2017-18 Committee on Graduate Education

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 8, 2018

Committee members: Christine Finnan (Chair; TEDU & Anthropology), Lindsey Drager (English), Kate Keeney (Arts Management), Sandy Slater (History)

Ex-Officio: Jon Hakkila (Graduate School), Robyn Olejniczak (Graduate School), Brian McGee (Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Charleston, S.C.), Lynn Cherry (Associate Provost for Curriculum and Institutional Resources), Jerry Mackeldon (Registrar’s Office), Julie Dahl (Registrar’s Office)

A. Call to order. 9:04am

B. Review and approval of the minutes from the December 1, 2017 meeting.
Kate made a motion to approve the minutes. Sandy seconded. All approved.

C. New Business
A. Course additions to MTLA Curriculum & Instruction concentration
Christine noted that the MTLA courses are already available, and she addressed the comment that there are many available electives in the program. The program addresses this through advising and works to avoid small enrollments. These courses already exist, so this proposal puts them in the MTLE concentration officially. Lindsay motioned to approve. Sandy seconded. All approved.

We will have many proposals to review for the next committee meeting.

D. Old business
A. Change to Admissions Process
Christine reviewed the issue. It seems sufficient for graduate admissions changes to go through the Graduate Committee and then to the Graduate Council. Provost McGee noted that it is in the authority of Faculty Senate to approve admissions changes. However, this has not been the practice, and a change like this can be reflected in the Faculty Senate minute meetings. Provost McGee believes that Faculty Senate will likely be comfortable with this proposal. The Committee on Graduate Education will report at the February Faculty Senate meeting that this will be the process. This will allow for Faculty Senate to raise any issues/concerns. Christine will draft the paragraph and have Provost McGee review before giving the report. Lynn Cherry suggested that we report any graduate admissions changes to Faculty Senate at the end of the year. Henceforth, changes to graduate admissions standards will go through: the program, School Dean(s), a Graduate School Dean or Associate Dean, the Provost, Graduate Committee, and Graduate Council. The Committee on Graduate Education will report any changes to Faculty
Senate annually during the spring semester. Provost McGee made the motion. Sandy seconded. All approved.

E. For the good of the order.
   A. Provost McGee noted interest among programs regarding GREs and/or other exam scores. Programmatically, there is interest in creating more pathways to graduate admission. Rather than treating these all as one-offs, the Provost would like this committee to have a broader discussion about graduate entrance exams. The assumption of the Graduate School is that students are taking exams, and exceptions are not the standard. A larger umbrella conversation would be useful to establish a baseline/standard for the College.

   B. Provost McGee noted the continued discussion of graduate assistants and fellowships. This impacts recruitment and will be continued work for the spring semester.

   C. Provost McGee provided an update on a program cost study (costs to operate a program), that is based upon last academic year. Results will be available to School Deans shortly. The College completed a study in 2010-11. The study generally showed that programs were either small and efficient or large and efficient. The study includes undergraduate and graduate programs. This time, the Provost believes that the study will show that costs are up for graduate programs, but generally still efficient. An example of a program that was uncovered from this type of examination is the previously held athletic training program, which was eliminated because of accreditor standard changes and resulting cost implications. Sandy asked, if programs are flagged for cost balance problems, will there be opportunity for redevelopment or will it just be eliminated? Provost McGee said that it depends on the options for redevelopment. Nothing will be cut immediately--there will always be discussions prior to. Decisions will be based on quality and institutional mission. We recognize the need for programs to be redeveloped and/or eliminated in some instances. Provost McGee noted that the trend for graduate programs is away from 36 and 43 credit hours, and towards a 30 credit hour design that is completable in three semesters.

   D. Christine asked about the Graduate Dean search. Provost McGee noted that this conversation will happen in January, 2018. The goal will be to bring candidates in before the end of the semester. The search will be open to internal and external candidates.

   E. Christine asked, is there more clarity to a substantive change and what needs to be approved by SACSCOC? Provost McGee noted that each case is unique. A new program or a new kind of program is a major change. A mode of delivery can in some instances be a substantive change. Any level of complexity requires us to potentially consider a proposal as a substantive change.

   F. Christine suggested that we discuss the GRE admissions requirements since the committee had no more business to conduct. Some programs ask students to take the GRE, but then they don’t publicize a cut-off score. So why ask them to take it if it is not being used as a criteria for admission? Sandy noted that in her experience, the GRE is part of an admissions package; the GRE score may indicate a red flag as part of an overall package. Provost McGee read the policy from the Graduate School website, and noted that this section is not clear. Robyn noted that program directors and students look for a “back door” to taking graduate entrance exams for admission. The committee continued discussion on the merits of the GRE. This committee will continue to have a role in identifying admissions standards that find the right balance of rigor
and flexibility. Additionally, the committee has to be sure that programs are enforcing their own admissions standards. Sandy noted institutional integrity. Provost Mcgee stated that by writing policies poorly, we can impact students. Programs need to develop admission standards that are reasonable and that they can stick to.

Lynn Cherry asked about undergraduate admissions and tracking students’ applications to other schools. For graduate students, are we tracking students’ applications to other schools or admission to other schools? Robyn noted that we do not have these date. There is no common application for graduate admission.

G. Robyn clarified the workflow for graduate admissions changes. There is currently a built-in “graduate school stop” in the process. Who in the Graduate School signs off administratively before it moves through committees? This should be the Graduate School Dean or Associate Dean. Franklin will set the process up in Curriculog. Robyn motioned needing to add this to the workflow. Sandy seconded. Henceforth, changes to graduate admissions standards will go through: the program, School Dean(s), a Graduate School Dean or Associate Dean administrative step, the Provost, the Graduate Committee, and Graduate Council. The Committee on Graduate Education will report any changes to Faculty Senate annually during the spring semester.

F. Adjournment. 10:03am
Next meeting February 5, 2018 – 9:00 – 10:30 AM -- Jewish Studies Center #319