To: The Senate
From: The Graduate Council
Date: April 27, 2011
Re: Graduate Council April Minutes

Members Present: Ed Aguado, Leland Beck, Jose Castillo, Martha Doran, Sharan Gibson, Dana Nurge, Radmila Prislin, Valerie Renegar, Tom Scott, Janusz Supernak, Lucinda Rasmussen, Valerie Cook –Morales (for Caren Sax), and Anne Turhollow.

Members Absent: Andrew Do, Gibran Guido, Steve Kramer, Nancy Marlin, Eugene Olevsky, Ramona Perez, and Aladdin Shadyab.

Ex Officio Members: Rita Baumann, Camille Nebeker, Janet Rodgers, and Cristina Sanchez.

Ex officio Members Absent: Sandra Temorez-Valdez.

Guests: Sabrina Cortell and Margarita Pina-Harlow.

Minutes: The minutes for the March 10th, 2011, Graduate Council meeting were approved.

1. Report of the Dean

Presiding Dean of Graduate Affairs Dr. Tom Scott opened discussions with an update on the possibility of a pending federal shutdown. If this happens, we can expect programs such as Financial Aid, NIH, and NSF will stop, proposals will not be able to be submitted, and all federal program oversight will be put on hold. Dr. Scott anticipates the shutdown would be brief and a rapid recovery should be expected.

There will be a GRE exam presentation on April 28th at 12:30 here in the GRA conference room, SSE-1410. The presenter will be Matt Kadlubowski and all Graduate Advisors are invited. If you would like to attend, please send an RSVP to Amanda Carpenter (acarpenter@mail.sdsu.edu).

Applications are up 135 over this time last year (a 2% increase). International applications are also up 2%. Additionally, more applications have been properly completed, providing a greater pool to pull from. GRA has been meeting with Negar Davis, the new Director of the ISC, to discuss international applications. Dr. Scott mentioned the possible continuing effect of requiring that international applicants have their credentials professionally verified. The plan is to collect three year’s worth of data before deciding whether to change this requirement.

The Kyoto Symposium was held Tuesday, April 4th. Dr. Kazuo Inamori was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree from SDSU. As had been anticipated, Dr. Inamori has signed the MOU to continue the Kyoto Laureate Symposium in San Diego for four more years and the LOA for an annual contribution of $50k to each of the four campuses on which the Symposium is celebrated. Additionally, Shinya Yamanaka, the 2010 Kyoto Prize recipient in advanced technology, was honored and gave his presentation on his research of deriving induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells from adult skin cells.
2. Committee Reports

Graduate Curriculum Committee

ACTION (1A-04-11)
The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) paperwork came to the GRA last week and was completed just last night. This item must move quickly since it must be in the Chancellor’s office by September 1st, 2011. The Curriculum Committee has reviewed it and made some important comments regarding academic planning and policy. If approved by the GC today, it will go back to the Academic Deans for one week for comment, and then April 12th to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy & Planning (APP) and Committee on Academic Resource Planning (CARP), and to the Senate Executive Committee for approval. The question was raised if students will pay for these courses and will they pay a higher fee. Dr. Scott answered that the expectation is that they will pay up to the University of California rate. Rita Baumann made a comment that the wording “Students must complete 36 units in order to complete the program” should be adjusted to read “a minimum of 36, maximum of 45 units”. Dr. Prislin suggested a change to page 1 bullet 4 to change from, “those who are ethnically and geographically disadvantaged” to read instead, “socio-demographic groups.” There was a discussion regarding the minimum GPA of 3.5 and 1000 GRE score, bullets 5 and 6 on page 2. Concern was expressed that good candidates who have a slightly lower GPA or GRE score (for example) might hesitate to apply. It was decided to soften the wording, and replace bullets 5 and 6 on page 2 with wording such as, “Competitive undergraduate GPA and GRE scores will be required.” [Note: After the meeting had concluded, review of the Action item showed that wording should be for a Master’s credentials, not undergraduate.] Under the section Advancement to Candidacy on page 3, the sentence “Students will present at least one peer-reviewed professiona...” will be changed to read, “Students will make at least one peer-reviewed presentation at a professional meeting....” If the action item is approved, it will go back to Steve Williams in HHS for rewording. A motion was made to approve the action item and accept the recommended changes. This was seconded and unanimously approved.

