GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
May 5, 2005
3:00pm, MU Board Room

Present: Pehrsson (co-chair), Steel (co-chair), Bond, Ciuffetti, Filtz, Francis, Koenig, Pedersen, Rettig, Rockey, Strickroth, Tadepalli, Unsworth, Waldschimdt

Absent: Brown, Selker

Guests: Deborah Healey, Director -- English Language Institute

I. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the April 21, 2005 meeting were reviewed by Council members. Barbara Bond recommended that page 3 of the minutes be amended to reflect that Nuclear Engineering would be treated no differently than any other department that may be interested in deviating from the standard residency requirement. Prasad Tadepalli asked that the minutes be amended to show that he was not present. A motion was approved to accept the minutes as amended.

II. Update on PhD Learning Outcomes

Dale Pehrsson reported that a subcommittee of several Graduate Council members met last week to examine doctoral residency issues. The subcommittee determined that the issue is very complex and there is an increasing concern that consideration of policy revisions is a matter that should not be rushed. Pehrsson was asked by the subcommittee to synthesize ideas from readings that have been shared with the Graduate Council, with emphasis on ideas that might be considered for endorsement at OSU. Using this information, she will prepare a draft of a document that will describe OSU’s desired PhD learning outcomes. That draft was to be distributed to all Council members for review and comment. To inform the Council about trends that exist nationally, members of the PhD learning outcomes subcommittee took on the task of researching the residency requirements of our comparator institutions, including some of our “wish-list” institutions. Several examples of residency requirements at other institutions were shared with the Council, as follows:

Several examples of residency requirements at other institutions were shared with the Council, as follows (some of the following summaries are taken from university web sites and some are paraphrased language based on university web sites):

- Iowa State University – A minimum of 72 graduate credits must be earned for a Ph.D. At least 36 graduate credits, including all dissertation research, must be at ISU. At least 24 of these credits must be earned during two consecutive semesters or during a continuous period including two semesters and a summer session while in residence at the university. (This requirement does not apply to doctoral students who are employed half time or more at ISU or government laboratories in Ames.) There is no specific university requirement regarding the number of credits to be taken inside or outside the major/program.

- University of Illinois – Doctoral degree programs are divided into three stages (master’s degree, additional studies following the master’s degree and ending with an oral
preliminary examination, and at least one year completing a dissertation) and must include the successful completion of a minimum of 96 semester hours of graduate credit as well as the preliminary and final examinations. At least 64 of the hours, which may include thesis credit, must be earned as residence credit.

- **Texas A & M** — A major purpose of the residence requirements for graduate degrees is to ensure that the student has an opportunity to benefit from the advantages of a university environment. These advantages include not only the accessibility of library, laboratory and other physical facilities, but also the opportunity to participate in seminars and a variety of cultural activities. Equally important to the graduate student are the advantages of becoming acquainted with the faculty and other students on both a personal and a professional basis. A student "in residence" is expected to devote most of his or her time and energy to graduate studies under the direction of the student's major professor and the advisory committee. Another major purpose of the residence requirements for graduate degrees is to ensure the faculty the opportunity to properly evaluate the student and his or her development in order to guide and direct his or her studies and to determine competency. The minimum time required to qualify for an advanced degree varies with the ability and preparation of the student. Students may find it necessary to extend their studies beyond the minimum requirements. For specific minimum residence requirements, students are directed to check the degree program description for the degree which they are pursuing. Students who enter the doctoral degree programs with baccalaureate degrees must spend two academic years in resident study. Students who hold master's degrees when they enter doctoral degree programs must spend one academic year in resident study. One academic year may include two adjacent regular semesters or one regular semester and one adjacent 10-week summer semester.

