GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING  
October 6, 2005  
3:00pm, Memorial Union Conference Room

Present: Koenig (chair), Filtz, Francis, Gitelman, Gupta, Harter, McLain, McMullen, Proebsting, Rettig, Rockey, Strickroth, Tadepalli, and Unsworth

Absent: Pehrsson and Quinn

Guests: Chelsea Byrd, recipient of OSU Distinguished Dissertation Award and nominee for the Council of Graduate Schools/University Microfilms International Distinguished Dissertation Award in the Biological and Life Sciences; collaborators on Dr. Byrd’s nomination and members of her dissertation committee: Dennis Hruby, major professor, Theo Dreher, Peter Bottomley; Robert Duncan, who nominated Leah Bandstra for the Frolander Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award.

1. Award Reception for Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching and Research

The Graduate Council hosted a reception for Leah Bandstra, recipient of the Herbert F. Frolander Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award and for Chelsea Byrd, recipient of Oregon State University’s Distinguished Dissertation Award and nominee for the Council of Graduate Schools/University Microfilms International Distinguished Dissertation Award competition.

2. Introduction of new Council Members

Hal Koenig (Business) introduced himself as Chair of the Graduate Council and welcomed the Council members to the meeting. He invited all Council members to introduce themselves as many members are new to the Council this year. New members are Alix Gitelman (Science), Rod Harter (Health & Human Sciences), Tom McLain (Forestry), Starr McMullen (Liberal Arts), and Bill Proebsting (Agricultural Sciences). The graduate student member has not yet been selected.

3. Committee Assignments

The list of committee and subcommittee assignments for 2005-06 was distributed. For the benefit of those who had no prior experience with the workings of the various committees, Koenig briefly described the duties of the various committees.

Sally Francis (Graduate School) reminded the Council that these are “proposed” assignments. Council Members who would like to switch assignments were asked to inform the Graduate School at least a week from today’s date. This is especially important in regard to members assigned to Graduate Program Review Panels. Francis informed the Council that she tried her best to distribute the work-load equitably, and she believes that she managed to achieve that.
Koenig announced that he is teaching from 4-6 this term and will need to leave each Fall Graduate Council meeting an hour early. Koenig asked to be informed if any Council member wanted someone else other than Francis to call the question when the graduate program review guidelines are discussed. Koenig admitted that he generally tries to avoid employing Roberts’s meeting rules.

Koenig asked Bruce Rettig (Graduate School) about the timing of the Oct 20 meeting. Rettig answered that the agenda had not yet been set but that the Council would be informed of the meeting time soon. Rettig also warned the Council that the meeting on November 3 may be cancelled. The Industrial Engineering Graduate Program Review has been scheduled for November 3rd and that would mean that up to four Council members would not be able to attend a Graduate Council meeting on that day.

Koenig then requested that Dan Rockey (Veterinary Medicine) agree to help lead the second half of the Oct 20 meeting. Rockey agreed and Koenig left the room. Francis took over as chair.

4. Graduate Council Graduate Program Review Guidelines Revision

Francis informed the Council that the Graduate Program Review guidelines were last revised four years ago. Last spring the Graduate Council created a web survey to collect feedback from departments to learn how the Graduate Program Review process is perceived to be working. The Council had not previously discussed these tabulated results. Francis informed the Council that the survey revealed that, in general, everything seemed fine but that she decided to revise the guidelines in order to incorporate a few new procedures and to make the guidelines more user-friendly. For example, the guidelines were reorganized and separated into two sections: Information for Departments/Programs and Information for Reviewers.

One major improvement to the guidelines is the addition of an appendix of model tables. In the past, the Graduate Deans and the Program Review Panel members found that many self-study documents lacked some of the data needed for the review. The new model tables require that the same data be supplied as before, but the hope is that the new table format will prevent departments from forgetting to include information important to the reviewers.

