I. Approval of Council Minutes

The minutes of the March 13, 2003, meeting of the Graduate Council were approved as distributed.

II. Proposal for the MA Degree in Contemporary Hispanic Studies

A proposal to create the degree of Master of Arts in Contemporary Hispanic Studies was introduced by Joseph Krause, chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. The proposal document, the result of a long and careful process, has been revised many times since it was first drafted two years ago. The proposed program is based on programs in other universities, including the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. A conference organized in 1999 on undocumented workers served as a catalyst for initiatives to create this proposal, as did the department’s appreciation of the importance of demographic shifts toward a larger Hispanic community in Oregon. The program is unique within the United States, and perhaps internationally. The proposed degree, which was described as interdisciplinary in nature, was based on cultural studies in the larger sense of that term. It includes several nontraditional learning strategies including a learning community, new assessment methods, a presentation of a portfolio, and participation in a specific field experience designed to link students to the Hispanic community. The department anticipates that the proposal will increase the number of graduate teaching assistants in the department, freeing up faculty members to teach more graduate and undergraduate courses. The department intends to offer more slash courses and two to three additional stand-alone graduate-level courses. Students pursuing this degree could work in social work areas, labor organizing, law enforcement, and other occupations. The anticipated start date is either Fall 2004 or Fall 2005.

In response to a question from Barbara Watrous (Veterinary Medicine), Juan Trujillo (Foreign Languages and Literature) said that the maximum number of students at the beginning of the program would be eight, although six students are anticipated to matriculate the first term that the program begins. This number should be large enough to support the stand-alone graduate courses because those courses would also appeal to MAIS and MAT students who are currently involved in the department. Watrous also noted that one source of funding was of limited duration and would not provide continuing funds for a continuing faculty position. Kay Schaffer,
Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, said that the College was ready to fill in the financial gaps that would be created by the limits of that funding.

Responding to a question from Sally Francis (Graduate School), Krauss said that the six teaching assistantships described in the proposal are in addition to the number of current teaching assistants. Their plan to replace some of the instructors in first and second year Spanish classes with teaching assistants is expected to generate revenue savings. Noting that those six assistants are not listed in the budget, Francis asked how that is accounted for in the budget. John Selker (Engineering) said that he knows an instructor in the department who is teaching five courses a year and receiving a base salary of $24,000. He argued that the strategy of replacing instructors with teaching assistants would be more costly in the long run. He also said that undergraduates are currently having a difficult time getting into sections of courses. Although he finds the proposal to be laudable, he is concerned about the current status of the undergraduate program. Krauss said that in addition to the faculty salaries, which range from $24,000 to $48,000, faculty salaries require additional funds for OPE.

Graduate teaching assistants in Foreign Languages and Literature are only allowed to teach two courses a term. Even carrying a full graduate course load, assistants will be able to teach six courses per year. Lynda Ciuffetti (Science) asked for clarification of the difference between courses and sections. Trujillo explained that the first and second year courses in Spanish are divided into multiple sections, with each assigned a separate instructor. Graduate assistants would either teach two sections of a particular course such as Spanish 113 or one section of, for example, Spanish 113 and one section of Spanish 213. Because graduate assistants can teach these courses, more graduate courses could be added without hiring additional faculty members.

Doug Markle (Agricultural Sciences) asked how the projected four new stand-alone graduate courses could be started with the resources now available to the department. Krauss replied that the department expects the resources to expand because of this new program. Selker asked Schaffer what, given the financial challenge facing the undergraduate program, the College of Liberal Arts can do to appropriately fund this program. Does the college expect the increased FTE to be available from current funding? Schaffer said that the College wants to keep moving forward even while funding is scarce. The department has an agreement with the college to be as flexible as possible in providing resources out of funds available to the college. In response to continuing questions on this issue, Schaffer said that a new faculty member could be expected in the program in its second year at the earliest, although it is possible that the additional hire would not take place until the fourth year. Krauss believed that two new courses per term would be adequate to maintain the undergraduate program and start the new graduate program. These new courses can be added without jeopardizing the quality of the undergraduate program. Those new courses would represent .50 FTE. The department can meet that obligation with current faculty resources. If a part-time instructor could be hired to cover some areas, a tenure-track faculty member could be freed to teach graduate courses.

David Gobeli (Business) asked whether the interdisciplinary nature of the program is really a focus of the program, as stated in the proposal. He suggested that statements about economics as
a part of the degree are stated but left hanging in the proposal, especially where the junction of this program and the College of Business are concerned. Francis asked whether the creation of a minor in Intercultural Studies is a part of the proposal or whether this is a description of courses intended to complete an integrated minor. In response to Selker’s request for clarification of the faculty FTE, Krauss explained what courses and sections are currently taught by faculty. Francis asked whether one person would be directing internships or whether major professors would be expected to supervise internships as well. Selker reiterated his concern about the heavy workload of the current faculty and his concern about whether the department has the resources to initiate this program.

