MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
Friday, February 22, 2019 – 3:00 PM
Robert Scott Small, Room 235

Chair – Godfrey Gibbison, Interim Dean of the Graduate School

Members and Guests Present: Seaton Brown (MBA), Annalisa Calini (MATH), Karen Chandler (ARTM), Jason Coy (HIST), Julie Dahl (RO), Roger Daniels (ACCY), Rachel Donaldson (HIST/HSS), Mike Duvall (ENGL), Christine Finnan (MTLA), Tracey Hunter-Doniger (EDEL), Martin Jones (MATH), Renée McCauley (CSIS), Michelle McGrew (Academic Affairs), Nancy Muller (LGC), Bob Perkins (TEDU/EHHP), John Peters (SMFT), Craig Plante (MBIO), Silvia Rodriguez Sabater (HISP/LCWA), Emily Rosko (MFA), Sandy Slater (HIST/CGE), Maura Burns for Susan Simonian (MSCL), Zach Stephens (GSA), Allan Strand (BIOL/SSM), Annette Watson (EVSS), Kelley White (EDEC)

GSO Staff Present: Laura Everett (Marketing), Susan Hallatt (Admissions), Jon Hakkila (Associate Dean), Robyn Olejniczak (Student Records)

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

II. Approval of the Minutes January 25, 2019 Meeting – unanimous approval

Godfrey Gibbison (GSO/SPS) introduced Laura Everett, the Graduate School’s new Director of Marketing and Recruitment.

III. New Business

A. Curriculum Proposals – Sandy Slater (HIST/CGE) presented the curriculum proposals.

   i. Computer and Information Sciences

   The proposals create a new course, CSIS 670 Developing Mobile Applications, and adds it to the program as an elective. CSIS 632 is being added as an elective option in the Computer Science specialization.

   The proposals passed unanimously.

   ii. Elementary Education

   The proposals update the admission and degree requirements. The field course, EDEE 590, is being removed from the degree requirements as it was determined to be unnecessary. The admissions changes now allow students to submit GRE or PRAXIS scores for consideration. The program now only accepts students in the summer term for the accelerated one year program.

   The proposals pass unanimously.

   iii. English to Speakers of Other Languages Certificate

   The proposal was pulled for further consideration by the department.

   iv. Languages
EDFS 674 is being added to the list of program electives.

The proposal passed unanimously.

v. Marine Biology

The first proposal adds the core courses as elective options. Students are required to take three of four courses, but if they take all four the fourth course needs to count towards the degree. The second proposal adds the independent study course as an option for the seminar requirement. The third proposal adds a note to the catalog encouraging students to take an organismal course even though it is not required. Slater (HIST/CGE) noted that this is breaking precedent to include an advising note in the catalog, which is reserved for policies, regulations, and degree requirements, and the exception will not be made for other programs. John Peters (SMFT) asked why this note needs to go in the catalog and not on the program website or advising materials; Roger Daniels (ACCY) asked if it could be included in the program description. Craig Plante (MBIO) responded that there is no guarantee it will be seen, and he does want to include this specific piece of information in a place that speaks to the whole program. Jason Coy (HIST) and Renée McCauley (CSIS) added that it is unfair to say other programs cannot make these kinds of changes or additions to their catalog areas, and the precedent is set even if it has been determined to not allow further exceptions. Allan Strand (BIOL/SSM) called to question, which was approved. Then the proposals were put to a vote.

The proposals passed unanimously.

IV. Graduate Education Week – March 12-13

Gibbison (GSO/SPS) announced that the Graduate School will host graduate education week in early March. Graduate education week is already designated by the state and the Graduate School will try to take advantage of that. The intent is to host two events per semester: an open house in the fall open to the community, and a graduate school fair in the spring open to College of Charleston undergraduates. For the upcoming event, the Graduate School will provide each program with a table on Cougar Mall, but programs should provide their own marketing materials and swag.

