

## **GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES**

**November 30, 2005**

Approved: February 21, 2005

**Present:** Tom Blume, Millie Merz, Lisa Hawley, Kris Thompson, Joe Shively, David Downing, Claire Rammel, Meir Shillor, Lorenzo Smith

**Absent:** Chris Kobus, Mohinder Parkash (sabbatical), Darlene Schott-Baer,

**Guest:** Dale Nesbary

**Staff:** Julie Delaney, Lynette Folken

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was convened at 2:12 p.m by David Downing, Chair.

### **I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of October 12 and October 26 were approved and seconded as presented.

### **II. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

#### Update on Elimination of Fees

David Downing confirmed that the Board of Trustees approved the elimination of fees effective winter 2006. As of winter semester, all mandatory fees (general service fees, technology fees, etc.) will be eliminated, and a flat tuition rate will be assessed. According to Mr. Downing, the benefit from the students' perspective is varied, and a relatively small increase in overall tuition for some students will result. Overall he feels that it presents a positive situation for both undergraduate and graduate students, especially for those graduate students who are taking 1 or 2 credits.

#### Continuous Enrollment Policy

Mr. Downing reported that the new continuous enrollment policy for doctoral students is working very well. He reminded members, in connection with this policy, that in an earlier meeting it had been discussed whether or not to charge a flat rate for continuous enrollment; however, given the tenor of the Board's discussion regarding elimination of fees, he suggested that this matter be revisited in a year or so. Claire Rammel concurred with his suggestion.

Still with the topic of continuous enrollment, Mr. Downing asked members to consider the possibility of introducing the policy at the master's level. When master's students receive a P (in progress) grade, they have, theoretically, two years to make up the grade; however, if they are not continuously enrolled, they will lose email and other university services after one year. He reported that this is not affecting as many students, but Graduate Study is receiving complaints from both faculty and students. He suggested the possibility of continuous enrollment in a thesis

or project course, so students would have continuity of University services. Mr. Downing asked members to discuss the issue with colleagues and bring feedback to Council.

#### Banner 7 Update

Claire Rammel informed members that after 30 days in the new Banner 7.0 environment, version 7.2 has been installed. The advantage of this newest version is concurrent curriculum, which will provide flexibility to students who might want to hold simultaneous levels. For example, a graduate student may be interested in taking a professional development class; another graduate student may wish to take an undergraduate class. Concurrent curriculum provides the opportunity to accommodate these needs and to transcript accordingly.

#### Post Master's Certificates in Local Government Management and Non-Profit Organization and Management

Dave Downing reported that the post-master's certificates went through the final approval process and were presented as an informational item to the Senate.

#### Dissertation/thesis awards

Dave Downing thanked the members for the input he received in this matter and informed them that he had shared the observations with the Provost who has agreed to incorporate most of them. In the meantime, these proposed changes are being circulated and discussed with the deans. The single issue that has not been resolved is the one involving timelines and deadlines.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

#### MPA/JD Joint Program

Dale Nesbary, Director of the Master's in Public Administration program, presented information on the proposed MPA/JD joint program, a partnership between Oakland University and Cooley Law School. He circulated drafts of the joint degree proposal, as well as a Joint Declaration of Intent for students who want to participate in the joint program, and a Frequently Asked Questions page.

Mr. Nesbary advised members that it appears that a joint program could generate more students for both programs. Cooley Law School undertook a survey of their current students in summer 2005 and found that of their 2,000 plus students, about 800 students were interested in the joint MBA/JD and MPA/JD programs, generally. Mr. Nesbary computed those figures as an additional 57 students (approximately 800 credits a year) in the MPA program. MPA students when asked showed a similar interest in the joint program. He suggested that this kind of collaborative program with Cooley Law School would introduce new, high quality students to the MPA program.

Admissions to both programs would be conducted separately with no guarantee that students would be admitted to either program. Once they have matriculated, students would apply either

sequentially or simultaneously. Operationally, a student beginning an MPA program would complete 24 credit hours prior to completing any 12 hours in the Cooley program; conversely, a student beginning the Cooley program would complete 27 credits prior to beginning OU credit hours. Mr. Nesbary explained that the expectation is that students get a good base in one or the other programs and begin the other program after making good progress in their initial program.

