1. Proposal for a new minor in Ecosystem Informatics

Julia Jones (Geosciences) introduced a Category II proposal to establish a new graduate minor in ecosystem informatics at OSU.

Jones informed the Council that the minor would be open to all OSU graduate students. She explained that the minor originated as part of an NSF funded IGERT (program now in progress) and as part of a strategic initiative funded by the Provost.

The minor involves a series of four courses, which have been taught in another form (599) for two years. There are five faculty committed to the long-term teaching of these courses. Four tenure-track faculty were hired for this purpose with the money provided by the Provost in support of the initiative in ecosystem informatics. Sustaining the teaching of this minor is assured by Provost’s funding and by Jones continuing in her current position in the department of Geosciences.

Jones added that ecosystem informatics is appearing in job ads and offering a minor in the area, she believes, would give graduates of our University greater employability and provide OSU more visibility. No university in the United States currently offers a degree or minor in this field.

Alix Gitelman (College of Science) asked Jones to speak on the reasoning behind the ecosystem informatics courses not having coursework prerequisites especially considering the minor is open to any graduate student from any academic department. Jones answered that aside from not wanting to be exclusionary, the issues were timing and the disciplinary diversity of students. It was the hope that students could begin work on the minor immediately upon arrival at OSU and that since the students are coming from so many different disciplinary areas it didn’t seem conceivable that they could identify any individual prerequisite course that would fit all students. Jones added that she does not anticipate that the students coming into the program would have a common set of knowledge but rather they would be trained to share their particular knowledge, cross bridges and build collaborative research proposals and do collaborative research projects.

Gitelman indicated that she believes informatics is the study of data and information and so she was surprised by there being no explicit mention of the discipline of statistics in the description
of the minor. Jones explained that when they wrote the proposal they did not have representation from the Statistics Department which she admits was an oversight. Since that time they have made attempts to integrate statistics.

When Jones left the meeting, more discussion concerning the past preparation of students and the possible need for prerequisites in one or more of the proposed minor courses ensued.

The Council felt that perhaps some of the courses should have prerequisites so that students are ready to grasp and wrestle with concepts rather than simply leaving a class with a “sense” of the topics presented. The Council’s concern was that the minor be rigorous. The Council decided to postpone a vote on the proposal and the courses that still need approval. After all the classes have been reviewed and approved by the College of Science and the Office of Academic Programs, the Council will review the proposals as they exist at that time as well as any supplementary material that might be provided such as additional liaison letters/messages. A formal vote on courses and the minor will occur at that time.

2. **Category II Proposal to Revise Requirements for the MAIS (Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies)**

Ann Schauber (Graduate School) reminded the Council that at its meeting of March 2, 2006 it was recommended that she go forward with a CAT II proposal to revise MAIS degree requirements. Today she brings that proposal to the Council. The proposal recommends making two changes. One would be to drop the College of Liberal Arts requirement (the requirement which states that at least one field among the three fields of study chosen must be selected from among the programs in the College of Liberal Arts) and the other is to add two new courses to the degree: IST 511, Introduction to Interdisciplinary Graduate Students and IST 512, Applying an Interdisciplinary Perspective. Adding the two courses increases the total degree credits from 45 to 49.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the CAT II proposal and the two new courses. All voted in favor. Motion passed.

3. **Minutes from Previous Meeting**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of March 2, 2006. All voted in favor. Motion passed.

4. **Revision of the Graduate Program Review Guidelines**

Sally Francis (Graduate School) brought to the Council suggested changes to the *Graduate Council Graduate Program Review Guidelines* and a set of proposed guidelines for three year internal reviews of new graduate programs. She also wished the Council to consider whether or not to establish reviews of graduate minors, graduate certificate programs, and service courses.
Graduate Council Program Review Guidelines

Francis introduced and the Council discussed the following changes:

- introduction of language to bring attention to a unit’s efforts to increase and enhance diversity
- removal of language suggesting an OSU Research Office interview be a part of the site-visit agenda
- introduction of an additional template (for self-study cover sheet)

Francis then suggested a change in the management of the graduate program review panel. She suggested asking the external academic peer to serve as chairperson. She explained that occasionally when she phones prospective reviewers to request their services, she hears that the reviewer immediately assumes that he/she would be in charge of writing the review report. Additionally, Francis reported that external reviewers are getting, in most cases, an honorarium for their service.

