

**MINUTES
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES**

MEETING: November 7, 2016

PRESENT: B. Burraston, R. Cohen, M. Conroy, R. Cox, S. Fleming, E. Groenendyk, T. Hagen, K. Hicks, W. James, C. Lessman, S. Mishra, C. Powell, S. Roakes, T. Roche, J. Scraba, J. Topinka, D. Unowsky

ABSENT: E. Delavega, P. Simone

PRESIDING: R. Kreuz; S. Fitzgerald, recording secretary

Approval of minutes from the October 3, 2016 meeting (K. Hicks, C Lessman second)

Old business

Dr. Kreuz reported that an e-mail ballot was held on October 5 on a curriculum revision from Philosophy to approve a change in the number of hours for a teaching skills class (PHIL 7/802). The change was approved by a vote of 15 to 0.

Mistake on the agenda

Dr. Kreuz noted that the first entry under “upcoming deadlines” was incorrect—Spring registrations begins on November 14.

Curriculum revisions

Dr. Kreuz reported that the so-called triage meetings will be held on November 9. The associate deans for each college meet with Dr. Dhaliwal to discuss any issues that Mary Kyle has flagged, identify any courses across the colleges that have overlapping content.

Dr. Kreuz reported that he would present a summary of the College’s curriculum revisions and answer questions from the other graduate directors and elected members at the University Council meeting on December 2. The final votes for approval would be taken at that time.

Report on the College Directors meeting (October 27) and Graduate Council meeting (November 4)

Curriculum revisions for this year

Dr. Kreuz reported that the U of M will still be under TBR for curriculum changes for this year. The Graduate School will give notice in January to withdraw from the system.

International Student Office

Dr. Kreuz reported that the Graduate School will resurrect the International Student Office. It will be housed in the Panhellenic Building. Dr. Dhaliwal believes that we're behind in recruiting international graduate students compared to other Tennessee schools, and reconstituting this office will make us more competitive in this regard.

- Dr. Scraba raised the question of whether this revived office would handle visa applications. Dr. Kreuz said the details are being worked out, and he will report back as details emerge.

Decision Desk

Dr. Kreuz reported that at a meeting of the College Directors on October 27, Jim Kierulff asked that departments keep using the existing system for graduate applications for now. In other words, programs shouldn't wait on the new system to begin processing applications.

Kierulff emphasized that all requests for additions and changes must be in by the end of the month, since the contract with the vendor ends then.

- There was discussion regarding this deadline, since Dr. Cohen noted that he had edits in the system which have yet to be addressed after three weeks.
- To allay the concerns that the vendor will not provide backup after launching, Dr. Kreuz pointed out that this vendor contract is just to get the system up and running.

Jim Kierulff noted that applications are down so far this year (although it's still very early). He's aiming to launch Decision Desk on December 1. Dr. Kreuz said that he wasn't clear whether this launch date is realistic or aspirational.

- There were questions about whether there would be two applications for the two different deadlines; about whether departments will be able to opt out of the process for this year's applications; and about how the students will find links to the appropriate pages. Dr. Kreuz said he will keep everyone abreast of changes and policies as they are made known to him.

Enrollment management

Dr. Dhaliwal emphasized the continued need to grow enrollments. The population of 18-years olds over the next few years is either static or trending downward, so for the university as a whole, it's important to increase enrollments at the graduate level. The Graduate School wants to work with departments that want to grow their enrollments.

Graduate certificates

Dr. Dhaliwal continued to emphasize the importance of promoting graduate certificates. It's easy to get approval for them (only takes 30 days), and can be obtained for taking as few as four courses. Positive performance in a certificate program could be used to enhance the application of prospective students to our graduate students, and could offset, say, low GRE scores.

Student Research Forum

Dr. Kreuz reported that student speaker nominations are needed. If you have anyone to recommend, please let him know.

- The date of this forum is March 27. Students will do 5-10 minute presentations. Names of recommended students should be given to Dr. Kreuz.

Section change forms

Dr. Kreuz reported that the Council has discussed a change in the section change process (when a student changes from one section to another in the same class). Kierulff argued that no value was being added by the Graduate School, and so in the future, such forms would be sent by the departments directly to the Registrar's office. This is part of a more general push to eliminate the Graduate School's role when no value is being added.

Carnegie Classification

Dr. Kreuz spent some time discussing the university's Carnegie classification, as it's recently become a matter of interest for the administration. His goal was to ensure that everyone was on the same page going forward, since actions by the university could have an impact on our graduate programs.

TU of M is classified as a Carnegie II doctoral institution (R2, or "higher research activity"). The administration aspires to see us reclassified as a Carnegie I institution (R1, or "highest research activity"). There are currently about 115 R1 and 107 R2 universities, and the classification is updated every 5 years (most recently, last year). Currently, the only public R1 school in Tennessee is UT Knoxville, and Memphis is the only R2. (There are four public R3s: ETSU, MTSU, TN State, and TN Tech.)

An important component of the Carnegie system is the number of doctoral degrees awarded. Therefore, the administration wants to prioritize this, and this may include creating more professional programs. There is some concern about "heading off" other institutions from developing such programs, such as a PsyD in Psychology. However, professional doctoral programs only make sense for certain disciplines, and as of the 2015 formula, they aren't weighted as much as traditional PhDs. There's also the concern about how professional programs would change the character and culture in departments that develop them.

