University Council on Graduate Study  
May 17, 2011  
Minutes  
3:00-4:30 p.m.  
817 CL

Attending: Catherine Bender (Nursing), Kay Brummond (A&S), Yanan Chen (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly), Nicole Constable (A&S), Sudipta (Nila) Devanath (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly), Lucy Fischer (A&S), Maggie Folan (Pharmacy), Ellice Forman (Education), Paula Grabowski (Interdisciplinary), Henry Goodelman (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly), Michael Lin (Public Health), John Horn (Medicine), Margaret Mahoney (Law), Richard Oravtez (Graduate and Professional Student Assembly), Anthony Petrosky (Education), Jayant Rajgopal (Engineering), Joan Rogers (Health Rehabilitation), Alberta Sbragia (Provost’s Office and A&S, Chair), Heiko Spallek (Dental), Martin Weiss (Information Sciences), Stephanie Hoogendoorn (Provost’s Office), Patricia Mathay (Registrar’s Office)

Guest: Sheila Conway (Education)

Approval of the Minutes  
The minutes of the April 19, 2011 meeting were approved as written.

Program Proposal: Certificate of Advanced Study in Teaching with an area of concentration in Special Education Teacher Preparation Pre K-8 submitted by the School of Education.  
The proposed postbaccalaureate certificate program is designed to respond to changes in State requirements for teacher certification. It is intended to replace the existing certificate program in Education of Students with Mental and Physical Disabilities which will be terminated by the School. No new courses are required to offer the new program.

The presenters explained that effective January 2013, the Special Education Instruction State Certification will only be granted to individuals who have a prior instructional certificate. The skills and knowledge of the existing certificate program are still valid; however, the students entering the new course of study will now have previous coursework in curriculum and teaching, and student teaching experience.

Council briefly discussed the proposed program. A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed Postbaccalaureate Certificate program, subject to the submission of a statement that addresses how technology is embedded in existing coursework, since the one credit course Computer Applications in Education is being eliminated. All voted in favor of the motion.

Announcements
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships
Pitt students received nine fellowship awards from the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Of these, four are Pitt graduating undergraduates who will pursue their graduate studies elsewhere and five are students who are pursuing graduate studies at Pitt. The programs of current graduate students include Bioengineering (two students), Biological Sciences, Molecular Biophysics and Structural Biology, and Psychology.

The Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS) Foundation is a national organization dedicated to enhancing America’s national and local capacity for research and innovation in science and technology. They provide financial support to outstanding American scholars in the sciences in support of their mission to increase the number of outstanding American scholars pursuing advanced scientific study and research. Pitt students received four awards: two students in Bioengineering and two in the graduate programs in the School of Medicine.

The Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst/German Academic Exchange Service has awarded five Pitt students the DAAD Graduate Scholarship for Study and/or Research. The DAAD is the German national agency for the support of international academic cooperation that represents the German higher-education system abroad. The service promotes Germany as an academic and research destination and helps build ties between institutions around the world. The programs of current graduate students include Computational Biology, Computational Neuroscience, German, Philosophy, and Psychology.

Nicole Constable provided an overview of recent School of Arts and Sciences programs:

The Hot Metal Bridge Program (HMB) was initiated for the fall 2010 term and was designed to find students to help the diversity goals of A&S who might not have the necessary record to get admitted to graduate school. This year the HMB program admitted nine fellows, all of whom have been successful. Each fellow had a department mentor. For specific program information, see http://www.as.pitt.edu/graduate/diversity/hotmetal.php.

The inaugural Postdoctoral Fellowship Program brought in eleven postdoctoral fellowships this year in the humanities and social sciences. They have formed a strong cohort who is mentoring graduate students, attending early career workshops, and participating in a writing group. For specific program information, see http://www.as.pitt.edu/postdoc.

The Dissertation Boot Camp was first held this May and provided a week of intensive writing designed especially for doctoral students in the process of writing their dissertations. For specific program information, see http://www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter/dissbootcamp.html. The workshop accommodated 20 students and had a wait list of students. For reference information about starting a dissertation boot camp, see the starter kit titled “Starting an Effective Dissertation Writing Group” from the Hume Writing Center Graduate Student Workshop at Stanford University at
Arts and Sciences participated in the application review process for the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) New Faculty Fellow post-doc fellows. The New Faculty Fellows program was created in response to the increasingly jobless market that confronts recent Ph.D.s in the humanities. It funds two-year positions at universities and colleges nationwide where their particular research and teaching expertise augment departmental offerings. A recent Pitt doctoral graduate from Film Studies received an ACLS post-doc fellowship at Emory University in Atlanta. A recent CMU doctoral graduate received an ACLS post-doc fellowship at Pitt in our Women’s Studies and History department.

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GPSA)
The GPSA outgoing president, Nila Devanath, presented an overview of their activities during 2010-2011. GPSA has developed effective programs to foster civic engagement in Pitt students. Their accomplishments in this area include:

- helping to create and establish the annual Student Civic Engagement Campaign, a campaign aimed at increased civic participation of Pitt students and increased student voter turnout;
- organizing the student voter turnout initiative which brought out the highest number of Pitt student voters in a non-presidential election year, with over 2000 students registered and over half of them voting on election day;
- leading the formal establishment and then assuming leadership of the Pittsburgh Student Government Council, a city-wide student organization composed of the student leaders from major Pittsburgh-based institutions of higher education, with the signing of their constitution and recognition by City Council; and
- continuing the Pancakes and Politics series which has brought prominent politicians to Pitt to interact directly with students.

GPSA has continued to provide the majority of their student activity funding to the academic benefit of students. In fact, 42% of the GPSA budget is allocated to funding Travel Awards and Grants to students presenting their work at academic conferences. In the 2010 to 2011 year, over 400 students received awards in the amount of either $100 or $200. In order to find new sources of funding for the Travel Awards and Grants program, GPSA would like to establish an endowment fund. GPSA is also seeking a mechanism to communicate with all graduate and professional students. For more information about the GPSA, see their web site at http://www.gpsa.pitt.edu.

Dr. Sbragia thanked the outgoing GPSA board for their dedicated service.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held on June 14, 2011.