As Francis envisions the change, the external academic peer member of the review panel would lead discussion and be the point person in the coordination of the review report. However a local person (a member of the review team who is also a member from the Graduate Council) would serve to move the review report forward here on campus. The peer reviewer would not be flown back to campus to present the final report to the Graduate Council or to the Provost.

A member of the Council asked if this is a more typical model found employed at other universities. Francis answered that at some universities the review teams are completely external. She also pointed out that accreditation reviews and CSREES (Cooperative States Research, Education, and Extension Service) reviews are external.

A motion was made and seconded to approve as amended (minor editorial changes) the changes to the Graduate Program Review Guidelines suggested by Francis. The revised guidelines will be effective Fall 2006. All voted in favor. Motion passed.

Proposed Questions for an Internal Three-Year Review of New Graduate Degree Programs

Francis proposed a list of seven questions to be formally asked of Department chairs/Program directors three years after the initialization of a new graduate degree program. Francis informed the Council that OUS does review new degree programs at five years, but that the Provost requested that an internal review be completed prior to that. It is the Provost's concern that promises of resources made during the CAT I process do not materialize, and an internal review would potentially identify problems (and give units time to address them) prior to the OUS external review.
Francis explained that the process would not involve the Graduate Council beyond the current request to consider and approve the seven questions included in the survey. The process would involve the Dean of the Graduate School submitting the three-year review survey to the Department Chair/Program Director and then forwarding the unit's response to Mina McDaniel in the Academic Programs Office and from there to the Office of the Provost.

After some discussion over the wording of the questions and the suggestion of including a preamble to remind the unit that the questions asked during an OUS external review will be very similar to the OSU internal review, Francis suggested that Hal Koenig present the approved three-year review guidelines to the Academic Senate’s Executive committee when next he visits.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the three-year internal review guidelines as amended. All voted in favor. Motion passed.

**Review of Graduate Minors and Certificates**

Francis told the Council that the discussion of whether or not to review graduate minors and certificates was a conversation started last year at a previous Council meeting. Graduate minors at OSU have never been reviewed. This is of particular concern in the case of standalone minors which have no relationship to a corresponding graduate major. Bruce Rettig (Graduate School) reminded the Council that an MAIS student is permitted to select three standalone minors to complete the degree. Standalone minors have never been reviewed by the Graduate Council. Francis stated that it is even more crucial to review graduate certificate programs, because completion of them provides a transcript-visible credential and they can be earned independent of admission to a graduate degree program.

Francis asked the Council if it felt that a process to review minors and certificate programs should be instituted. She also asked for suggestions on how to develop the process if it were considered necessary.

The Council was unanimous in its feeling that a process should be instituted and after some discussion it was decided that a process be created that would require a self-study, but that the self-study would require less information and not involve a formal site visit. It was also suggested that an external reviewer would read the unit's survey responses/self-study and forward a report to the Graduate Council for approval. In response to a question from Francis about who would design the review process, the Council asked the Graduate School to design something for the Council to respond to next year.

Meeting adjourned
Three-Year Follow-up Review
of a New Graduate Program

1. General Information
   a. Have you made major modifications in the program from the original proposal? (include rationale)
   b. Do you foresee modifications of this program in the future?

2. Faculty Resources
   a. Please list faculty by name, FTE, and rank/title.

3. Enrollment/Degree Production
   a. How many student majors are currently in the program?
   b. How many degrees have been awarded, per year, since program implementation?
   c. Is the program delivered in alternative ways (e.g., distance delivery, off-campus)?

4. Accreditation/Advisory Bodies
   a. Is this program accredited? If so, by what agency? If not, will accreditation be sought?
   b. Please indicate if this program has a business/industry and/or professional advisory body.

5. Other Resources
   a. What is the current budget (present year) for this program?
   b. Have grants been generated through, or because of, this program?
   c. Evaluate the adequacy of other resources necessary to support this program (e.g., library, computer equipment, other equipment, facilities, labs).

6. Student Outcomes
   a. Are employment-related experiences required in this program (e.g., internship, student teaching, practicum, clinical experience)?
   b. Describe the capstone activity required of students in this program. Other major assessments?
   c. Are there professional licensure exams for this degree? If so, how have your students performed on these exams (e.g., how many students sat for the exam; what percentage passed)?
   d. What have you learned about the employment and/or further professional- or graduate-level educational activities of graduates from your program?

7. What else would you like to tell us about your program that was not addressed in this review?