To: The Senate

From: The Graduate Council

Date: 1/17/2012

Re: Approved November 3, 2011 - Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Lawrence Baron, Leland Beck, Sheila Deam, Andrew Do, Sharan Gibson, Steve Kramer, Radmila Prislin, Nicole Simons, Anne Turhollow, Satchi Venkataraman, Larry Verity, Joseph Waters, and Steve Welter (Chair).

Members Absent: Edward Aguado, Jose Castillo, David Ely, Dana Nurge, Eugene Olvesky, Ramona Perez, and Caren Sax.

Ex-Officio Members Present: Rita Baumann, Dena Plemmons, Janet Rodgers, and Cristina Sanchez.


1. Opening Remarks of the Dean (Dr. Stephen Welter, Chair)
   Dean Welter expressed his enthusiasm about returning to SDSU and working with the GC and campus community on advancing graduate studies. He arrived on campus on October 31st, but was faculty here for three years in the past (1981-84), before going to U.C. Berkeley for the past 27 years.

2. Minutes: The minutes for the October 6, 2011 meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Committee Reports

   Curriculum Committee
   Information (21-11-11)
   Information (21-11-11.500)
   Action (2A-11-11)

   Dr. Baron expressed concern regarding the new Social Work Ph.D. - not at the proposal itself, but at the shift towards Ph.D. programs at the expense of the masters programs. He would like to see more careful vetting of Ph.D. programs, especially in light of Drs. Hirshman and Marlin’s comments that no new doctoral programs would be initiated after completion of the approval process for those already initiated. Dr. Prislin responded that whereas everyone is aware of the shrinking resources, it is important to consider that the process of developing a new joint doctoral program takes years, sometimes decades, to work through. In this case, the Chancellor signed the Permission to Negotiate with UCSD to establish a JDP in Applied Social Sciences (Social Work) in 2006 and resources were set aside years ago. Therefore, it is one of the two programs that whose approval process was initiated prior to Drs. Hirshman and Marlin’s comments.
Dr. Venkataraman asked why a new multi-variance statistics course was being developed specifically for this program rather than using an existing course. Dr. Newhoff answered that there are a number of techniques used in substance abuse research and only one or two faculty members on campus can teach the information. Both of these faculty members are very heavily overbooked, and therefore Social Work brought in faculty explicitly to teach this coursework.

Action item 2A-11-11 was unanimously approved.

Policy Committee Report – None

Student Affairs Reports – None

4. New Business
   • Montezuma Publishing thesis review (Dr. Venkataraman)
     Dr. Venkataraman expressed frustration at the thesis review process, commenting that it is unnecessarily complicated and creates a bottle-neck which delays students’ graduations. Dr. Blomgren added that whereas he met with Montezuma Publishing (MP) a year ago to establish a LaTeX template, which was approved by MP, theses published in LaTeX are still being returned for errors. Dr. Blomgrem felt part of the problem was that compared with other universities, SDSU’s Dissertation and Thesis Manual (DTM) is too long and detailed. Dr. Venkataraman inquired about where the authority regarding thesis review lies.

     Janet Rodgers pointed out that the authority for thesis lies in the DTM, the manual that was composed based on individual programs’ input and was approved by the Graduate Council. It adheres to the standards comparable to those at such universities as NYU, Chapel Hill, Stanford, and Berkley. While each department may have its idiosyncratic department style, the DTM takes precedence if there are conflicting rules, per the Graduate Council’s prior approval. MP are not allowed to add any additional formatting rules and can only apply rules already approved by the Graduate Council. Kim Mazyck of MP explained that there have been no major changes to the DTM – they are using the same requirements and the same ~50 formatting rules that have been used for the last decade. Importantly, each year MP sends out a list of department style guidelines to the graduate advisors for their approval or revision – only approximately half respond, most of which do not request changes. Ms. Mazyck agreed to send out the style guidelines again, adding the department chairs to the distribution, for their review. Dr. Prislin added that if a specific formatting rule is burdensome and should be changed, it should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Council for review. Dr. Welter invited a concrete example of a problem situation to be documented and sent to Janet Rodgers, who will work with Kim Mazyck to find a solution.

     • Reproduction of thesis on Microfiche (Janet Rodgers)
       Janet Rodgers explained that in 1973 the Graduate Council approved a rule stating that two microfiche copies of each thesis be created – one for the library and one to archive.
However, this is an outdated procedure given that microfiche is so rarely used today. Kim Mazyck added that there are only two companies in San Diego that still create microfiche. Anne Turhollow pointed out that any potential change should ensure that a new system has both a preservation and a Presentation function. Proquest, which satisfies both requirements, has an added advantage of being a free program. Anne Turhollow agreed to obtain detailed information about Proquest, including who has the rights to the document once it is deposited on Proquest, how long the information remains on Proquest, and how the information is stored – she will bring the information to the December meeting for further discussion.

• Masters-level graduation with distinction policy (Dr. Baron)
  Dr. Baron stated that a number of colleges have asked if they can give official distinction on the transcript to a masters student upon graduation based on such criteria as their GPA, a thesis, or an exam – this recognition is available for undergraduates, but not for graduate students. Distinction of this type is given at other schools, including CSU Fresno, that bestows distinction to a student with a 3.9 GPA. Janet Rodgers contacted a diploma company to ask how many other universities have official distinction on diplomas – they answered 12 of approximately 400 universities do. Dr. Welter brought out one of the challenges in giving awards at the graduate level based on GPAs is that we expect graduate students to have good GPAs. However, there are many other ways to recognize students which might include competitive awards. Dr. Prislin reminded the group of the very prestigious Inamori Fellowship Program held each year where ten students are recognized. The group agreed that whereas each college would like to recognize students, if a distinction were to be on the transcript then everyone must agree on the exact mechanism. Dr. Baron agreed to return to his college and ask for suggestions of what kind of mechanism they would like.

• Miscellaneous
  Dr. Venkataraman asked if we are doing anything special to highlight our programs during the Diversity Forum in spring. Janet Rodgers answered that she is working on making this the best forum of the last 21. This is the first year SDSU is hosting the event and a 17 member committee has been formed to prepare. The committee welcomes any and all ideas from departments as to what they would like to showcase and how. Dr. Welter added that given SDSU’s remarkable record on diversity, this is an opportunity for us to brand SDSU in a positive way.

5. Old Business - None

Adjournment 3:27pm