To: The Senate

From: The Graduate Council

Date: September 12, 2012

Re: Graduate Council Minutes – May 3, 2012

Members Present: Lawrence Baron, Leland Beck, Jose Castillo, Sheila Deam, David Ely, Sharan Gibson, Eugene Olevsky, Ramona Perez, Radmila Prislin, Caren Sax, Satchi Venkataraman, Larry Verity, and Steve Welter (Chair).

Members Absent: Edward Aguado, Kevin Delgado, Andrew Do, Steve Kramer, John McMillan, Dana Nurge, Anne Turhollow, and Joseph Waters.

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


1. Minutes: The minutes for the April 4, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved.

2. Report of the Dean

Admissions (Dr. Prislin): Current data from Admissions show 8502 applications have been received, a 4.7% increase compared to last year. Of those applications, 1464 were international applications, a 16.7% increase from last year. This increase in international applications compares favorably to the 9% national increase, as reported by the Council of Graduate Studies. However, since SDSU experienced a drastic decrease in applications three years ago, the current status is still far below the numbers experienced prior to that time.

One serious obstacle for international student recruitment has been the fees charged to independently analyze international transcripts. Next year, the majority of these transcripts will be examined internally, with only the least-known university transcripts going to external reviewers. However, since there will only be two persons who will serve as internal evaluators, consideration will be needed when setting the application deadlines for next year.

Of the 769 intents to enroll that have been received, 539 are California residents. Since the graduate programs’ goal is to increase overall resident enrollment by 5%, these current statistics show that at this time, we have reached 35.9% of our goal.

In order to help communication between Enrollment Services and the departments throughout the application process, Dr. Perez suggested the online system include a place where a department could add comments about the status of each RDR that could be viewed by Enrollment Services. Margarita Pina-Harlow and Sabrina Cortell from Enrollment Services agreed to look into this possibility.
Dr. Welter emphasized the importance of providing personal attention to students throughout the application process, pointing out the impact this individualized effort can generate. Dr. Prislin added that last year’s resident enrollment numbers included students with non-resident tuition waivers; therefore, to compensate for these numbers, departments should recruit aggressively. To this end, this summer GRA is planning a series of workshops on how to attract and work with international students.

Currently, there are 2489 RDRs in department review and not all of those are waitlisted students – the others should be returned, especially those who are rejected. During the meeting, Dr. Welter learned from Academic Affairs that if the graduate programs do not use their allocated numbers, they will be taken back and allotted instead to undergraduate students. Discussion ensued regarding what deadline the council would like to return the RDRs to Enrollment Services. Dr. Prislin reminded the group that the enrollment cap is for California residents only. Dr. Welter closed discussion by saying that next year, he will meet with the College Deans early to determine deadlines.

Vote: GC decided that Dean Welter would advise Academic Affairs that the Council would like to request a deadline of May 31st to get RDRs returned. However, if that date is not accepted, May 18th will be the second date requested.

3. Committee Reports

• Curriculum Committee – None

• Policy Committee Report (Dr. Prislin)

The Policy Committee recently met to discuss the existing policy in regards to probation and disqualification. Page 434 in the Graduate Bulletin under ‘Probation and Disqualification’ reads:

A post-baccalaureate graduate student in any admission category shall be placed on academic probation if the student fails to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.85 in all units attempted subsequent to admission to the university. Students in a graduate degree program in conditional or classified standing should consult the section of this bulletin entitled “General Requirements for Doctoral Programs” and “Basic Requirements for the Master’s Degree” for additional grade point average requirements for degree seeking students.

The committee came to the conclusion that the current policy was an attempt to hold students to a reasonable policy that fits most students. The committee therefore chose to keep the existing policy but agreed that the Council should notify programs that if they wish to have higher standards, they may do so.

Dr. Venkataraman asked if there was a mechanism in place that signals promptly when students’ GPA decreases to the point that triggers probation. Janet Rodgers answered that the system identifies critically low GPAs and the Office of the Registrars then puts the students on probation. Ms. Sanchez added a department is also able to disqualify or put a student on probation based on their own specific
department requirements. However, if a department chooses to have higher specific department standards, such as a higher GPA, they will need to monitor their students themselves as the system is not able to do so.