- **University of Wisconsin at Madison** – Residency is determined at the department level;
- **University of California at Davis** – Students working toward a master's degree must be registered in residence for at least three quarters. Two regular six-week Summer Sessions may count as the equivalent of one quarter. Usually, all work for the master's degree is done in residence on the Davis campus. With the consent of the graduate adviser and the dean of Graduate Studies, however, some work taken elsewhere may be credited toward your degree. The normal limit for such transfer credit is 6 units from another institution, or 12 concurrent units, or up to one half of the unit requirement if the courses were taken at another campus of the University in graduate status—providing the units were not used to satisfy requirements for another degree.
- **University of California at Davis** – Students working toward a doctorate must be registered and in university residence for a minimum of six regular quarters. Experience indicates that it takes considerably longer than this to complete a degree program. Two consecutive regular Summer Sessions may count as the equivalent of one regular quarter.
- **University of California at Davis** – Lynda Ciuffetti reported that she could find no reference to distance delivered graduate degrees.
- **Cornell** – Full-time graduate study at Cornell is measured in terms of registration units. One term of satisfactory, full-time, graduate study normally earns a full registration unit, but the number of courses and the level of performance required are left to the judgment of the members of the student's Special Graduate Committee, consistent with the
requirements, which may be established in the subject areas which they represent. The Graduate School requires six registration units, i.e.: 6 terms of full-time graduate study for the Ph.D. degree. A Ph.D. student may petition to have study in other graduate schools counted toward the registration unit requirement. Upon recommendation of the special committee and approval of the Dean, a maximum of two registration units may be awarded for a master's degree completed at another university. Requests will not be formally considered until the student is registered in the Graduate School.

- Cornell — The Graduate School requires four registration units for a M.S. degree. Master's degree students may not count study in other graduate schools toward the registration unit requirement. They are, however, eligible for registration units for work completed at Cornell in provisional or non-degree status, with the approval of the Special Graduate Committee. With approval of the Special Graduate Committee students may also earn registration units while registered in-absentia. See the Code of Legislation for further regulations regarding registration units.

- Cornell—Lynda Ciuffetti could not find the “Code of Legislation” on the Cornell web site and did not find anything related to distance delivered education for graduate students.

- Ohio State — A minimum of three out of four consecutive quarters with an enrollment of at least ten graduate credit hours per quarter must be completed while in residence at this University.

- Purdue – At least 90 credit hours are required for the PhD, with at least one-third to be earned in continuous residence on the Purdue campus where the degree is to be granted. A master’s degree from any accredited university is considered to contribute 30 credit hours toward this 90-hour residency requirement (Lynda Ciuffetti described the process at Purdue known as research in absentia. For more details, please see Section V.F. of the Policies and Procedures for Administering Graduate Programs at http://www.gradschool.purdue.edu/downloads/facstaff/2004PP.pdf. Or, see the application form at http://www.gradschool.purdue.edu/downloads/facstaff/GS-12.rtf);

- Penn State – There is no required minimum number of credits or semesters of study, but over some twelve-month period during the interval between admission to the Ph.D. program and completion of the Ph.D. program, the candidate must spend at least two semesters (summer sessions are not included) as a registered full-time student engaged in academic work at the University Park campus, The Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, or Penn State Harrisburg.

- Colorado State – There is no university residency requirement for PhD programs;

- North Carolina State – NC State offers a range of distance master’s degrees with no residency requirement;

- University of Arizona – Arizona offers the master’s of engineering degree with no residency requirement; the MS degree in engineering does require residency;

- Michigan State University – MSU offers 9 off-campus master’s degree programs with an MS and PhD program in physics offered at a distance with major research laboratories.

Pehrsson explained that the subcommittee looked at a variety of practices at other universities, and she asked the Council to reflect on what it means to earn a PhD at OSU. She noted that this was not the first time such a discussion had come before the Graduate Council. The policy, as it
now reads, has been reviewed many times over the years including a discussion by the Graduate Council in 2001. She indicated that, although we are in a time of change in academia, the matter of PhD learning outcomes is a serious issue. The Council needs to move forward, although with caution.

Steel stated the Graduate Council needs to consult with the university community and may need to seek the support of the Faculty Senate for full approval of any policy changes that the Council may propose.

