

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

April 12, 2016

Members Present: M. Wilson (Chair), J. Marshal, P. Trueblood, M. Lopez,  
D. Vera, T. Skeen, A. Nambiar, Kaitlyn Sims (student)

Members Absent: S. Tracz and R. Raeisi (Excused)

Guests: Peter Van de Water, Robert Dundas, Andrew Lawson,  
Christopher J. Pluhar.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wilson at 2:00 p.m. in TA #117.

1. Minutes. MSC to approve the minutes of April 5, 2016
2. Agenda. MSC to approve the agenda as distributed.
3. Communications and Announcements.

J. Marshall:

- TA eligibility spread sheet is available and needs to be approved by the provost. The allocations to the colleges for next year will be sent out by April 15. Each college will decide how to use the allocation. It is expected that the allocation will be similar to what colleges received this academic year.
- Graduate students, seniors and juniors have been notified of the Grad Research Symposium (May 5th 1 pm to 8 pm).

4. Appointments to Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee

Dr. Steven Hart will be reappointed to the graduate Curriculum Subcommittee.

5. Program Review for M.S. in Geology

Dr. Pluhar, the graduate coordinator, listed four areas on planning pointed out by reviewers: (a) 5 year hiring plan (b) Student recruitment (c) Space for faculty (d) Increasing funding. Dr. Pluhar mentioned that to address some of these they conduct a faculty retreat in August. In terms of hiring, they plan on adding two faculty positions; they have already requested one.

Another recommendation from the outside reviewers was to nurture new faculty and improve space allocation. Dean Lawson and Dean Dundas pointed out that the new Jordan Agricultural Research Center building will help address this issue. According to Dean Dundas, three faculty members from EES will be relocating to the new building.

Dr. Pluhar also commented on the outside recommendation to address faculty workload. He discussed using existing mechanisms and pre-classifying classes to address workload. Dean Dundas also mentioned that the college is working ensuring workloads of 24 WTUs.

Dr. Pluhar also discussed funding; he said that tuition waivers have helped funding students. More progress needs to be made on fundraising

Dr. Pluhar said that improving the website is in the agenda for the Fall semester. He hopes this will help recruit students. Dean Lawson added that the college has a graduate student who can assist with the website.

Dr. Pluhar mentioned the alumni advisory board as well as the speaker series. The idea is to better align the speaker series with the graduate program.

Dr. Van de Water discussed how they are working to get students to complete their degree on time. Dr. Wilson pointed out the high attrition rate and Dr. Pluhar concurred.

According to the team report, graduate students were not aware of funds for travel and attending conferences. However, Dr. Pluhar described how students do take advantage of funding, and added that the program sends several students to an annual conference in San Francisco every year.

Dr. Wilson asked about core courses. Dr. Pluhar explained that students take 2 common classes: writing classes (201), thesis unit (299). Students take widely varied courses, based on what they decide with their advisor and what is available. The program is very flexible; however the course offerings are very uncertain. Dr. Lopez voiced her concern about students lobbying to get courses, according to the program review team report. Dean Dundas clarified that instead of students "lobbying", they (faculty) consult students on what courses to offer. Dr. Wilson inquired about a research method course. Dr. Pluhar mentioned that they have been discussing additional courses including a speaker series course and a research method course. The department expects to discuss courses and possible curriculum changes during the faculty retreat. Dr. Pluhar pointed out that students can still complete the course requirement in a 1 ½ to 2 years. Most of the issues with completion are related to finishing the thesis.

Dean Lawson agreed that having more common courses (content) could help with assessment, assurance of learning and quality of the program. Dr. Wilson concurred that it would help with the SOAP. Dean Marshall added that a research methods course would also help graduate culture in the program.

Dr. Pluhar said that a course for new graduate students in the fall semester would help graduate culture. Dean Dundas and Dr. Van de Water pointed out that students in the program spent a lot of time travelling together and doing fieldwork, which improve both the undergraduate and graduate cultures.

Dr. Lopez asked about the number of students in the program. Dr. Pluhar said that they have anywhere between 3-12 new students, and around 20 students including existing students. Dr. Pluhar explained that additional graduate students would allow the department to offer more labs and more graduate courses. Improving graduation rate will allow faculty to serve more students during the same period of time. Critical mass and cohort would also help students succeed in the program.

Dr. Skeen asked about student recruitment. Dr. Pluhar answered that in the past most students were from CSU Fresno, but more recently they have recruited from outside. Dr. Pluhar added that more recently students have been going into Ph.D. programs

6. Summary of Program Review for M.S. in Geology

Strengths:

- a) Faculty (strong faculty)
- b) Enough graduate students
- c) Writing class
- d) According to the graduate coordinator students present in Academic Conferences
- e) A planned faculty retreat to improve planning and curriculum
- f) Hiring plan

Needs

- (a) Long term course planning
- (b) Core Courses, including research methods, for consistency and SOAP.
- (c) Updated website
- (d) Expanded SOAP
- (e) Assessment (SOAP) needs to be implemented on other courses besides thesis and thesis- related courses.
- (f) Student recruitment plan

Committee recommends the M.S. in Geology as a “Program of Quality and Promise”

7. MSC: to adjourn at 3:00 pm

The next scheduled meeting for the Graduate Committee will be held May 3, 2016, at 2 pm in TA 117.

Agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of 4/12/16.
2. Approval of the Agenda.
3. Communications and Announcements
  - Larry Riley from Mathematics will be the Science and Mathematics representative 2016-2019.
  - GRACAS Thursday, May 5, 2016 1 – 8 pm
  - UGC End of the Year Social: May 6<sup>th</sup>, 6-8 pm, Marilyn Wilson’s home
4. Appointment of Hollianne Marshall, Criminology, to the Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee
5. Proposal for Certificate of Advanced Study in Research Methods – 1<sup>st</sup> reading
6. Election of UGC Chair for 2016-2017