- Increased numbers in existing programs will, of course, help.

- STEM programs seems to be more heavily weighted in the Carnegie system.
- Dr. Hagen mentioned that this seems to be contrary to the funding for graduate programs at UM over recent years.
- Dr. Mishra asked if now would be a good time to request a PhD program for Physics and where the department should begin their conversation. Dr. Kreuz noted that Dr. Dhaliwal might give them advice, but his office would not be the source of the necessary funding.
- Dr. Topinka noted that the Tennessee state surplus is less than it appears, since the state has unfunded liabilities.
- The next classification will occur in 2020, based on the years 2018 and 2019.
- Dr. Burraston stated that the Texas programs actually achieved their goals earlier than they had hoped.
- Dr. Hagen suggested that a higher ranking might lower teaching loads and allow for higher salaries.

Dr. Kreuz noted that more graduate students would mean a need for more faculty, which would be expensive. However, the administration is looking to the Texas system and their success. A few years ago, the state made funds available to R2 schools that wanted to obtain R1 status, and four of them were successful at getting reclassified in the most recent classification (Texas Tech, UT Arlington, UT Dallas, and North Texas). Altogether in 2015, fifteen schools moved up from R2 to R1, and eight were downgraded from R1 to R2 (including Dartmouth).

Dr. Kreuz noted that in Tennessee, Governor Haslam is term-limited, and will serve until January 2019. The state also has a large budget surplus this year (\$850 million). The plan is to encourage him to follow Texas' example and create a fund to help schools obtain an R1 classification. He's already displayed some interest in higher education through the FOCUS act, and it's hoped that he might see higher ed as a way of leaving a legacy. Undoubtedly, however, higher ed will have lots of competition with other projects.

NCUR

General information

Dr. Kreuz reported that student sessions will be held from 12 to 5 each day, with plenary sessions in the mornings. Lists of attending students, sorted by discipline, will be available from Melinda Jones, the director of the Honors Program who is organizing the NCUR meeting. It will be possible for departments to put ads in the program, and Dr. Jones should be contacted about this.

Department Open Houses

Dr. Kreuz reported that he had asked Dr. Jones if there were funds available for the open houses. She said that funds have not been budgeted for this. He also asked Dr. Dhaliwal, who said no, pointing to the expense of assisting 50-60 who might hold them. He said that the Graduate School will hold some sort of even during the conference.

Dr. Jones said that the plan is to hold open houses on Thursday, April 6 (the first day of the conference) from 4 to 6 pm.

Dr. Kreuz reported that U. Kentucky hosted NCUR in 2014, and was the last institution to hold open houses (NCUR 2015 and 2016 were held at primarily undergraduate institutions). Their final report contains the following advice about holding open houses:

Make it clear to participating faculty/departments/research groups that students will be cycling through the open houses and not at their specific event for an extended period of time. Several of our participating groups planned elaborate and lengthy tours that needed to be revised relatively late in the game. Simple is best.

Abstract review process

Dr. Kreuz reported that this point, an abstract coordinator and several abstract reviewers for each department have been selected. The abstract portal opened on October 3, and the deadline for submissions is December 2. The review of abstracts can begin immediately, and the deadline for all reviews is January 13.

- Dr. Lessman asked about graduate students as reviewers. Dr. Kreuz noted that, although the November 1 deadline has passed for submitting reviewers' names, the department should contact Dr. Jones with names and email addresses for students.
- Dr. Powell asked what to do if their department had not been informed of names of coordinators and reviewers. Dr. Kreuz said he would check on this and get back to her.
- There was discussion about the January 13 deadline for reviews being during Christmas break, when many people will be away. Dr. Kreuz pointed out that the process is an electronic process rather than a paper process, so few should be totally unable to participate.

Dr. Kreuz reported that the student submitters choose a "field of study" under which their abstract is categorized, and submit an abstract of 300 words. Abstract coordinators will assign abstracts to reviewers. They will be rated on a 5-point scale (comments are not required). Abstracts rated 3-5 will be accepted. Abstracts rated 1 will be rejected. Abstracts rated 2 will be placed in a conditional category. Dr. Kreuz reported that the university is aiming for an 85-90% acceptance rate (similar to the rate at previous meetings). Everything is done through the NCUR electronic system.

Curricular revision schedule

Dr. Kreuz reported that Mary Kyle reports has alerted him that originally, the 2017-2018 catalog was scheduled to be published on February 1, 2017. However, due to the implementation of Acalog, the new catalog management software, the 2017-2018 catalog will not be published until March of 2017.

New business

There was no new business.

Sharon's status

Dr. Kreuz reported that Sharon Harber retired from the university last month. The College office will be advertising for a replacement administrative assistant as soon as approval is received. The position is being reclassified (upgraded), so that adds a bit of complexity to the approval process.

December meeting

Dr. Kreuz noted that it's something of a tradition not to hold a Council meeting in early December, since it would occur during the busy grading season, and with curriculum issues settled, there typically isn't much going on. Dr. Kreuz will send out a request for new business in late November, and the Council will meet, if needed, on December 5; otherwise, the meeting will be canceled.

Motion to adjourn (T. Roche, S. Mishra second)

Notes taken by Susan Fitzgerald; minutes prepared by Roger Kreuz