Pehrsson reminded the Council that it has received a proposal from a department that came forward in an ethical and thoughtful manner. She asked the Council what advice should be given to the department. Pedersen said that the Council made a motion at the last meeting which outlined how we would address the pending request.

Bond stated that articulation of goals is important, but that the real problem is whether an off-site location will enable a student to meet the PhD learning outcomes. She cautioned the Council not to allow the pending Nuclear Engineering proposal to set a precedent. Rather, it should be designed as a very limited test. She stated that the proposal may involve a test for only one or two students; this is too small a sample to validate an alternate process. She reiterated that, with funding, OSU could do the research to determine if PhD learning outcomes could be met at an off-campus location. She would like to see OSU do such a study.

Rockey said that, in his opinion, peer institutions provide artificial comparisons. He is inclined to fully endorse this pilot as an experiment. After a few years, the Council could assess the results and establish revised policy.

Unsworth agreed with Rockey, but cautioned that it might be a long time before results would be known. Pedersen stated that, although quantitative data may not be available for a while, the Council could gather qualitative data along the way. Steel asked if a sunset clause could be imposed on the pilot test. Unsworth maintained that assessment could be undertaken at both the beginning and the end of the students’ programs. Pehrsson stated that she would like to see an ongoing report rather than waiting until the end of a trial period. Ciuffetti asked whether the Council should wait to take action on the proposal until the subcommittee has completed its draft concerning doctoral education policy recommendations.

Rettig reminded the Council about pending agenda items for the two Graduate Council meetings that remain this academic year. It may be difficult to schedule time for this issue at the two remaining meetings.

Waldschmidt asked if there is a precedent for approving experimental programs. She said that developing such a policy would allow the Graduate Council to authorize an approved experimental design. Francis stated that there is no such policy, but that the Graduate Council can make exceptions to existing policy.
Bond asked what question the Council should be considering today. Pedersen stated that she believes it is important to get feedback on the research done to date. Unsworth asked when Nuclear Engineering wanted to begin admitting students under their proposed off-campus design. Rettig indicated they have a student who is very interested. The department may see this person as the test case that is motivating their current high interest in a decision from the Council.

Perhsson confirmed that the draft that discusses PhD learning outcomes will be distributed to the Graduate Council in the coming week. She encouraged Council members to provide their feedback via email so that a final draft could be prepared before the May 19 meeting. She stated that the Graduate Council will follow the course of action established by the motion that was approved at its last meeting. Several Council members indicated that they could be available for a summer meeting in the event that a vote was necessary before fall term.

III. Graduate Courses in Plant Physiology

Barbara Bond distributed a draft of a letter expressing concern over the loss of plant physiology courses. She explained that over the past 15 years several plant science faculty have retired or left OSU. In almost all cases, these positions have not been replaced. Consequently, only 2 to 3 of the 15 to 18 courses that were once offered at OSU in the late 1980s are available today. She stated that interdisciplinary programs need fundamental courses in the plant sciences. But there is no incentive for departments to offer these courses. Bond believes it is important for the Graduate Council to go on record acknowledging the problem that exists. She recommended sending the letter to the Provost. She believes a task force could be developed to explore options. Bond suggested that a change in the budget model may be necessary because these are courses that serve multiple programs in multiple departments and no one is taking ownership.

Steel reported that he has been sitting in on a Natural Resources task force, which is comprised of deans. He thought that establishing a similar task force for the plant sciences might be a worthwhile approach. Unsworth questioned whether the Council has gone as far as it can with this issue. He wondered if a meeting with deans and directors of programs that are impacted may be more in order. Francis noted that a formal communication from the Graduate Council to the Provost would get heard. In response to the question of who should be involved, she said that the question is part of a larger issue. It is about how you coordinate courses. You need to get the attention of a broader group of faculty and administrators in order to resolve this issue. She suggested that the Graduate Council send the letter to the Provost and invite him to one of its meetings. She noted that OSU’s Strategic Plan states that we want to do these things, but there is nothing in place to make that happen.

