

## MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

March 23, 2010

105 Houchens

**Convene** – Meeting Convened at 3:00 PM – Dr. Beth Boehm, Interim Dean presiding.

**Ex-Officio present:** Dr. Paul DeMarco, Associate Dean SIGS

**Members Present:** Haribabu Bodduluri, Sherri Brown, Amber Carrier, Jean Christensen, Carrie Daniels, James Fiet, Ruth Huber, Mary Hums, Mehmed Kantardzic, Susan Ryan, David Scott, and Samuel Stringfield.

**Members Absent:** Susan Olson Allen, Ray Austin, William Dean (for Barbara Clark), Eileen Estes, Jafar Hadizadeh, Debra Journet, Luke Milligan, John Naber, Joe Steffen, Deborah Thomas, Gennaro Vito, and Pam Yankeelov.

**Guests:** Travis Gault (elected to take Amber Carrier's position).

### 1. Welcome

Dr. Beth Boehm, Interim Dean SIGS opened the meeting at 3:00 PM of the Graduate Council and welcomed everyone. She introduced Travis Gault, an Electrical Engineering student who is the newly elected officer that will be taking Amber's place as of May 2010.

### 2. ACTION: Consideration of minutes of January 26, 2010

Dr. Boehm asked for approval of the January 26, 2010 meeting minutes. Dr. James Fiet asked that a correction be made to read "ask for a writing sample" on Page 2 of the minutes. MOTION by Jean Christensen to approve with correction; Second by David Scott. APPROVED.

### 3. ACTION: Proposal from Graduate Student Welfare and Development Committee for a Graduate Student Parental and Family Leave Policy.

Due to the absence of members from the Student Welfare and Development Committee, Dr. Boehm presented and recapped the proposal on their behalf. Will be funded in part by SIGS. Number 1 of the proposal applies to students who are funded by SIGS (of which we can set a policy since we provide funds). Number 2, because it's an academic leave policy that applies to all students but doesn't have a monetary commitment, so we can set that academic policy. At the bottom there's a policy that is a sort of matching policy that departments can choose to participate in with their own students who they fund on GTAs but are not required to do so. She recapped the policy. Some departments say yes to leave policies and might give generously; other departments say absolutely no to funding. This is a big issue to students, especially women graduate students. According to a Council of Graduate Schools report, there is a huge difference in students that end up graduating (20% women vs. 75% men). Any student that receives a scholarship from SIGS is eligible for leave for a period of three weeks in connection with the birth or adoption of a child. Leave currently is for three weeks, in accordance with staff. We are working to extend this to six weeks (if it is extended for staff). There was some question about students having to pay back monies awarded if leave is taken. This is not the policy or practice of SIGS. (Correction to 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, last sentence: "...as well as and remain..." remove AND). If a student has already worked, then they have already earned it.

The final part of the proposal that the committee recommended (Hari Bodduluri, Student Welfare & Development committee member now here) is a grant program, where departments can apply for a leave program (SIGS would pay ½ student's leave and dept would pay ½) or cover. Student could keep their stipend (and insurance) and we would just be paying for labor for them to continue their duties.

Dr. Boehm asked Amber for any feedback from the students. She said the students really liked the idea of getting standardized policy. Another part is that maternity is covered 100% under student health insurance.

Dr. Boehm asked for a vote. This comes from the committee as a MOTION and second.  
APPROVED. The policy will become effective immediately.

#### **4. Graduate Student Professional Development P.L.A.N. Project – Dr. Boehm**

When Beth was hired, she was asked to begin thinking about professional development for graduate students. One of the things the Provost asked for upon reorganization of SIGS, wanted it to be a place for student advocacy and professional development. Beth has been working with her graduate student on this PLAN. It will part of the orientation planning; SIGS met with outgoing and incoming Graduate Student Council leadership and also the SIGS Student Welfare and Development Committee and all are on board to work on this. It is a four-year plan for graduate students should do while here, that will be handed out at orientation. This allows them to “have a plan” and “participate in planning.” Beth recapped and went through each topic of the P.L.A.N. It will be like a folder and printed up a nice format. Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS) will be meeting soon (see below) and asked to fill out this plan with what they are doing currently or areas that need work. Lots of discussion followed. Beth did report that the schools that had a plan had higher recruitment rates than those that did not (referred to Michigan State hosted a session during Council of Graduate Schools). Students felt schools that were willing to work with them to make them successful professionals and not just get a degree. Dr. Huber asked if there was an area for politics (ethical/ philosophical) of a profession included? Dr. Boehm suggested it might be included in the Life Skills portion of the PLAN? Maybe units should take responsibility for this area? Dr. Christensen said we need to make students AWARE of what these things are preparing them for...some departments don't do anything to set milestones. Students might get to the point where they realize they don't know how to write a dissertation and we can help them do this and lay this out. The programs that do that and are more transparent, graduate more students. It was unanimous to move forward with this.

