To: The Senate
From: The Graduate Council
Date: April 15, 2011
Re: Graduate Council Minutes - March, 2011

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Members Present: Ed Aguado, Jose Castillo, Martha Doran, Steve Kramer, Ramona Perez, Radmila Prislin, Tom Scott, Aladdin Shadyab, Caren Sax, and Anne Turhollow.

Ex-Officio Members Present: Beverly Arata, Rita Baumann, Camille Nebeker, Margarita Pina-Harlow, Janet Rodgers, Sandra Temores-Valdez, Christina Sanchez, and Sabrina Cortell.

Minutes: The minutes from February 10, 2011 were approved.

Report of the Dean
The SRS symposium was very successful with 413 presentations (both oral and poster) divided into 162 undergraduates, 179 masters, and 72 doctoral students. The students who won the President’s Awards consisted of 5 doctoral, 4 masters, and 1 undergraduate.

Fall applications for admission are 150 ahead of this same time last year, with a total of 7896 (1215 of which are international).

NRTW: 351 nominations were submitted during round one (compared to 436 during round one for fall 2010). Last year, a final total of 613 were nominated during round one and two and 203.5 (average of fall and spring) were allocated. This year, Academic Affairs has provided 201 waivers for fall 2011. After this first round, 130 waivers will be allocated and programs will be informed of their count on Monday, March 15th. Priority will be given as follows: 1) International continuing, 2) continuing domestic students with Title 5 issues, 3) new EdD, PhD, AuD, MFA, and 4) new students in other masters programs.

The first round of budget cuts to the CSU system brought a $27 million reduction – of which, the GRA absorbs about 1%, or $270,000. Of course, the GRA has tried hard to protect support for graduate students. However, it was necessary to reduce the Graduate Division Support Funds (aka Shared Vision) by 10% from last year. Going forward, if the tax extensions are not put on the ballot or are not approved by the electorate, the total budget reduction will likely not double, but will be damaging. However, if there are further reductions we will certainly see measures such as additional tuition increases. While we should have enough funds to carry over to make the 2011/12 academic year work, by the year after (2012/13) our reserves will have been reduced or depleted.
The Kyoto Prize Symposium is to be celebrated on our campus on April 5th, 2011. Kazuo Inamori, founder of Kyocera and of the foundation that awards the Kyoto Prizes, will sign a $50k donation agreement to SDSU for the next four years. During the April 5th event, Dr. Inamori will be awarded an Honorary Doctor of Sciences degree from SDSU. This will be the only Honorary Doctorate SDSU will award in 2011.

**Committee Reports - None**

**New Business**

A. **Academic Reviews (Radmila Prislin)**

The Academic Dean’s Council recently discussed whether to continue academic reviews this academic year and determined they should, but committed to streamline the process to lessen the workload for all involved. There is an average of ten reviews a year. The only remaining review for spring 2011 is the Computational Science JDP (set for April 14, 15). The Geography JDP has been moved to fall 2011. Officially, each program should be reviewed every five years but in practice it falls about every seven years. In light of the budget situation, it was emphasized that the benefit of going through a review should be to learn how to better use existing department resources. Dr. Castillo added that his review experience has been very valuable in learning his department’s history, resources, strengths and weaknesses.

B. **NRTW Eligibility (Radmila Prislin) and Substitution of Traineeship for TA/GA/RA Contracts and Possible Ramifications (Caren Sax)**

Dr. Prislin pointed out that due to Executive Order 605, a student who receives an NRTW must be employed on campus at least 20 hours (unless they have prior approval from GRA to register for 10 units). Therefore, if it can be established that the student would be employed as a campus employee during the traineeship, then the position could be considered as meeting this criteria. Discussion was tabled awaiting further details regarding how the position was funded.

C. **GRE Entrance Requirements (Ed Aguado)**

There is a university-wide requirement for graduate admission of a minimum 2.85 undergraduate GPA. Dr. Aguado raised the issue of whether there should also be a minimum requirement for GRE scores. The question was posed that since most universities do have this requirement, could not having one at SDSU affect our reputation? Some argued that the score does not give substantial predictive information; others felt this viewpoint was exaggerated. It was suggested that the ‘minimum’ standard could have been removed from the graduate bulletin and replaced by ‘satisfactory’ during a period of declining test scores. Some members mentioned that their departments set their own minimum scores for the students they accept. While each program puts its own emphasis and importance on the scores, one member added that if they choose to accept a student whose score falls below their minimum, they require the student to take additional coursework.

An additional problem with GRE scores, according to Sandra Temores-Valdez in Enrollment Services, is that some students have been told by their departments that
although they are required to have a GRE score on file for admission, they need only to arrive at the testing site and sign their name. Hence students sometime present only a partial GRE score.

Members were asked to go to their departments and ask the Chairs to consider what they would define as a satisfactory score for their department and what they would consider their department’s minimum requirement. They were also encouraged to consider how the GRE should inform admissions. Members were asked to report back their findings to the Graduate Council.

**Old Business**

**A. Responsible Conduct of Research (Camille Nebeker)**

The SDSU RCR plan recognizes that training in RCR is ongoing and may occur in a variety of settings (e.g., lab, course, seminar). The SDSU Division of Research Affairs coordinates the plan and works with faculty and students to facilitate opportunities to access training and to document training achieved. Strategies for 2011 involve a multifaceted approach to establishing practices that facilitate and promote education in responsible and ethical research practices. In addition to having the University Research Council involved, all campus stakeholders and partners are asked to take part in creating an academic environment whereby ongoing training in research and professional ethics is expected and valued. The Graduate Council is one of the key units to assist in establishing structures to include RCR as an expected part of graduate programs.

Engagement with the University Graduate Council is essential to increase awareness of RCR as a critical component of academic programs. The Graduate Council is asked to:

1- add research and professional ethics training to the Program Review self-study and evaluation process. An example was presented based on a self-study program review assessment used by North Carolina State University:

   6.6 Ethics Training: Describe any education in research and professional ethics that the program provides for its graduate students. Such education could include courses, workshops, seminars offered by the program or by related programs or other appropriate experiences, such as the use of resources provided by the university.

2- Consider a requirement or minimal standard for new programs to ensure courses proposed cover content expected for research and professional ethics. The Graduate Council is also asked to assist DRA by identifying courses that presently address relevant components of RCR training. We will collect syllabi from those courses and these will be entered into the centralized SDSU RCR Inventory.

**B. Other**

A member asked why an applicant can only apply to one program at a time. Sandra Temores-Valdez explained that the database system will only allow for one major. However, if a student were to apply to a program and not be accepted, as long as they are
in the system with all documents submitted, then they can switch the major (if they do so before the May deadline).

**Adjournment 3:45pm**