

MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO
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Office of the Academic Senate Ext. 8-2743

October 13, 2015

Members Present: M. Wilson (Chair), J. Marshall, A. Nambiar, P. Trueblood, D. Vera, R. Raeisi, S. Tracz

Members Absent: M. Lopez (excused)

Guests: M. Varela

Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. in TA 117.

Agenda:

1. MSC to approve the minutes of 09/15/2015 with minor revisions.
2. MSC to approve the agenda for 10/13/2015 as distributed.
3. Communications and Announcements:
 - a. Follow up from Grad Coordinators' Breakfast
 - Dean Marshall reported that it was well attended. The primary topic was financial aid. A number of questions surfaced during the meeting which financial aid office took back to their department for further action. Dean Marshall mentioned that he attended the system wide meeting of graduate deans and it seems that some of the issues facing our campus are prevalent across the system. It seems that most students do not know much about financial aid. For example, the rule of financial aid repayment is commonly interpreted as being 6 months after graduation. However, the rule is that repayment begins after 6 months after a semester of less than 6 unit enrollment.
 - Another topic that was discussed at the meeting was the proposed Graduate Education Awareness and Recognition Week planned for February 16 - 19, 2016. Dean Marshall shared the tentative plans for that week. One of the big activities planned is the Graduate Program and Resources Fair where each program would have a table. The fair would potentially be around the patio at student union. This would probably run from 2pm to 6pm. This might attract some undergraduates. This might also attract working

professionals who might want to come by after work. Program Coordinators would have a table to display student work, flyers, etc. The idea is to improve awareness of graduate programs across campus. The fair is meant to target future graduate students. During this week or even the week prior, there would be prompts using lawn signs throughout the campus, and a new banner is being designed to be hung over the student union. There is also a recognition component, which might include a student-faculty mixer. There is a possibility of having this mixer at the new art facility at Downtown Fresno. The mixer would probably be on Thursday. A lecture would be planned during that week as part of the Graduate Net initiative too. There are talks about having student art exhibits and potentially having tickets for the basketball game on Saturday. Dean Marshall met with all College Deans and suggested that perhaps in each college, events could be planned around this.

- Dr. Skeen reported that the breakfast was well attended and everything was relevant. Dr. Skeen also mentioned that focusing on one particular topic in detail might be really helpful for future meetings. Dean Marshall mentioned that the next Graduate Coordinator meeting would be in the afternoon with some repetition.
- Dr. Tracz also thought that the financial aid presentation was really useful and Dr. Tracz has actually invited the presenter to her college. Dr. Tracz found the presenter to be really knowledgeable and really helpful.

b. Academic Senate business related to graduate programs

- The name change related from M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling to M.S. Rehabilitation and Mental Health was approved by the Academic Senate.

c. Status of upcoming Program Reviews

- Dean Marshall informed the committee that there are two program review self-study reports coming to the committee for review - one from Geology and another from Kinesiology.

4. Discussion of Graduation Clearance form: suggestions re simplification: Guest: M. Varela
 - a. Chair Wilson inquired about the need for all the signatures required on the graduate degree clearance form.

M Varela mentioned that there have been times in the past when all the signatures were required. However, over the years, it has changed and most signatures have "if required" option. As for the grade, this is the only course where faculty do not go on PeopleSoft to assign grades.

There was one time when grades could be entered online and faculty entered grades online but students were not ready to graduate. So the intent of including the grades on the clearance form is to have another check to make sure if the student is ready to graduate. M. Varela informed that her office hand delivers the grades to the Records office to ensure that grades are posted and their degrees are awarded on time.
 - b. Chair Wilson also inquired why thesis is awarded grades and not NC/CR

Dean Marshall mentioned that it is possible to change that. However, each program would have to submit a request to change from letter grade to NC/CR. Dean Marshall also mentioned that about 2/3 of the programs across the system use letter grades.

M. Varela mentioned that only 1/5 units can be CR/NC courses. M Varela also emphasized the need to work with scheduling to ensure that PeopleSoft accurately codes the courses following a change.
5. Discussion of Graduate Orientation: timing, content, coordination with other events.
 - a. The committee felt that the proposed Graduate Education Awareness and Recognition week addresses some of the concerns raised about the orientation.
 - b. Dean Marshall mentioned that the New Student Convocation would continue every year and the organizers realize that graduate students need to be included in the messaging.
 - c. Dean Marshall mentioned that despite the change in times, attendance at the graduate orientation was fairly comparable - around 250-325 compared to an average of around 400 in previous years.

- d. The committee deliberated ideas such as having a tent for graduate students to meet after the new convocation; coming back to Save Mart after the fair for the graduate student orientation; moving it back another hour and splitting the social hour for undergraduate and graduate students.
- e. Dr. Skeen mentioned that it would be great to know the plans/dates well ahead.

6. New Business

a. Low-cost Extension for 298C/299C

- o Dean Marshall mentioned that some coordinators have expressed concern that the rule of registering for IT 298C in every subsequent semester after the initial enrollment in IT 298 affects quality. However, this was done to improve graduation rates and provide faculty credit in workload.
- o The committee discussed options such as having a low-cost extension for one semester and then reverting back to the current practice.
- o The committee inquired about the number of students enrolling in IT298C across the University.

7. MSC to adjourn at 3.02 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting for the Graduate Committee is Tuesday, October 27, 2015 at 2:00 pm in Thomas 117.

Agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of 10/13/2015.
2. Approval of the Agenda.
3. Communications and Announcements.

The Academic Senate and President Castro approved the Web-Based Certificated of Advanced Study in Community and Regional Planning.

4. Preparation of questions for Program Review of Kinesiology; Kinesiology department and college representatives will attend the UGC meeting Nov. 3.
5. Continued discussion on 299c/298C.