

## **GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES**

**December 05, 2007**

Approved: February 13, 2008

**Present:** Tom Blume, Jacqueline Drouin, Lisa Hawley, Frances Jackson, Paul Licker, Mildred Merz, Zissimos Mourelatos, Meir Shillor, Joseph Shively

**Absent:** Mohamed Zohdy

**Guest:** Christina Grabowski

**Staff:** Julie Delaney, Lynette Folken, Eilene Lohmeier

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was convened at 2:12 pm by J. Shively, Vice Chair.

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of October 10, 2007 and October 24, 2007 were deferred to the January 16, 2008 meeting.

### **III. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR AND INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

J. Shively asked C. Rammel to provide an overview of the agenda items. C. Rammel reported that at a recent Associate Deans meeting, the Associate Deans requested that they be better informed and involved with policies and issues being addressed by Graduate Council. The Associate Deans also expressed an interest in working more closely with Graduate Council.

Extensive preparation is underway for the North Central Association's (NCA) visit which will focus on level outcomes by courses and programs. C. Rammel was informed by S. Awbrey, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, that NCA has included new review criteria, "8.2 the Commission's Federal Compliance Program" which will impact graduate education. C. Rammel stressed the necessity to focus on priorities and ensure policies and foundations are established and moving in the direction of supporting NCA guidelines.

C. Rammel reported that she met with V. Moudgil, Provost, to discuss graduate assessment. Current graduate assessment is not at a level that will satisfy NCA expectations. It was suggested that a faculty support position might be created and be responsible for taking a leadership role for the graduate education assessment function.

### **IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **a. Transcript Requirement for Graduate Admissions**

The proposed transcript policy was shared with the Associate Deans. After lengthy discussion, the consensus was to retain the existing policy requiring all transcripts from every postsecondary

institution, except possibly transcripts from community colleges which are normally used to satisfy the bachelor's degree.

At the October 24, 2007 Graduate Council meeting, C. Rammel was asked to investigate any accreditation issues or legal ramifications of the proposed policy. She reported that the accreditation guidelines reference "best practice." The minimum guidelines of "best practice" require that a student must have a bachelor's degree and provide proof/evidence of such degree. C. Rammel also discussed the issue with the General Counsel's office. Their recommendation was that if the original transcript posting of a student's bachelor's degree is required to satisfy "best practice", then the admission decision cannot rely on secondary transcripts (i.e., master's transcript) to provide proof of the bachelor's degree. General Counsel recommended the establishment of a baseline minimum based on "best practice" and stressed that it is critical that the transcript carries proof of the awarded bachelor's degree. A student cannot be fully admitted without it.

Traditionally, students have been required to provide evidence of every postsecondary college attended. Many institutions also require submission of transcripts that validate transfer credits. The new proposed policy would eliminate transcripts of post-bachelor undergraduate credits and would require transcripts only from the post bachelor's degree forward. General Counsel cautioned that a student's admission cannot be retracted when a student has not been asked to produce the transcript(s) to begin with.

J. Delaney supported the need for requiring all transcripts. There have been cases where a student's admission was rescinded, not necessarily based on the application, but on the information provided by transcripts.

To expedite the admissions process, "best practice" dictates that an admission decision does not have to wait for official transcripts to admit a student, but allows for the use of an unofficial transcript to review for provisional admission.

T. Bloom clarified the two levels of requirements: the admission requirements and the documentation requirements. The documentation requirements are required regardless of whether the student is admitted or not in order to make the admission decision. C. Grabowski stated that a conditional/provisional admission can be made based on the unofficial bachelor's degree. However, the student would not receive full admission until all official, required transcripts and program required documents (formal application, letters of recommendation, etc.) have been received and reviewed.

Members expressed a need for a glossary of terms with standardized language. C. Rammel agreed with members to address nomenclature and to operationally define our language in the form of a glossary.

T. Bloom asked how students are informed about individual program requirements. C. Grabowski stated that the program requirements for each department are published in the catalog and available on the Web site. Applications completed on the web will populate the department's requirements for admission and submission will generate a confirming email. Paper applications

also generate a confirming email with links, description and a question and answer sheet. Information is also mailed to the student. For financial aide compliance, we will need to ensure consistency articulating information such as prerequisites and course requirements between the catalog and Web site.

C. Rammel was asked to incorporate the changes suggested by Council members and create a minimum transcript policy based on “best practice”. It is agreed that the Schools/College will retain the ability to require additional transcript information as necessary. The revised transcript policy will be forwarded to the members via email for review, approval and vote.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### **Commencement Ceremony – Doctoral Hooding**

C. Rammel received a request from a doctoral student, who has defended but not yet submitted her final dissertation to Graduate Study, to participate in the upcoming Fall commencement. The department argues that the early deadline dates limit the student’s ability to complete her requirements in time to participate in Fall commencement.

Though a one-time exception was granted for a similar request last year, J. Delaney explained that there are two commencement ceremonies held each year: May (for winter semester doctoral graduates) and December (for Spring/Summer /Fall semester doctoral graduates). She stated that Oakland University’s thesis/dissertation submission deadlines are comparable to other institutions in Michigan.

Following discussion, Graduate Council agreed that a successful doctoral defense does not affirm that the doctoral process is complete. The doctoral degree is only awarded after a student has successfully completed his/her defense and has submitted an approved dissertation to Graduate Study. Submission of an approved dissertation for publication is a degree requirement for doctoral students. All degree requirements must be successfully completed before a student is approved for graduation. Council members recommended that doctoral students become familiar with the existing deadlines and plan completion of their doctoral process accordingly.

Following lengthy discussion, Graduate Council recommended that directors and advisors alert students that they do not have an entire semester to complete their dissertation process and affirmed that doctoral students must adhere to the published dissertation deadline dates. Additionally, the Council directed Graduate Study to adhere to all published thesis/dissertation deadline dates.

The doctoral student’s request to participate in the upcoming December commencement was denied unanimously.

On behalf of Graduate Council, F. Jackson agreed to forward a position statement to V. Moudgil, Provost, regarding the requirements for doctoral participation in the commencement ceremony and reaffirm no doctoral student would be hooded prior to completion of the dissertation process.

## **VI. GOOD AND WELFARE**

F. Jackson reported that the Student Conduct Committee met on November 27, 2007 regarding the dismissal appeal of a Physical Therapy student. The committee will meet with the student on December 6, 2007, and the report and recommendation will be submitted to C. Rammel following the meeting.

C. Rammel reported that a new Graduate Study website is being developed and will provide a more user-friendly environment.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2008.