V. Letters of Recommendation – Susan Hallatt, Graduate School

Susan Hallatt (GSO) let everyone know that she is adding more training sessions for TargetX since program directors are likely to be using it more during the admissions cycle. She noted that each program has a report that shows how many completed applications are ready for review. Applicants with incomplete applications cannot be admitted and programs have the opportunity to update their admissions requirements. Mike Duvall (ENGL) asked if there was a report that can show what item is missing from an applicant’s file. Brown (MBA) noted that there is a report that shows the percentage complete, but not an itemization of what is missing.

She then asked program directors and their admission committees to consider the value of the current letter of recommendation. Brown (MBA) and Duvall (ENGL) responded that they find the letter redundant of the recommendation form. Emily Rosko (MFA) asked what are peer institution’s using. Coy (HIST) said he finds more value in the letter than the form. Stephens (GSA) noted that some schools provided guidance on what kinds of things a letter should address, but did not require
a form. Maura Burns (MSCL student) said that some schools provided the option of a letter or recommendation form. Gibbison (GSO/SPS) asked program directors what information they are using from the letter. Daniels (ACCY) added that he finds interacting with the student through an interview more useful than reading a recommendation letter. Peters (SMFT) noted that sometimes the bigger issue is a student using the wrong type of person to provide a recommendation. Hallatt (GSO) asked that programs start to think about this as she wants to update the recommendation process in the near future.

VI. Assistantships – Robyn Olejniczak, Graduate School

Robyn Olejniczak (GSO) announced increases in assistantship earnings effective fall 2019. The hourly pay rate for graduate assistantships will increase from $20.67/hour to $21/hour effective, which will increase the earnings for a full-time GA from $12,400 to $12,600. The earnings for teaching assistantships in the sciences will increase from $16,000 to $16,250. The MBA and Computer Science assistantships are exempted from this increase.

VII. Graduate Student Association – Zach Stephens, President

Zach Stephens (GSA) provided some information about the number of program organizations that are participating in the GSA – there are currently seven sub-organizations, but there are 20+ graduate programs. He asked program directors how they can work together to encourage programs without groups to establish them. Martin Jones (MATH) noted that his program struggles with continuity and maintaining momentum – how do other programs manage that? Stephens (GSA) said that programs need strong transition plans and the affirmation from their program directors that these organizations are useful. Seaton Brown (MBA) asked if the GSA has monthly events and what’s the best way to connect with the group. Stephens (GSA) responded that they have a facebook and cougar connect page, but they are finding that students are not connecting with facebook as much anymore. They are always working on other ways to reach graduate students. Stephens (GSA) announced that the Provost and CFO have asked GSA to consider how they will serve students who are enrolled in online graduate programs. Stephens (GSA) closed by announcing that 19-20 elections will be held on March 13.

VIII. Announcements, Updates and Reminders – GSO Staff

Olejniczak (GSO) reminded the group that the award amounts for the poster session were doubled to incentivize participation. Calini (MATH) suggested having one poster session for the whole campus.

Olejniczak (GSO) and Hakkila (GSO) suggested that the Graduate School advocate for faculty awards for graduate teaching and graduate mentorship/advising to distinguish from the undergraduate.

Coy (HIST) raised a concern about the fellowship award process stating that the deadlines are too late for programs to stay competitive. He would like to be able to have students make decisions sooner. Olejniczak (GSO) reminded the group that the Graduate School is a signatory on the CGS April 15 Resolution, which states that graduate schools will not force admitted students to make decisions regarding their funding packages before April 15. Graduate Schools can set earlier deadlines for admissions decisions to be made by admitted students, but not funding decisions. Gibbison (GSO/SPS) suggested that programs move their application deadline back to February 1. He also added that programs should continue to work on their assessment plans.

IX. For the Good of the Order – no comments
X. **Adjournment** – the meeting adjourned at 4:48pm