Martin Fisk (Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences) asked how this program differs from the MAIS, which is also interdisciplinary and allows a non-thesis option. Francis said that the two degree credentials are quite different.

Selker again expressed his view that the degree program is an excellent idea, but that he was concerned about the workload. Francis suggested that the concerns about faculty resources fall into two categories: Would addition of a graduate program without additional resources damage the undergraduate program? Would lack of resources impair the quality of the graduate level learning experience in the new program? Selker said that he would not be comfortable with approving this proposal without clarifying these issues and suggested that the proposal be sent back with a request for a stronger statement of support from the dean of Liberal Arts. The additional faculty member should be hired at the beginning of the program, not in the fourth year when there is no additional workload. Gobeli asked whether there are any groups that might support this program by providing additional financial support. Where is the university currently moving (with OSU 2007) with the topic of outside funding?

Council members raised additional questions: Should the integrated minor focus on intercultural communication or intercultural studies? Can other cultures be added to this degree or is the focus simply Spanish? Selker mentioned that he would support a minor in intercultural studies. Mary Strickroth (Graduate School) asked for clarification of whether the capstone was a thesis or a non-thesis option because the proposal refers to 3 credits of thesis (the MA requires either a thesis with a minimum of six credits or a project with a minimum of three credits).

The Council requested that Associate Dean Rettig draft a letter to the department requesting a revision of the Category I proposal that addresses the following areas of concern identified by the Graduate Council:

- Revise the budget to address the question of adequate FTE and clarify the budget line item concerning GTAs.
- Examine the list of courses in the integrated minor and consider adding courses that provide a large-scale perspective such as might come from courses in economics or additional courses in political science.
§ Clarify the language defining the capstone experience. Specifically, is the capstone a thesis option, which would require 6-12 credits, or a non-thesis option, which would include 3-6 credits of research-in-lieu-of-thesis (commonly research or project credits)?

III. Graduate Certificates (numbers of credits)

Two years ago the Graduate Council approved policy guidelines for new graduate certificate programs, which require a minimum of 24 credits. No certificate programs have been created, although a few proposals are in preparation. Some units interested in graduate certificates have asked that the minimum number of credits be lowered, perhaps to 15 (the minimum at Portland State University) or 18. Francis asked Council members to visit with faculty in their colleges to discover the views in their units on this issue. Because many council members were unaware of the graduate certificate credential, background information will be distributed prior to this issue being fully discussed.

IV. Graduate Level Learning

The Graduate Council discussed comments made by Bruce Sorte, President of the Faculty Senate, at the April meeting of that body regarding further discussion of the 50% rule and slash courses. Ciuffetti interpreted Sorte’s comments to imply that Graduate Council members were expected to meet with faculty in their colleges to gather information before providing the Faculty Senate with recommendations. In parallel, the Executive Committee will entertain questions and comments regarding the continuation of masters’ degrees in departments where that degree is based primarily on slash courses. Ciuffetti quoted Sorte as saying, “We will jointly be working with the Council to try to get a proposal that you would accept.” Francis understood that Sorte was telling senators that Graduate Council members would be meeting with Faculty Senate members (constituents in represented colleges) to discuss graduate level learning and the continuation of slash courses.

Francis reported on a phone conversation with Stella Coakley, president elect of the Faculty Senate. She said that she understood Coakley to say that she thought that the bottom line was that the Graduate Council’s action on slash courses was probably right, but that prior to taking that action, each Graduate Council member did not consult with their college. Coakley said that follow-through would now be entirely in the hands of the Graduate Council, and it is the Council’s responsibility to find out the impact of this Council decision on University units. Also, a meeting involving members of the Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee is expected.

Fisk suggested that to frame communication between members of the Graduate Council and faculty within their colleges, Council members should say what the Council decided. They should also say why it was decided (slash courses are not graduate level) and explain that there are still two other parts to the subject which have not been decided: graduate level outcomes and undergraduate level learning. Then ask for input on the remaining two issues. Fisk recommended development of a one-page description of what was decided, why, and what is left to decide.
The Council then had an extensive discussion of alternative ways to engage graduate faculty members on campus. After listening to constituents, Council members might discover that the policy needs to be modified. Fisk suggested that the Graduate Council should invite the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and other interested parties to a Graduate Council meeting and spend one hour on 50% rule. Gobeli suggested that the information page be emailed to constituents. As a result of this discussion, the following plan was approved:

- Schedule two open forums in a large room in the Memorial Union for two dates in April
- Write a one page description of the decision and how it was made including issues that are not yet resolved
- Insure that as many Council members as possible attend the meetings
- Compile email responses
- Hold a joint meeting between the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Graduate Council following the open forums.