Service Scores
On a side note, Francis informed the Council that Alix Gitelman (Science) reminded her earlier about the importance of including data on service courses in the Program Review self-study. Francis says that this represents a gap in the review process. Francis believes that the Council should soon discuss how best to review programs providing service courses. Francis used the Statistics Department as an example of a unit with service courses. Because that department teaches such a large number of service courses, there is a huge service toll on the faculty that goes beyond the work they perform towards their
graduate degree program. How should the Council review this? Francis would like to tackle this question with the Council’s help this year.

**Graduate Council Consent Agenda**

Francis reported that the one substantive change made to the guidelines was an attempt to respond to the web survey question dealing with the perceived value of the panel chair’s presentation of the review panel’s report to the Graduate Council in the presence of the program’s College Dean. Francis shared with the Council her surprise at learning that many units did not feel that the presentation of the review panel’s report was a valuable undertaking. Francis proposed a revised guideline:

**Consideration of the Review Panel Report** The report will be distributed by the Graduate Dean to members of the Graduate Council for a 2-week review period. After two weeks, the report will be placed on the consent agenda of the Council for approval unless the Chair of the Review Panel, the majority of the Graduate Council, or the department chair/program director provides a rationale calling for full discussion of the report by the Graduate Council prior to its approval. In the absence of a request for Council discussion, the report will be considered to have been approved following the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Graduate Council. When a request for full discussion by the Council has been received, the chair of the Graduate Council will arrange for the report to be presented at a regular meeting of the Graduate Council where it is formally reviewed and accepted. The department chair or program director and academic college dean(s) will be invited to this Graduate Council meeting to comment on the content of the report. After the Graduate Council has accepted the report, either by consent or full consideration, the report is forwarded by the Graduate Dean to the Provost.

Francis described to the Council how she envisioned the consent agenda process to work.

Rettig commented that serving on a Graduate Council Program Review Committee is a rewarding experience. He asked Council members who served last year whether it also is valuable to have the presentation and discussion of the panel review report at a Graduate Council meeting.

Michael Unsworth (Oceanic & Atmospheric Sciences) told the Council that he still favors having departments come in for the panel chair’s presentation. He said that although it might be true that department chairs and college deans don’t find the experience valuable, he believes that the Council members do. He confessed that he usually hasn’t read through the panel report in great detail before a meeting so it has been valuable to him to hear the panel chair summarize it in front of the Council. Michael felt that the discussion between the department and the Council was very useful as well. Placing the report on a Consent Agenda, though it seems like it would reduce workload, actually increases it. This would put the burden on all of the Council members to thoroughly review the panel report prior to the Graduate Council meeting.
Other Council members agreed with Unsworth. Tom McLain (Forestry) and Prasad Tadepalli (Engineering) commented that it is a positive experience for department heads and college deans to come together for the Council meeting. McLain stated that placing the review panel’s report on a Consent Agenda sends the message that the review process is really not very important.

Sally called McLain’s position to a vote – all agreed. Alternate language was brought forward:

**Consideration of the Review Panel Report** The chair of the Graduate Council will arrange for the report to be presented at a regular meeting of the Graduate Council where it is formally considered. The department chair or program director and academic college dean(s) will be invited to the Graduate Council meeting to comment on the report. The Council may accept the report as distributed, accept the report with revisions, or send the report back to the Review Panel for further work prior to finally action. After the Graduate Council has accepted the report, the report is forwarded by the Graduate Dean to the Provost.

Francis explained that the paragraph above describes the procedure we currently follow.

Unsworth responded that although the old procedure is a lot of work, it sends the right message to the departments and colleges: Graduate Program Reviews are extremely important to the entire University.

Proebsting moved to reject the new (consent-agenda) procedure in favor of the old procedure. The motion was seconded and the vote unanimous.

Other changes to the guidelines were discussed by the Council.

**Self-Study Cover Sheet**

McLain expressed his concern over the instructions for the signing of the self-study cover sheet. He said that obtaining 35+ faculty signatures is too difficult an undertaking. Francis informed McLain that this idea resulted from the Zoology self-study. The reviewers of that Graduate Program commented that they were very pleased to see signatures indicating that everyone in the department participated/contributed to the preparation of the self-study.