Since 6 credit hours would count towards either program, students must meet minimum grade requirements for either program: 3.0 for OU and 2.0 for Cooley Law School. This issue has not yet been resolved by the OU/Cooley working group; however, the group agreed that when Cooley students, participating in the joint degree, are ready to transfer their credits to OU, grades below the required 3.0 will need to come to Graduate Council for review and permission to transfer. Mr. Nesbary stated that his department has agreed to this process.

At this time, no financial aid consortium agreements exist between OU and Cooley, so students may use financial aid funds only at their home institution. While there will be some coordination of advertising, each institution will have budget independence. At present, there is no indication that either OU or Cooley will incur additional advertising costs.

David Downing pointed out the advantages of being able to count up to six credits from Cooley towards the Master's in Public Administration and, in addition, being able to count up to six credits of MPA program courses towards the JD degree and if asked there was any retroactivity involved. Mr. Nesbary replied that the original working group decided they would deal with this issue at a later date but have not done so. The department feels that if students are completing their degree now and the joint degrees were in place next semester, the department would have no objections. Since no decision has been made, there is nothing in the proposal language that states that students could not do so. Mr. Downing asked if someone who has a JD from Cooley and has taken Course A and Course B (whatever those may be) would be able to apply and be enrolled in the MPA program and use those six credits. Mr. Nesbary replied that this hasn't been defined yet, but at this point, it has not been ruled out. He will confer with his department.

Meir Shillor pointed out that a student undertaking both degrees will have to study 12 credits less, because he/she will be counting them both ways twice: six credits with OU counted twice and six credits with Cooley counted twice. After discussion, Mr. Nesbary agreed with Mr. Shillor's interpretation.

David Downing asked about the existence of an enforcement mechanism to make sure that students complete both degrees; Mr. Nesbary responded that there is no such requirement and there will be no recommendation to create such a practice. Students will be advised of the benefits of completing both degrees.

Mr. Downing requested a list of specific courses that can be transferred into either program; Claire Rammel requested a copy of the survey information.

Grade Mode for Dissertations or Theses

Claire Rammel reported that, generally, when doctoral students, and master's students on a much smaller scale, sign up for dissertation research, they are given a P (progress) grade because they have not completed their dissertation. When their dissertations have been submitted, the grade is converted into a pass/fail grade. However, there are instances when some departments assign a numeric grade, resulting in students accumulating 24, 30, or 35 credits of 4.0 in dissertation credit.

Ms. Rammel also pointed out that Financial Aid and other lending agencies sometimes require confirmation that the student is making progress towards their degree. When students have P grades posted on their transcripts for years, it can look as though the students are not making any progress. She suggested initiating a process used at other institutions whereby students submit an annual report to their advisers which provides information on academic progress.

Julie Delaney raised the question of when should dissertation work be graded. Ms. Delaney reported that there is some inconsistency between the Schools and College on when the grades should be submitted. Traditionally, dissertation research is not graded until after defense and submission of the manuscript for binding; however, some departments are submitting numeric grade changes for dissertation work every one or two semesters while the student is continuing work on the dissertation. The risks of awarding 4.0 grades throughout the work (indicating successful progress to the student) and not approving the defense or dissertation were discussed. Meir Shillor was of the opinion that grades are irrelevant at the Ph.D. level. He explained that if a student passes the defense, he/she will be awarded the Ph.D., regardless of the grades or grading system given during work on the dissertation.

Mr. Downing asked what would happen to the P grades, if a student was awarded a series of P grades and failed the dissertation defense. The P grades would remain on the transcript during an appeal for second defense. Should the second defense be denied or failed, the P grades would be changed to U(unsatisfactory). If the appeal for second defense is approved and successfully defended by the student, the P grades will be changed. If the student does not pass the second defense, the P grades will be converted to U(unsatisfactory) and no degree awarded.

In summation, Mr. Downing observed that the Council members agreed that, to avert potential problems, numerical grades should not be awarded for thesis or dissertation work and that P grades would be assigned. A policy will be formulated and returned to Graduate Council for approval.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Ph.D. in Music Education Update**

David Downing reported that Sheryl Klemanski completed a review of the Ph.D. in Music Education for the Provost's office and has requested some changes in the proforma. Basically, since there are courses in the School of Education and in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Provost's office wants the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance to modify their proforma to make sure that they are not double counting enrollment and revenue.

##### **MA in History Program Review**

David Downing reviewed the Program Review-MA in History handout outlining the recommendations to be explored by Graduate Council and pointing out that two of the options, limiting cross listed courses and adoption of an accelerated program, would have policy implications.