Bond indicated that the letter will be drafted as an invitation to the Provost while providing background on the issues.
IV. The New Internet-based TOEFL

Bruce Rettig distributed copies of two power point documents prepared by the Educational Testing Service: one which provides an overview of the iBT/Next Generation TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language); the other about understanding and setting new scores.

Deborah Healey, Director of the English Language Institute, provided a brief background on the TOEFL, indicating that two test versions currently exist:
1. a paper-based test (PBT) which is a multiple choice test. This test is used by ELI as one instrument to evaluate conditionally admitted students.
2. a computer-based test (CBT) which includes a writing section.

Healey explained that the iBT, the newest version of the TOEFL, is similar to the IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Although the IELTS is superior to the current PBT and CBT, is not as widely available as the TOEFL. The iBT includes both writing and speaking sections. The test includes a computer-generated score for writing and a human score for the speaking component. She believes it is a better test because it includes multiple skills and the questions on the test are integrated.

The iBT will be administered beginning in the United States in September 2005, followed by administration in October in a few other countries including Canada, France and Germany. However, Healey anticipates a long delay in getting the iBT to India and Africa. CBT will continue to be the dominant test version for the immediate future. Unlike the CBT which is available on an ongoing basis, the iBT will be offered only on specific testing dates. The ELI has applied to become an iBT testing site.

Healey indicated the speaking section of the iBT will be different from the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or the SPEAK test which is currently administered to international GTAs. She indicated that iBT will measure how well an individual may function in the university lecture environment.

Healey suggested that OSU needs to be prepared to receive scores from European sites as early as October 2005. She recommends the Graduate Council consider establishing minimum scores in each of the skills areas: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Healey stated that setting interim scores initially would allow OSU to be prepared for the new test method.

Ciuffetti asked if ETS was considering eliminating the SPEAK test. She expressed her concern for GTA spoken language proficiency. Healey said that ETS will not be eliminating the SPEAK test and will be interested in receiving feedback from universities about their testing needs.

Steel questioned how the iBT correlates to the verbal GRE score. Healey explained that the TOEFL was built for non-native speakers and is a better measure of language proficiency for international students. The GRE verbal exam is designed to test students whose native language is English.
Francis noted that the task for the Graduate Council is to set admissions standards for the TOEFL test.

Healey stated that a benefit from the new test will be that more students will be preparing for the speaking portion of the test and subsequently will be building their spoken language skills.

Rettig said it would be optimal if, by early September, the Admissions Office web site gave guidance on the new iBT. He suggested creating a task group this summer to set up initial score thresholds. While some ball-park numbers may be close enough for the overall score, the sub scores will be critical in assessing language proficiency for incoming students.

Bond suggested adding this item to the agenda for the proposed summer meeting. She recalls the Council coming to an agreement when the IELTS was reviewed. She recommends that Healey prepare a recommendation for Graduate Council consideration. Healey indicated that she would like to collaborate with colleges to listen to the tapes and look at writing samples to determine the minimum score thresholds. Francis asked if Healey could bring such samples to the Graduate Council and guide them through the process of developing minimum score requirements.

Unsworth expressed interest in receiving the recommendation from the experts in language testing. Bond asked that any future presentation be brief but effective enough to inform the Council so that they could make informed decisions.

Rettig sought clarification about what quorum would be required during a summer meeting to take action. He suggested that the quorum consist of those who are present.

V. Other Business

- Lynda Ciuffetti proposed that the Graduate Council gather at Bombs Away Café after its June 2 meeting as a way of acknowledging the hard work of the Council and the departure of several members.
- Rettig asked the Council for the manner in which minutes from the June 2 meeting will be approved. It was determined that the minutes would be distributed electronically for a vote.
- Rettig asked the Council how it wishes to handle Category II requests that are received during the summer months. He asked current Category II subcommittee members to let him know if they could manage the process in the manner that was undertaken last summer.