MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
Friday, October 13 – 3:00 PM
Robert Scott Small – Room 235

Chair – Brian McGee, Dean of the Graduate School

Members and Guests Present: Paul Anderson (CSCI), Mary Bergstrom (RO), Divya Bhati (OIEP), Vince Benigni (COMM/HSS), Annalisa Calini (MATH), Karen Chandler (ARTM), Lynn Cherry (AA), Angela Cozart (MAT), Franklin Czwazka (RO), Julie Dahl (RO), Mike Duvall (ENGL), Martin Jones (MATH), Phil Jos (MPA), Bret Lott (MFA), Jerry Mackeldon (RO), Aspen Olmsted (CSIS), John Peters (SMFT), Craig Plante (MBIO), Silvia Rodriguez Sabater (LALE), Alan Shao (MBA), Susan Simonian (MSCL), Allan Strand (BIOL/SSM), Laura Turner (EDPA), Sebastian van Delden (CSCI)

GSO Staff Present: Jon Hakkila (Associate Dean), Michelle McGrew (Student Services Coordinator), Robyn Olejniczak (Student Records)

I. Welcome – the meeting was called to order at 3:03pm

II. Approval of the Minutes, September 22, 2017 Meeting – unanimous approval

III. New Business

A. Fall 2017 enrollments
   i. Brian McGee (GSO/AA) reminded the group that this was unofficial data provided by the Office of Institutional Research. Official fall enrollments will be presented at the November meeting.

B. Curriculum – New program proposal: M.S. in Data Science and Analytics
   i. Paul Anderson (CSCI) presented the proposal – he said it has been in development for over a year in consultation with other academic departments on campus. The program intends to target traditional and non-traditional students from a variety of disciplines. It is the first data science program in the state and would modernize the College’s graduate offerings.

   In response to a question from the Graduate Education Committee meeting, McGee (GSO/AA) noted that it may be possible for a data science student to enroll in a computer science course offered by The Citadel. This is not a joint program, however.

   Alan Shao (MBA) asked why this program is named data science and analytics, why not just data science, what is analytics in this context? Anderson (CSCI) responded that there is a difference of opinion in the discipline on this matter, but the terms are essentially interchangeable. Data science is more theory, while data analysis is more application. They wanted to communicate that a student could accomplish both with this program. Jon Hakkila (GSO) added that there are three prongs in the discipline: 1) computer science, 2) statistics, 3) application. Van Delden (CSCI) also added that the field is still relatively new and the terminology is evolving.

   Shao (MBA) asked what the market analysis showed as the demand for the program. Anderson (CSCI) said they conducted a survey among current College of
Charleston undergraduate data science majors. The survey showed an overwhelming support for the program. However, the department used much lower enrollment estimates in the proposal to be cautious.

Shao (MBA) then asked about the entrance test the program plans to utilize as an admissions requirement. Anderson (CSCI) responded that some applicants may have to fill in some knowledge gaps, but the test should not be an obstacle to admission.

McGee (GSO/AA) asked if the program plans to offer courses online. Anderson (CSCI) responded that the current proposal does not include online offerings; they believed the program would be best offered face-to-face. McGee (GSO/AA) noted the importance of future-proofing proposals in regards to the site location for course offerings and how we notify our regional accreditor.

Hakkila (GSO) asked if the program intends to start their program with summer courses. Anderson (CSCI) said yes and added that they are not planning to admit students until summer 2019.

Graduate Council unanimously approved the M.S. in Data Science and Analytics.

McGee (GSO/AA) noted that to have new programs included in the following year’s catalog, they need to complete the College of Charleston process by December in order to adhere to the CHE and SACSCOC spring meeting schedules.

C. Scholarships and Assistantships
i. McGee (GSO/AA) presented a hypothetical reallocation of assistantships based on enrollments. He noted this reallocation was based on a three-year average of enrollments for programs with that data and did not reduce or increase by more than 25% to any program’s current assistantship allotment. Marine Biology and Environmental Studies would be most affected by this method of reallocation.

Vince Benigni (COMM/HSS) said that the way to recruit the best students is to increase the earnings for an assistantship. McGee (GSO/AA) responded that the pay is actually comparable and/or higher than some of our peers, but that we are uncompetitive since we do not offer full tuition waivers. He added that he intends to submit a budget request to increase the assistantship earnings for the coming year.

Craig Plante (MBIO) said that any reduction to the assistantship allotment to the Marine Biology program would impact staffing in the Biology department.

Laura Turner (EDPA) said that she has no control over how her students are considered or awarded assistantships. That process is managed by the Teacher Education department so she has no recruiting power.

John Peters (SMFT) said that assistantships are not useful to his program’s population as most students work full-time. His program would benefit more from scholarships.
Annalisa Calini (MATH) said that if the assistantship earnings are going to be increased, then a reallocation is not necessarily required – the graduate dean should increase the assistantships in the programs with the least amount. But if there is going to be sustained growth and increased value, both the earnings and the allotment need to go up.

Alan Strand (BIOL/SSM) noted that the 25% rule does not make sense if the allocations were not rational in the first place. He asked if the next hypothetical reallocation should assume and include growth and new programs.

Hakkila (GSO) noted that the sample reallocation was not done in a perfect way – there are many caveats to the assistantship allotment that are difficult to consider when using a mathematical approach.

McGee (GSO/AA) responded that the entire approach to assistantships and recruitment needs to change. He also noted that new programs will have their budgets approved and implemented concurrently with the curriculum. The two processes should not be disjointed. The next step in this process is for the Graduate School to take individual meetings with programs to better understand their assistantship needs.

IV. Update from the Graduate Student Association – Timothy Buttram, President

Timothy Buttram was not in attendance.

V. Announcements, Updates, and Reminders

McGee (GSO/AA) informed the group that Academic Affairs is planning to initiate the search for the new graduate dean in January. More information should be available at the November meeting.

Jon Hakkila (GSO) thanked those who served on the assessment committee and noted that the assessments plans are much improved.

VI. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 4:29pm