MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
Friday, September 28, 2018 – 3:00 PM
Robert Scott Small, Room 235

Chair – Godfrey Gibbison, Interim Dean of the Graduate School

Members and Guests Present: Emily Beck (LALE, ESOL), Mary Bergstrom (RO), Jason Coy (HIST), Franklin Czwazka (RO), Lucy Davis (EVSS), Mike Duvall (ENGL), Christine Finnan (MTLA), Megan Gould (AA), Martin Jones (MATH), Brian Lanahan (EDEL), Ron Magnuson (MBA), Renée McCauley (CSIS), Judy Millesen (MPA), Nancy Muller (LGC), John Peters (SMFT), Emily Rosko (MFA), Norma Salcedo (MBIO), Susan Simonian (MSCL), Sandy Slater (HIST/CGE), Zach Stephens (GSA), Allan Strand (BIOL/SSM), Rafael Teixeira (SCIM/SOB), Laura Tuner (EDPA), Annette Watson (EVSS), Kelley White (EDEC)

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

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

II. Approval of the Minutes April 20, 2018 Meeting – unanimous approval

III. New Business

A. Curriculum

   i. Environmental Studies

   Sandy Slater (HIST/CGE) said the Committee on Graduate Education had no issues and supported the proposals. Annette Watson (EVSS) introduced the first proposals that added more courses to the program’s elective options including MPA and EVSS core courses. The second proposal is to change the program name from Environmental Studies to Environmental and Sustainability Studies. Watson explained that this is a more accurate reflection of the coursework and thesis/internship projects student complete, which center on systems thinking and the three pillars of sustainability. This also coincides with changes happening within the discipline. It increases the marketability of the program. Zach Stephens (GSA) noted that he supports this change as a current student in the program.

   The proposals passed unanimously.

IV. Curriculog Refresher – Megan Gould, Academic Affairs

   Megan Gould (AA) reminded the group that all curriculum proposals use the Curriculog software. Curriculog can be found in MyCharleston on the faculty tab. She and Franklin Czwazka (RO) are system administrators and can help answer technical questions. Lynne Ford or Lynn Cherry can help address curriculum content questions. There are also training sessions and workshops offered to help faculty become familiar with the software and ask any questions as they move through the curriculum development process.

V. Admissions Update – Susan Hallatt, Graduate School

   Susan Hallatt (GSO) introduced a new form to be used by programs when they would like to petition for a waiver of an admissions requirement. The request will need to be approved by the Dean
before an applicant can be notified. The form will ask programs to name other application materials that will be considered in lieu of the waived requirement, and how they plan to evaluate their admissions to determine if they need to be updated. Mary Bergstrom (RO) added that programs should adhere to their admissions standards as they appear in the catalog. Jon Hakkila (GSO) encouraged programs to review their requirements and consider revising if they may be too rigid. Laura Turner (EDPA) and Christine Finnan (MTLA) stated that they feel the GRE is too burdensome for their programs. They added that they believe the GRE should not be a requirement for applicants to qualify for Graduate School fellowships. Hakkila (GSO) and Godfrey Gibbison (GSO/SPS) said they would consider reviewing the criteria.

Hallatt then let program directors know about a potential new test option for non-English speakers, the iTEP. Undergraduate Admissions now accepts this test and she intends to add this test to accepted tests for graduate admissions. It provides international students with another test option in addition to the TOEFL and IELTS.

She also thanked people that attended the Target X trainings, and she will continue to do one-on-one’s if needed.

VI. Assessment Update – Jon Hakkila, Graduate School

Hakkila (GSO) reminded the group of the upcoming deadline for assessment plans and reports. He added that we are not in a good position – there are many blank assessment entries and some programs incorrectly filled out their reports and subsequently lost all their data. Gibbison (GSO/SPS) acknowledged that the assessment software is not that intuitive, but asked if the group would benefit from a workshop with the assessment office. Watson (EVSS) inquired about the deadline and Hakkila (GSO) did say that the assessment office has moved the date, which has created some confusion. He advocated for the deadline to fall during the fall semester since faculty are more available than during the summer when the assessment office is running workshops. He also offered one-on-one sessions to help program directors complete their reports and plans. Martin Jones (MATH) asked the group if their programs were benefitting from the current form of assessment. Susan Simonian (MSCL) said her program did use assessment results to make changes and that her program has improved because of that. Mike Duvall (ENGL) said that he finds that the assessment data does not conform to the assessment requirements of the institution – the measures are too rigid. Finnan (MTLA) added that there is not an option to provide qualitative data, just quantitative. John Peters (SMFT) said that the College has adopted a top-down model of assessment, which does not encourage buy-in from faculty. If assessment measures were developed bottom-up by faculty, the value of assessment results would increase. Judy Millesen (MPA) noted that external discipline-specific bodies accredit some programs, and there should be a process for using the same data for internal and external systems. Brian Lanahan (EDEL) said the education programs have a similar issue and are often burdened with completing assessment multiples times for different entities.

VII. LGC Funding Opportunities – Nancy Muller, Director

Nancy Muller (LGC) presented to the group the funding opportunities available to them through the Lowcountry Graduate Center. The funding possibilities range from $5,000 to $25,000 for program development and program redevelopment. These funds are available to the three LGC institutions, MUSC, the Citadel, and the College of Charleston. There are two application deadlines for these funds, November 1 and February 1, but the funds will be released in the current fiscal year. Hakkila (GSO) asked if the funds could be used for a salary match, and Muller (LGC) said they could.
VIII. Graduate Student Association – Zach Stephens, President

Stephens introduced himself as the new GSA president for the year and said he hopes to revitalize the group and its activities and engagement with graduate students. He listed some event ideas and topics of concern he hopes to address during the year. They included a virtual career fair in the spring semester, graduate student housing options, and graduate student priority in parking assignments. Stephens let the group know that the GSA did not receive their full requested budget from Student Affairs, which means that program sub-organization budget requests will have to be reevaluated. He closed by noting that the GSA may have to forego executive team elections and appoint those positions.

IX. Announcements, Updates and Reminders – GSO Staff

Robyn Olejniczak (GSO) quickly mentioned that the Graduate School will be hosting a thesis workshop for students submitting this fall or in the spring. She and Hakkila will be covering formatting basics, graduation requirements, and required forms. She also mentioned that the Graduate School will host the fifth annual 3MT competition in early November.

Godfrey Gibbison (GSO/SPS) reminded people that he is still interested in meeting with program directors. He mentioned that the marketing position vacancy in the Graduate School office is in the process of being filled. The job description has been updated and approved by HR. He reminded the group that program directors must be involved in the recruiting process.

He also encouraged program directors or faculty that are considering developing new programs to understand what funding needs to be requested of the institution to make the program viable. Faculty often request too little funding because they think it might make their proposal more likely to be approved.

X. For the Good of the Order – no comments

XI. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 4:44pm