MINUTES
Annual Graduate Faculty Meeting
October 23, 2015, 1:30 – 3:00, CSB 110

In Attendance: Andrea Abramovich, Karen Bell (Presiding Officer of the Graduate Faculty), Nataly Chesky, Sunny Duerr, Devon Duhaney, Laurel M. Garrick Duhaney (Associate Provost & Dean of the Graduate School), Marinella Garatti, Caroline Hopenwasser, Aaron Isabelle, Baback Izadi, Gweneth Lloyd, John Mahoney, Rosemary Millham, Rajeev Narayanan, Catherine Paolucci, Lindsey Russo, Mary Sawyer, Laura Schultz, Vika Shock, Karla Vermeulen

1. Welcome by Karen Bell, Presiding Officer of the Graduate Faculty

Karen Bell gave a brief overview of the Graduate Faculty Blackboard page (e.g., meeting minutes, agenda, By-laws, syllabus template, and her contact information). She then introduced Laurel M. Garrick Duhaney, Dean of the Graduate School.

Introductory Remarks by Laurel M. Garrick Duhaney: Welcome followed by introductions of the Graduate Council Representatives...

2. Program and Course Revisions & Proposals

   a. Please contact Laurel before proposing a new course/program because she needs to inform the Provost and discuss the rationale for course/program, resource implications, etc. Also, sometimes there are changes to the forms that are used by SUNY and/or SED, so you want to be sure to use the correct form to simplify the process.

   b. A cover page, which requires signed approvals from relevant individuals and governance bodies, must accompany each proposal. The cover page—which is available on the Graduate Faculty Blackboard site—should be the first pages of the complete proposal.

   c. Laurel noted that: “Our goal is to send really strong proposals to SUNY and NYSED.” This includes a strong rationale for revising or developing a program (i.e., what need is it going to meet? Will graduates obtain jobs following program completion?).

   d. Model “new and revised program proposals” will be posted to Blackboard.

   e. Two major program revisions were approved over the 2014-2015 academic year, as well as one new program proposal. There were also a number of minor course revisions that were approved (See Attachment: Graduate Dean’s Report). Currently, there are a few course and program revisions in the pipeline.

   f. An ongoing concern is the length of time involved in reviewing proposals at New Paltz and at NYSED. At New Paltz, we are trying to address this issue. Elizabeth Shuipis, is a new addition to the Provost’s office and she will assist with program proposals.

   g. Laurel: “Why are we developing new programs? We’re trying to implement the Graduate School Strategic Plan; that is, we are looking for areas/niches in the community to fulfill to attract new students to our Graduate School. For example, a sub-group of the Interdisciplinary Autism Initiative Group produced a White Paper which outlines programs and plans for generating enrollment and revenue. “We want to be known as an Interdisciplinary Center for Excellence in Autism.”
3. Update on Graduate School Policies
   a. Students cannot have a grade of “F” in their Graduate Program of Study. Students must either take another course to replace the course or repeat the course (Note: students are only allowed to use the “repeat/replace” option once).
   b. Credit limit for Independent Studies: Up to 6 semester credit hours in Independent Study may be applied to graduate degrees. The purpose of offering an Independent Study was distributed to faculty. One major rationale behind offering an Independent Study at the graduate level should be to encourage student/faculty research collaboration. So, rather than simply creating an Independent Study as a replacement for a course, let’s try to facilitate student/faculty research. There are funds available to help underwrite research projects such as Research and Creative Project Award program (RCPA), and graduate students can also apply to the Student Association (SA) for funds.

4. Report of the Graduate School Dean (Note: A PowerPoint of this report can be found on the Graduate Faculty Blackboard page)
   a. Overview of The Graduate School Strategic Plan Priorities
      i. Increase graduate school enrollment
      ii. Development of an integrated and programmatic approach to marketing, recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management
      iii. Development of innovative approaches to teaching and learning (e.g. online, hybrid, non-credit bearing programs). We need to have a discussion as to what constitutes a “hybrid program.” For example, if 50% or more of a program’s courses are online, then that program is denoted as an “online program.” Please think about this: “What is the definition for a “hybrid program?” This is an important issue for us because more and more students want this type of program which would increase enrollments. We need to decide which programs are best to move into this model; therefore, we should approach this strategically and in phases.
      iv. Development of new programs and revision of existing programs
      v. Deactivation and discontinuance of a low-enrolled program (Note: this is a Cabinet level decision)
      vi. Student engagement and support
      vii. Creation of structures that enhance the Graduate School’s autonomy
   b. Recruitment
      a. The Graduate School is developing an International Graduate Student Recruitment Strategic Plan. The plan, which is being developed by StudentMarketing—an Austrian market research and market intelligence firm—has broad input from Graduate Dean Laurel and the Dean of the Center for International Programs and their respective staff members. The main purpose of the plan is to increase international graduate student enrollment, while maintain high academic standards and a reputation of quality. Laurel, along with other faculty/staff, recently visited multiple locations in India and the Middle East.
b. PTE Academic: Many of the students who we recruit overseas take this test; it is a relatively new computer-based English Language proficiency test produced by Pearson. We will accept PTE Academic scores that are equivalent to TOEFL and IELTS.

c. We are losing some students because we are not turning around application decisions quickly enough. (Laurel will try to hire an interim person to assist at high application intake times.)

d. Also, we often look for original documents from international students, but this can be especially difficult for students applying from some countries. We can grant admission based on “certified documents from an agent” pending submission of original documents for review.

e. During overseas recruitment efforts, Laurel spoke with both students and parents; they want safe/secure, affordable living arrangements. We need to offer them more support to find affordable housing.

f. There is a large expatriate population in Kuwait, Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Many of these students are fully funded by the government. If these students meet our admission criteria, then that is fine; however, whatever we do, we will not compromise the admission criteria of our programs. There are also certain cultural differences that we need to be aware of. In Kuwait, males may come to the US to study; however, if they are 18 or older, then they cannot go back to their country unless they have a job waiting for them. So, there are many issues to consider.

g. We are hearing that agents and prospective international students are having difficulty navigating our website and it lacks appeal for international students. How can we make it more appealing to both domestic and international students? A meeting with representatives of the faculty and Communication & Media staff will be scheduled. Some ideas for improvement include: virtual online tours in multiple languages; international student blogs; statistics and testimonials about international students; clear programmatic information and evidence that the degree will help employment options; accurate information; material in the language of key target students, etc. It is important to be aware that the way we use our website is different from how students view/use it.

c. Questions/Comments:
   a. Workflow issues – viewing application documents that are scanned the wrong way or formatting issues. Vika’s suggestion: the Xtender program is built for Internet Explorer (IE); for example, using IE allows you to rotate documents in the proper orientation.
   b. Ability to access workflow documents from home (VPN access)
   c. Problem: Secondary Education – The Department Chair can only see the education faculty member’s comments and not comments from the content-specific department. These issues need to be addressed.

d. Adjournment: 2:55 pm

Respectfully submitted by,

Aaron D. Isabelle, Dean’s Office, School of Education