards which are typically in the amount of $100 or $200.

Sudipta (Nila) Devanath, the current President, presented an overview of their 2010-2011 activities, many of which focus on civic engagement. For example, the GPSA, the Pittsburgh Student Government Council, and the Pittsburgh City Council worked together to designate September as Student Civic Engagement Month in the city of Pittsburgh. During the fall, GPSA and Pitt’s Student (Undergraduate) Government Board registered approximately 2,700 student voters this year. It was estimated that about half of those newly registered students voted. This is the largest Pitt student voter turnout for a midterm election in recent years. GPSA is continuing its successful speaker series initiated last year called “Politics and Pancakes.” This program provides students the opportunity to meet and ask questions of prominent policy makers. GPSA is organizing a trip to Harrisburg on March 22, 2011 to lobby for support for increased state funding to the Port Authority of Allegheny County. Students will meet with their representatives to share how the Port Authority bus cutbacks are affecting students’ lives.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.