Francis commented that the self-study and the review should be a group event. More than just one or two faculty members should be involved. Everyone should be given the opportunity to participate in or at least read the self-study.

Many members of the Council agreed that involvement is important, and when involvement impossible, that the self-study be made available to the entire unit prior to the review.
The Council debated who should sign the self-study cover sheet. All agreed that if only the department/program head signs, then s/he should include a statement indicating that all or appropriate graduate faculty members had an opportunity to participate in the development of the self-study or had an opportunity to review the final document. This led to discussion on how (and when) the self-study would be disseminated within the unit. Starr McMullen (Liberal Arts) was concerned that releasing the self-study two weeks prior to the site visit was not enough time for interested faculty to review and/or comment on the document.

Review Postponement

McLain directed the Council to page 3 of the new guidelines.

Postponement Programs may request a Postponement of a scheduled Intensive Program Review by presenting supporting evidence. In order to postpone an Intensive Program Review, programs must present data assessing program quality. Normally, Postponement may be granted for only one year and will require new data for each subsequent Postponement; but in rare cases, Postponement may be granted for a maximum of five years at a time if the program quality assessment data are sufficiently strong. Postponement may never exceed five years beyond the standard decennial review period. Postponement must be approved by the Graduate Council with the concurrence of the academic college dean(s) and the Dean of the Graduate School. Outcome assessment data (see Review Criteria, page 3) form the basis of requests for the granting of a five year Postponement of the Intensive Program Review.

McLain asked under what circumstances the Graduate Dean would agree to a five year postponement. Francis explained that to ask for a postponement a department chair/program director would have to collect all the data in the model tables and provide other supporting documents in order to demonstrate that its graduate program is of a sufficiently high quality to alter the review cycle.

Discussion regarding granting of and the length of postponements ensued. Francis admitted that a five-year postponement has never been granted.

After some discussion the Council agreed to modify the statement so that there is no mention of the possibility of a five-year postponement.

McLain made the motion which was seconded and approved unanimously, that the new language would be amended to:

Postponement Programs may request a Postponement of a scheduled Intensive Program Review by presenting supporting evidence. In order to postpone an Intensive Program Review, programs must present data assessing program quality. Normally, Postponement may be granted for only one year. Postponement must be approved by the Graduate Council with the concurrence of
the academic college dean(s) and the Dean of the Graduate School. Outcome assessment data (see Review Criteria, page 3) form the basis of requests for the granting of Postponements of the Intensive Program Review.

**Comparative Data**
McLain commented on the format of the model tables. He agreed that they present a good example to departments on how to present their data. He notes, however, that the tables only show departmental data, not normative data.

The Council discussed the importance of including national and peer institution data in the self-study for the sake of comparison and interpretation.

Rettig mentioned that OSU does not have a campus wide GRE requirement, so normative data across campus would have limited value.

Tadepalli commented that it makes more sense to compare your data with that of your peer programs.

Theresa Filtz (Pharmacy) told the Council that the advice of external reviewers can be important to gain perspective as well.

**Other Guideline Concerns**
Filtz asked if a statement regarding the different types of TOEFL scores could be added to the model table. Francis agreed that that would be a good idea.

Rockey asked if imposing a limit on self-study length could be considered. Francis responded that over-long self-studies are not normally an issue.

Filtz asked that strong language be included in the guidelines to remind self-study preparers to include narrative language to describe tabular data. Francis acknowledged the problem and agreed that that would be a good idea.

The Council agreed that they would be willing to work on revising the text of the guidelines electronically and later vote on the amended text electronically.

Francis called for other business.

Rettig informed the Council that Koenig (as Chair) sets the Graduate Council agenda. He urged the Council members, however, to feel that they too have ownership of the agenda. He encouraged the Council members to contact Koenig or himself if they would like additional items/issues to be added to the agenda.

Francis adjourned the meeting at 5:02 PM.