

# UBGS MINUTES

**To:** UBGS Members  
**From:** Bill Wiener  
**Date:** 11-06-08  
**Re:** University Board of Graduate Studies  
Approved Minutes of the **November 6 2008** UBGS Meeting

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*Present:* Jay Caulfield, Stephen Guastello, Robert Griffin, Kristin Haglund, Kim Halula, Ed Inderrieden, John Karkheck, Tim Melchert, Stephen Merrill, Craig Pierce, Margaret Steele, Michael Waxman  
*Excused:* Gerald Harris, Albert Rivero, Tom Taft, Bill Wiener  
*Also Present:* Melody Baker (note taker), Belen Castañeda

The committee was called to order at 2:05 p.m. and the agenda was approved with one addition.

## **Reports:**

*No Reports*

## **New Business:**

### *Foreign Languages (Spanish) program changes*

Dr. Castaneda joined the meeting to explain the changes in the Spanish program and answer any questions. The change forms had been sent to the members ahead of time. The changes included:

FOLL – Master of Arts/Specialization Spanish – the department would like to change from offering Plan A & B to offering Plan B only. This is being recommended due to a lack of interest in Plan A.

FOLL - end Master of Arts in Teaching. The rationale is prompted by a very low number of students being interested in program and the fact that students still have the option to obtain a teaching certification through other means if they so desire. Because some of the classes are through the College of Education, Dr. Inderrieden recommended that college should be notified of the change.

Dr. Castaneda was dismissed. A motion was made and seconded to approve both of these changes. In discussion, it was recommended to get feedback from the appropriate chair and dean from the College of Education. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

### *NURS-CNS Post-Master's Certificates: Adult Clinical Nurse Specialist and Gerontologic Nurse Specialist*

Dr. Haglund explained the rationale for these changes and answered any questions. The college has had these programs for years but they have never been on the books as certificates. There was some discussion regarding the credit requirements. It was recommended that it should be made clear that the proposal should state that a *minimum* of 12 credits are required. Dr. Haglund was not sure, but estimated that 2 – 3 students a year obtain one of these two certificates. A motion was made and seconded to approve the certificate and make it retroactive to this current term. No further discussion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

### *Assessment of Core Learning Outcomes for Graduate Studies*

A consensus list was compiled by Dr. Taft after sharing with the members ahead of time. The six items on the list were discussed with one minor change recommended by Dr. Wiener prior to the meeting:

1. Communication (such as fashioning oral and written arguments)
2. Ethics: research/professional/social
3. Knowledge (deep, appropriate, relevant) of the underlying theory and concepts of the discipline.
4. Critical Thinking/Analyzing
5. Apply Research to Solve Problems in the Discipline of Interest
6. Life-Long Learning

The topic of Ethics, and how a student's ethics would be assessed was discussed at length and it was suggested that knowledge of professional ethics may be assessed, and whether someone has the tools to identify an ethical dilemma, but not one's *personal* ethics.

It was also recommended to change #5 to: Apply Research *and Seek Other Information* to Solve Problems in the Discipline of Interest. This would incorporate Life-Long Learning (#6) and eliminate it as a separate item.

Another recommended a change was for #1: Communication *appropriate to the discipline*. The members agreed that communication can take very different forms from one discipline to another.

To #3, the members recommended adding: *Seek* knowledge (deep, appropriate, relevant) of the underlying *theories* and concepts of the discipline.

There was some discussion about how these outcomes are expected to be assessed and how this list will effect departments. It is assumed these details will be included in the final product, which will be returned to the UBGs for evaluation and approval.

### *Percentage of undergraduate (5000) level courses that can fulfill graduate degree requirements*

Mr. Pierce posed the question, what percentage of undergraduate courses should be able to count towards graduate degree? The current Graduate School policy is to allow 50% of the required credits to come from specifically approved undergraduate courses. A 1/3 (undergraduate level courses) – 2/3 (graduate courses) mix is being proposed. A review of peers found that some allow 20% or a flat 6 credits. MU's current percentage seems to be much higher than any peers. The question is, should a policy be made to limit the number of undergraduate level courses to be used towards a graduate degree to one third of the total credits?

One concern is that grad students are required to do extra class work to take undergrad credits, but there is no way to monitor that. Another dilemma is that the instructor won't know if a student is taking an undergrad class as a prerequisite for a graduate class, or towards a graduate degree. It was determined that this should be more apparent once all the new course numbers are applied.

It was asked if a grad student could take 4000 level courses, not as a credit, but to fill in background, or use towards tuition remission. No one was certain as to the answer to this question. In conclusion, the members were asked if they were in agreement that no more than 1/3 5000 level classes be allowed to be taken towards a graduate degree. A motion was made

and seconded that students can take no more than 1/3 undergraduate courses towards their master's program. In discussion it was confirmed that this change will not negatively affect most programs in a major way. For the one program that may have concerns with such a policy, exceptions could be made on a case-by-case basis. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

#### *Limits in transferring credits from one completed master's degree towards another degree*

The policy has been that a student can transfer 12 credits from prior coursework, whether that was part of a completed degree or not, towards a second degree. Some peers do not allow this, and some only allow excess credits, i.e. credits that were not used to complete a prior degree. Should credits from a completed program be used towards a new program?

One issue is that the date of the earliest transfer starts the 6 year (to degree completion) clock. Courses may be transferred into a master's program, but are not formally transferred into a PhD program; instead, credits of prior graduate coursework are recognized on the Doctoral Program Planning Form, which could ultimately impact the number of doctoral credits required for completion of the doctoral degree. Part of the discussion included what percentage of credits towards a MU degree have to be taken at MU?

Another issue is if students take courses to earn one masters and apply some of those credits towards another masters, is that double counting? Current policy allows 12 such credits to be used/double-counted.

Currently, credits earned in a non-degree status cannot go above 9 without going into a degree status. A student may still not be accepted into a degree program, but then will continue on in non-degree status. There have been a couple of cases where of abuse of this has lead a non-degree student to accumulate so many credits that they ultimately have taken the number required for a degree and then demand one, even though they were never accepted into a degree status. Solutions that were offered:

Solution 1: A student cannot stay in non-degree status for more than 12 credits.

Solution 2: Only *temporary* status can be used before going to degree status (change to allow 2 terms of temporary). Then, non-degree status can only be used *after* obtaining a degree and for no more than 12 credits.

Solution 3: Do away with the non-degree status entirely, and change the Temporary status to allow two consecutive terms.

Because this topic seems complicated, it was discussed, but no decisions were made. The members would like to continue discussion on this topic at the next meeting.

#### *Graduate Program Review*

Dr. Melchert gave a report on the overall observations and recommendations (17 total) that came out of last year's joint subcommittee on academic reviews. Handouts were shared with the members. There is a concern that these recommendations will not go anywhere in spite of the hours of work invested by the subcommittee. Many of the recommendations involve resources that would have to be approved by the provost's office. Dr. Inderrieden asked if the most critical issues could be identified before this document is distributed; however, there was uncertainty as to whether the document had already been circulated to the academic senate. It was also suggested include the kinds of things faculty are prevented from doing because of these critical issues.

Another suggestion was made to have the document endorsed by the UBGs and UBUS chairs as well as the vice provosts and to share these findings with the departments so that everyone can see what issues were identified. Some members asked if it could be

determined what items are most important, what is most feasible, and can a price tag be put on these items? It was recommended to continue discussion on this list at next the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.