• **Student Affairs Reports - None**

4. **Old Business**

• **LaTeX Thesis Review (Dr. Rich Levine)**

Revisiting an issue brought to GC in fall, most theses from the Mathematics department require a program known as LaTeX to create the thesis. LaTeX is standard for journal submission in the Mathematics field and while it is very good for type-setting, it can be difficult to create a template that follows the Dissertation and Thesis Manual’s (DTM) rules and regulations exactly. Peter Blomgren, an expert in LaTeX, created a template in September 2010, which was then approved by Montezuma Publishing (MP). However, since that time and some of the theses have been rejected multiple times. Dr. Levine proposes that, rather than these students going through the standard MP review process, MP instead approve a LaTeX template for each student to use and the department would review the thesis prior to submission to MP. Dr. Welter suggested that the department also provide a statement to MP along with each thesis, which would indicate that the department has reviewed the thesis and confirms that the MP approved LaTeX template was used. Janet Rodgers raised concerns previously voiced by MP that the references would not be checked and the preliminary pages would vary from the approved DTM format. Dr. Venkataraman answered that the preliminary pages are very close to the approved standard and Dr. Castillo added that the references are generated in the software, and so all of the citations and references would be correct.

**Vote:** GC voted unanimously to support a department using an MP approved LaTeX template, which would be as close as possible to the Dissertation and Thesis Manual rules and regulations. Additionally, when a thesis is submitted for review to MP, the department would provide confirmation stating that the thesis has been reviewed by the department and the student used the approved LaTeX template.

5. **New Business**

• **Faculty in the FERP program in the Graduate Bulletin (Cristina Sanchez)**

Dr. Aguado had raised the question of whether a faculty member who is in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP) should be listed in the Graduate Bulletin. Ms. Sanchez brought out that currently some departments include these faculty members, and others do not. Council members were not aware if there was a clear policy on the matter and, therefore, Dr. Prislin suggested the Policy Committee research the subject and report back in fall.

• **NRTWs**
Dr. Welter opened discussion by suggesting that the Council raise issues and make recommendations today, holding firm decisions until the fall semester.

**Priority Listing:** Dr. Prislin reviewed the current NRTW priority list, which is as follows:

1. Continuing international students recruited on a waiver and in good standing.
2. New JDP/MFA students.
3. Students on a fellowship (McNair/Fulbright).
4. Students from funded grants in which a NRTW was included as cost-sharing.
5. Other incoming non-resident’s (master’s).

Dr. Prislin reminded the Council that if the top two priorities were strictly adhered to during round one distribution, there would not have been enough waivers even to fulfill those two categories. Dr. Perez asked why MFAs are given priority when there are more terminal degrees than MFAs. Dr. Verity added that although master’s programs are at the bottom of the list of priorities, they outstrip the other categories in total number of programs. Dr. Welter added that when considering the ranking of priorities for waivers, the Council should consider who we want to be and where we want to go. Dr. Venkataraman added that if the JDPs were to receive all of the waivers, then master’s students would be subsidizing the JDP students, which he would not approve of. Additionally, he asked why Foundation is not involved in funding of the NRTW program considering JDP students are receiving waivers and it is they who are generating research and funds to Foundation. Dr. Welter answered that given the Foundation’s current economic challenges, their contribution to the program would not be a current solution. Dr. Perez warned against slipping into a business model in an academic environment. She explained that if Foundation were to begin to invest in supporting waivers to those departments who contribute the most of the grant money, then some colleges would be disadvantaged. Additionally, she warned that this kind of approach would further undermine parts of the university that many say do not receive enough attention already.

**International Graduate Programs:** Dr. Perez brought out that her department has a concurrent graduate degree program with a partner institution. When the contract was originally negotiated, the number of students was established and the process of exchange decided upon – some students would begin at SDSU and then go to the partner institution, and vice versa. However, since SDSU is a degree granting institution, the students who begin at the partner institution and then come to SDSU are required to pay the non-resident tuition while at SDSU. However, those beginning at SDSU and then attending the partner institution are not required to pay these fees while at the partner institution. Dr. Welter suggested this category of students be considered as an addition to the top of the priority list. Additionally, Dr. Welter suggested we add to the discussion in the fall what happens when a program makes a mistake during the NRTW nomination process.

In closing, Dr. Welter thanked Drs. Castillo, Do, and Olevsky for their service to the Graduate Council – since they have now completed their second terms, they will not be returning to the Graduate Council in fall.
Adjournment 3:30pm