MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING  
Friday, November 10 – 3:00 PM  
Robert Scott Small – Room 235

Chair – Brian McGee, Dean of the Graduate School

Members and Guests Present: Vince Benigni (COMM/HSS), Josh Bloodworth (OIEP), Roger Daniels (ACCY), Mike Duvall (ENGL), Martin Jones (MATH), Phil Jos (MPA), Shawn Morrison (LCWA), Nancy Muller (LGC), Bill Olejniczak (HIST), Aspen Olmsted (CSIS), John Peters (SMFT), Craig Plante (MBIO), Amanda Ruth-McSwain (MCOM), Alan Shao (MBA), Susan Simonian (MSCL), Allan Strand (BIOL/SSM), Ali Titus (MPA), Laura Turner (EDPA), Annette Watson (EVSS)

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

I. Welcome – the meeting was called to order at 3:02pm

II. Approval of the Minutes, October 13, 2017 Meeting – unanimous approval

III. New Business

A. Official Fall 2017 Enrollment Data
   i. Brian McGee (GSO/AA) presented official fall 2017 enrollment data provided by Institutional Research. He said programs with rapid decline in enrollments need to be analyzed to determine if they should be redesigned or closed. He noted that there is no magic enrollment number and some programs can be small without issue, but there is concern from the President and Board of Trustees. However, the marketing budget from the Marketing and Communication Division is inadequate.

   Bill Olejniczak (HIST) asked if the enrollment data included non-degree and joint students. McGee (GSO/AA) responded that they are not. The data also does not distinguish between part and full time students.

   Josh Bloodworth (OIEP) asked if there was data on cost per student or cost per program. McGee (GSO/AA) responded that this data is currently being collected and hopes it will be ready in early 2018. The last time the College conducted this kind of cost analysis was in 2010-2011. The College needs to consider program integrity and value – are certain programs providing a service to the state and worth running at a financial loss?

   Vince Benigni (COMM/HSS) offered that the Graduate School could benefit from having an Alumni Board or Council that could also serve as a recruiting tool. McGee (GSO/AA) responded that alumni bios should be on program websites, not the Graduate School website since prospective students are more likely to seek out that information from a program. McGee is considering this in the redevelopment of the staff vacancy in the Graduate School office. McGee also encouraged programs to consider developing their own tuition models.
Jon Hakkila (GSO) said that considering these kinds of changes - marketing approaches and programmatic updates – are what assessment can help programs do.

Mike Duvall (ENGL) asked how a program would know if they are in line with the mission of the College? McGee (GSO/AA) responded that a lot of programs contribute to the mission, but there needs to be a balance between maintaining quality and financial feasibility. The downward enrollment trends cannot be ignored.

B. Curriculum – Changes to the MED Languages program

i. Shawn Morrison (LCWA) presented the proposals on behalf of the program director for LALE.

   1. LALE 695 is a capstone course that is intended to guide students through their portfolio project development. Via assessment, the program faculty found that students were confused about the portfolio expectations so the course was developed to help navigate the student through the end of the program.

   2. LALE 698 is an independent study course specific to the LALE program. There is already an independent study course for education, but LALE students could also do independent study work in Spanish.

   3. LALE program change to add these two courses to the course offerings and requirements for the degree. These changes increase the degree hours from 36 to 37.

John Peters (SMFT) noted how impressed he was at the program’s use of assessment to make these changes.

McGee (GSO/AA) asked if the program intended to stay near the higher credit hour requirement. Morrison (LCWA) responded that the program could consider that, but the degree hours give credit for the work done by the students. McGee (GSO/AA) noted that the trend for master’s degrees hours is closer to 30 hours. Peters (SMFT) noted that in seeking out grants for his program, the feedback has been that students are interested in 14-month master’s degrees. The counterargument is that fewer degree hours is less tuition dollars for the institution. McGee (GSO/AA) added that students are very aware of cost so shorter degrees could increase recruitment.

Morrison (LCWA) added that these course additions will take the ESOL emphasis in the LALE program fully online. The Spanish emphasis is about 2/3 online. McGee (GSO/AA) said that there has not been a graduate program that has fully been offered through distance education (DE). He asked how this change would be communicated to prospective students. Morrison (LCWA) responded that the program has met with the Marketing and Communication Division, requested more marketing funds, enhanced their website, and conducted meetings with local teachers. McGee (GSO/AA) asked if the courses would be asynchronous and if the program faculty were DE trained. Morrison (LCWA) responded yes to both questions and added that more faculty are going through DE training. The intent is to have the program be online forever and to not change the modality from semester to semester. Nancy Muller (LGC) asked what instructional technology is
being used. Morrison (LCWA) responded that they will be using OAKS, voicethread, videos, discussion boards, chats, but every faculty will be doing this differently.

Amanda Ruth-McSwain (MCOM) asked if programs need to submit program change forms through the curriculum process if they intend to change the modality. McGee (GSO/AA) responded that this question has not been considered until recently and the answer depends on how substantial the changes are, but changes to modality should be flagged. The current curriculum rules do not explicitly say this, but the faculty should understand what they are voting on in Faculty Senate and Senate Committees. CHE and SACSCOC require notice of changes to modality. Bloodworth (OIEP) added that the institution is requesting that SACSCOC notice not be required every time there is a modality chance, but rather that that institution as a whole would receive permission to do so. Hakkila (GSO) asked what percentage of a program must be offered online for the whole program to be considered online. McGee (GSO/AA) responded that the threshold is usually 75%, but it can be more complicated if there are mixed modalities. There are different definitions for the College, CHE, and SACSCOC.

The proposals passed unanimously.

C. Scholarships and Assistantships
   i. McGee (GSO/AA) stated to the group that the next step in the redevelopment of the scholarship and assistantship models is to meet with programs that use Teaching Assistants so that more nuanced data can be prepared.

   Susan Simonian (MSCL) asked if the timeline for applying for graduate assistantships has changed. McGee (GSO/AA) responded that it has not and students do not need to be admitted in order to apply for scholarships and assistantships.

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

   Timothy Buttram was not in attendance. McGee (GSO/AA) reported that the GSA and Library are working towards designing a graduate-student only space.

V. Announcements, Updates, and Reminders

   Michelle McGrew (GSO) reminded the group about upcoming events: 3MT on 11/15/17, farewell drop-in for Cicely on 11/17/17, and the alumni reception on 11/17/17.

   Susan Hallatt (GSO) provided an update on the TargetX launch. The recruitment communication plan will launch on 1/18/18 and the admissions platform will launch in June 2018.

   Phil Jos (MPA) introduced Ali Titus are the new program coordinator for MPA.

   Simonian (MSCL) noted that the changes to the summer schedule put constraints on the Child Life program that are unmanageable since the program works closely with MUSC. She asked if it was possible to allow exceptions to the course schedule. McGee said they could discuss it.
Aspen Olmsted (CSIS) announced that he was submitting a grant to the NSF focused on cybersecurity. One of the aims of the grant is to encourage interdisciplinary work so other programs should contact him if they are interested.

Craig Plante (MBIO) inquired about the workflow for making changes to the catalog. He asked about the distinction between copy editing and making substantial changes.

VI. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 4:27pm