

MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO
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Fresno, California 93740-8014
Office of the Academic Senate Ext. 8-2743

February 23, 2016

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

Members Absent:

Guests: Dean Saul Jimenez-Sandoval, Associate Dean Honora Chapman, Professors John Beynon, Lisa Weston, and Connie Hales

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wilson at 2:04 p.m. in Thomas #117.

1. Minutes. MSC to approve the minutes of February 2, 2016.
2. Agenda. MSC to approve the Agenda.
3. Communications and Announcements.

The New Student Convocation will have greater focus on graduate students and will be on August 18, 2016. DGS will meet to make recommendations about orientation procedures in conjunction with the convocation.

Graduate Recognition Week was a success. The Resources Fair was moved, but had 175 students who were introduced to 25 programs. All programs left with list of student contacts. Thursday night had 150 people at the M Street Art Graduate Student Studio. Friday hosted a luncheon for staff who contribute to graduate student success. The two day graduate student leadership program had around 25 students. Dean Marshall thanked the committee for our support. A follow-up evaluation about this program on Qualtrics will be conducted.

4. Program Review for M.A. in English

J. Beynon, Program Coordinator, said the English program was a 30 unit MA program, with two options in Literature and in Rhetoric and Writing. These options culminate in a thesis, which is a substantial multi-chapter piece. The program has strong faculty and impressive students who go on to do great work and present at national and international conferences.

Dr. Beyon noted some MA students enroll in MFA courses. Some also enroll in the editing and publishing course and the Phil Levine course. The MA program has students supporting the Graduate Writing Studio on campus.

A new course, Research Methods, has been developed and is currently undergoing approval. In this course students will have an initial experience that allows them to learn about graduate level research will help build a community in first semester. The program wants students to have freedom of choice along with developing a sense of community, especially since many students work full-time and take classes in evening. Since developing the ENG 205 Research Methods and using social media platforms, students are sharing information such as calls for papers.

Concerns expressed through the program review included a lack of dedicated space. Dean Jimenez-Sandoval reported that English doesn't have a space of their own so students don't have a space where they can go. The department does not even a conference room or conference table. J. Beynon noted students reported feeling unconnected with other students. A dedicated space would help to develop program cohesiveness. Increased use of social media and requesting space in the new or old student union were suggested.

An addition concern noted by the review team was lack of travel funding. J. Beynon reported they received as low as 10-20% funding to attend conferences and at times cancelled presentations due to lack of funding. Chair L. Weston said it was a nice problem that their faculty are so productive, but coming up with money for travel is still a problem. The new budget helps some, and they are able to fund faculty better, and graduate students can get Grad Student Travel Grants ASI, and the Graduate Net Initiative. .

Dean Marshall complimented the English Department because more than any other department, when they apply for mini-grants, they always have very well written supportive letters from faculty, program coordinators, dean, chair, which discuss the impact on students of attending the conferences and the quality of the student work. These descriptions of the value are very useful.

A final concern was the lack of SOAP data. This was not addressed by the Program Review Team but definitely noted by the University Graduate Committee. J. Beynon agreed and said since he had become program coordinator, he had communication with OIE. He said it would be useful for him to have better training on assessment. Suggestion were made on

where to gain assistance on assessment, and types of data they might already have that could be utilized.

5. Program Review for M.F.A in Creative Writing

Coordinator T. Skeen discussed the 54 unit MFA program. He noted they have 46 students and 6 full time faculty. The goal would be 50 to 60 students. They will graduate 19 students. A major concern in recruitment is being competitive in terms of financial incentives.

The MFA program presented an excellent SOAP with data embedded in the self study. Their SOAP was customized to address their concerns. A primary source of data were student and alumni surveys administered through their restricted list serve. Their response rate was not that great, but some information was helpful, and they sincerely try to apply what they hear to what they do. Some of their students have great accomplishments. They have won the American Book Award for Poetry, which is the first Hmong book of poetry ever.

A future asset is the Phil Levine reading room, studio 2, with all his books. They can also use it as a classroom. Chair Wilson noted the program has great community participation.

T. Skeen said he wanted it in the record that the staff at DGS is terrific. "They have saved me many times." J. Beynon agreed.

A concern was the need to update and maintain their website. This was recognized as a common problem across campus. T. Lopez said FLC's are available so to work with faculty from many departments. Staff is overburdened, but they can still give administrative assistants some time to work on web pages. Another suggestion was getting a work study student or a graduate student as student assistant. Assistant Dean Chapman said the university plans to redesign their shell so we don't want to put too much work before getting a new template. She said the college is going to hire communication specialist.

Dean Marshall outlined the next steps in the Program Review process, with a letter from the UGC, then developing an action plan based on feedback from all levels of review, for a planning meeting with the Provost.

6. The motion to adjourn was passed at 3:05 p.m.

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The next scheduled meeting of the Graduate Committee is Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. in Thomas 117.

Agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of 2/23/16
2. Approval of the Agenda.
3. Communications and Announcements.
4. Recommendations for Graduate Program Review of MA in English and MFA.