#### **5. BOT approves Professor Doherty and Dr. Kalam for Honorary Degrees –**

Did approve both nominations for Honorary degrees. Dr. Kalam's will be April 12 at Comstock Hall, giving a talk. Hooding will be at 1:00 PM. Professor Doherty will be at our own hooding ceremony at commencement.

#### **6. Update on Fellowship Nominations -**

Dr. DeMarco said 47 nominations were received for University Fellowships this year. The Scholarship and Awards Committee did excellent work evaluating credentials of these individuals from disciplines all across the university, a very hard job. Based on their rankings we were able to make 28 awards to students, so far we've had 11 students accept and five reject. They have until April 15 to let us know whether or not they are going to accept. We

expect to get more responses closer to the date, and we will make other offers. The nominations were a broad range of disciplines.

**7. Update on Ethnic Minority/SREB Nominations –**

Dr. Boehm reported that eight (1 declined) for Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) ethnic minority award for PhD students only. SIGs pays \$5000, SREB pays \$15000, (through State) and we provide tuition and insurance. Students can take mentors with them to a big conference which is very good. Students must apply for this and have to be accepted by a program. We have currently eight nominations for students that have been accepted and three where students have applied but have not heard whether they are in the program. Awards are usually made mid-April. The applicant has to have an interest in becoming a faculty member. On a nice note, we have three SREB students are graduating (one Social Work, 2 English). We also gave four Dissertation Completion awards for students, all four are graduating. All four have been nominated for something. Five Ethnic Minority Award students that have been nominated for Deans Citation awards. Dr. Bodduluri asked if this council group had any ideas for capturing the best and brightest for these awards. Beth responded to a question about deadlines, that we have signed on to the Grad Council Resolution that April 15 is the only deadline for students. Dr. DeMarco asked if any programs (Health Sciences) invited outside students in for visits. Dr. Bodduluri said yes, they do for recruiting events. Faculty felt that the departments could not move the deadline any earlier. Discussion.

**Update on Graduate Student Honors Nominations –** Beth reported that there were forty-eight nominations for Dean's Citation Awards, a number of nominations for the Binford Award, and four Houchens Award nominations. This Scholarship and Awards committee really works hard. Their committee will meet again March 31.

**8. SIGS working with HR—HR to take over Payroll processing and orientation for new GAs**

GAs usually complete their payroll paperwork through their respective departments, for their own funded graduate students. Departments and graduate (SIGs) are not always consistent in what we are telling the students. HR has offered to have their own orientation. They are willing to do multiple ones (including one or two as needed on HSC campus) to let students learn how to fill out their paperwork, get their parking sticker, get their Card ID, learn how to sign up for taxes (we have not been consistent) all in one place. We thought this was a good idea. We have a new HR VP who wants to take it over and is very accommodating. We are trying to think of the things we do in our own orientations (insurance, etc) that might be included in the HR orientation, for it to be a more academic orientation. It is tentatively scheduled to have two in August and two in July, to coincide with when students come in. There will be an agenda/proposal by the April 16 meeting for DGS. The concern came up that departments sometimes send paperwork out ahead of time; HR is working on an on-line packet to handle this. Another concern was that a student might miss the deadline and miss a month of pay. There is a concern about paying students when they do not show up until August. COB puts on workshops that the students are required (?) encouraged to attend. These questions will be raised with HR. HR has volunteered to do this and will relieve some departments, and it might possibly be made mandatory to go through HR. HR wants students to know about tax issues, especially international students.

9. **Report from Graduate Student Council –Amber Carrier, President**

Amber reported on a successful Graduate Symposium and thanked those that judged. There was much better attendance this year and six prizes that were given out. All six were from different disciplines. Attendance started a bit slow in the morning, then got very busy in the afternoon.

Graduate Student Council also had officer elections, brand new slate of five new people. Beth asked to thank Amber before (Amber's last day is hooding day) her last day as outgoing president. Beth moved that we give Amber a round of applause. Amber introduced Travis (already introduced).

10. **Old Business** (none)

11. **New Business** –

Dates of the upcoming meetings of Directors of Graduate Studies. An email reminder will be sent closer to the dates.

HSC location

Friday, April 16, 2010

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Abell Building, Room 109

Belknap location

Monday, April 19, 2010

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Shumaker Building, Room 139

12. **Adjournment** – Beth called for MOTION to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted*

*Jan Link, Recording Secretary*

*3/30/10*