Graduate Policy Committee

Dr. Prislin presented the current student GPA probation policies. Dr. Beck had requested a review of the policy since he has had students who have had ‘catastrophic first semesters’ and end up with very low GPAs (such as one student with a 1.33), but produce good work in their subsequent semesters, with good GPAs (the same student had 3.33, 3.70, and 3.20 in subsequent semesters). However, since the initial GPA was so low, the student had not been able to offset it and faced disqualification.

Dr. Prislin explained that while the committee was sympathetic to students in this situation, the committee was guided by the policy that they would be reluctant to change a current policy based on an issue unless it affects a large number of students or many programs. Therefore, since the issue is not widespread, the policy will remain unchanged and programs will work with their students on a case-by-case basis.

In follow-up, Dr. Prislin presented a table demonstrating that the number of students who have this situation is small. Out of the 5286 graduate students enrolled in fall 2010, only 13 were eventually disqualified; six at the end of their second semester, and 7 at the end of their first.
student was eventually reinstated. Ms. Sanchez brought out that the student who was reinstated was the same student whose situation was mentioned at the outset.

Dr. Beck stated concern that the process as it stands is very long and difficult on a student. Dr. Prislin brought out that whatever way a program decides to deal with a student in this situation, processes such as retroactive withdrawal should be used sparingly. Dr. Scott reiterated that the Policy Committee has decided not to change the policy and that standards should not be relaxed.

Finally, Dr. Aguado noted that while appeals do often work, sometimes a lot of time and effort goes into an eventual failure.

3. Old Business

GRE Minimum

During the April meeting, members were asked to go to their departments and ask the Chairs to consider what they would define as a satisfactory GRE score for their department and what they would consider their department’s minimum GRE requirement. Dr. Perez had responded via email that the Graduate Advisors argued against a university standard and wanted to be able to adjust their minimum GRE scores across disciplines. Dr. Scott asked the members if the responses from their departments conformed to this view. Members agreed by nods. Dr. Scott stated, therefore, that the GRE would continue to be required but that a university standard would not be instituted. Members agreed.

Non-Resident Tuition Waivers (NRTW)

As a reminder, Dr. Scott brought out that 201 NRTWs were allocated to the Graduate Division this year, compared to last year’s 230. This number was based on the maximum of 25% of full-time equivalent non-resident graduate students. At the March meeting it was agreed that up to 65% (130) of the waivers would be allocated in round one. Four additional waivers were allocated due to oversights, totaling a round one allocation of 134. Ethan Singer agreed that if there are no spring admissions in 2012, GRA can go from 201 to 211 (10 over) for fall and, therefore, 191 in spring (10 fewer). This is because enrollment usually drops slightly in spring when students graduate or drop out. Therefore, 77 waivers will be allocated in round two. The nominations for round two are due April 15th, and announcements will be made April 20th.

Education Traineeship

As an update from last month’s GC meeting, Dr. Prislin informed the group that it has been determined that the traineeship discussed last month is funded in the same way as a Research Assistant, through SDSU Foundation. Therefore, the traineeship students would be eligible for NRTWs (first semester students only).

4. New Business

Academic Reviews

Dr. Prislin discussed the new processes that are being suggested in order to streamline academic reviews. Two handouts were put forward: the Academic Program Review (APR) planning process and Academic Program Review (APR) at SDSU: A Plan to Streamline and Integrate Review, Planning, and Assessment Processes. Dr. Scott asked if the members would like to vote
on adopting the processes and documents right away or table the discussion until next month’s meeting, the latter of which was decided upon.

Adjournment 3:10pm