

GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

October 5, 2006

3:00pm, MU 206

Present: Koenig (chair), Filtz, Francis, Gitelman, Grosskopf, Harter, Jovanovic, McLain, Proebsting, Rettig, and Unsworth

Absent: Blythe, Russ-Eft

Guests: Greg Perry, Jack Walstad, Carlos Martins, Hal Salwasser, Thayne Dutson, Kay Shaffer

1. 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. New members to the Council this year are Linda Blythe (Veterinary Medicine), Shawna Grosskopf (Liberal Arts), Goran Jovanovic (Engineering), and Darlene Russ-Eft (Education). Professors Blythe and Russ-Eft were absent. The graduate student member of the Council has not yet been assigned.

Sally Francis (Graduate School) thanked the Council members for their past and future service and reminded all present that the Gradual Council is the only Faculty Senate body that includes representatives from all OSU colleges.

2. Committee Assignments

The list of committee and subcommittee assignments for 2006-07 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 each.

Koenig reminded the Council that these are “proposed” assignments. Council Members who would like to switch assignments were asked to inform the Graduate School within two weeks from today’s date. Requests for changes will be accommodated if possible.

Bruce Rettig (Graduate School) broached the subject of the Category II subcommittee’s summer work habits. The Curriculum Council shares the problem of faculty finding it difficult to review proposals during a time when many of them are on vacation, conducting field research or in other commitments. The Curriculum Council expects to review this issue and may have a proposal for Graduate Council consideration.

3. Category I Proposal for Graduate Degrees in Applied Economics

Greg Perry (Agricultural & Resource Economics) introduced himself and Jack Walstad (Forest Resources) before giving an overview of the CAT I proposal for graduate degrees in applied economics (MS/PhD in applied economics, graduate minor in business economics).

Perry began by saying that the departments of Agricultural & Resource Economics (AREc) and Forest Resources (FR) have a long history of graduate education in economics and then provided some background on the formation of the UGFE (University Graduate Faculty of Economics) in 1988. Perry shared the reasons why the UGFE was dissolved in 2005, and how the new applied economics degree proposed in the CAT I proposal adheres closely to the spirit of cooperation and applied focus of the original UGFE proposal with important changes in organizational structure and degrees offered (new fields) which he feels would benefit both the program's faculty and students. He feels that the design of the new program would attract students and better prepare them for jobs in applied economics.

Perry informed the Council that all the department heads and deans involved in the proposed program have signed off on the proposal except for the College of Business. The faculty of that college was unable to meet to consider the proposal prior to today's meeting.

After describing the many benefits of the new degree program, Perry admitted that a problem with course duplication will exist if this proposal and the Department of Economics' corresponding proposal are both approved, resulting in a decline in enrollment in some of the PhD level core courses. He believes, however, that enrollment in applied economics core courses would improve once the new program becomes better known. Duplication of effort in the area of economics preliminary examinations would also occur.

Perry informed the Council that Carlos Martins, Chair of the Economics Department, reviewed and commented on the Applied Economics proposal. Perry thought Dr. Martin's comments were fair and briefly recounted a few of them. Perry asked the Council to refer to the proposal's liaison section for a full accounting of the communication between Martins, Perry, Walstad, and other faculty.

After Perry's presentation, Koenig asked Walstad and the deans present for any comment. Dean Hal Salwasser, College of Forestry, said he is supportive of the proposal and very pleased that we are reaching out to other departments in collaboration. Working across boundaries is right in line with OSU's strategic plan. Thayne Dutson commented on the increased marketability of students graduating under the new degrees. Dutson said that there is a very high demand in business for students trained in applied economics.

Koenig then asked the Council members for questions and comments.

Shawna Grosskopf (Liberal Arts) asked Perry if AREc and FR would be dropping their own graduate degrees if this CAT I proposal is approved. Perry answered that his unit would be retaining their degrees and the existing set of degree fields. Walstad told Grosskopf that FR would also be keeping their programs because students like the Forest Resource moniker.

Michael Unsworth (Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences) asked what the current AREc degree fields are and how they differ from those proposed in the new degree. He also wondered how students interested in studying International Trade, for example, would choose between the two programs. Perry answered that there is a difference in the core courses required. Additionally, the marketability of the two degrees is different, each degree opening certain doors.

Grosskopf asked who in the Graduate Economics Consortium (GEC) would decide who is qualified to teach core courses and to be included as a “primary” faculty member. Perry answered that the policy committee and the director of GEC would deal with these issues.

Francis took a moment to describe how faculty are appointed to the interdisciplinary program in Molecular Cellular Biology (MCB) although that program does not have a two-tiered faculty structure as proposed in this CAT I.

Tom McLain (Forestry) asked how the GEC would be more efficient than the UGFE in terms of administrative overhead. McLain wondered if, in a practical sense, the GEC would be the same as the UGFE. Perry responded that in the days of the UGFE, an AREc faculty member would automatically be a member of the UGFE. That same faculty member would have the choice of joining the GEC or not. Walstad then described the problems with decision making and voting within the UGFE. He believes that the proposed organizational structure of the GEC would reduce such problems.

Other points of discussion included:

- Representation in GEC from departments other than AREc and FR
- Data presented in Appendix B (graduates produced vs. faculty membership)
- How faculty will be compensated in GEC
- How current and future students will be affected if this proposal is approved

4. Category I Proposal for Graduate Degrees in Economics

Carlos Martins thanked the Council for the opportunity to present his department’s proposal and promised to be brief.

Martins explained that this proposal is to restructure his unit’s current degrees which were established in 1988 with the creation of the UGFE. He told the Council that the UGFE gave graduate economics degree granting authority to the departments of AREc,

Forest Resources, and Economics and that the basic idea was to provide a diverse group of students the benefit of a shared common core. He then explained how the UGFE evolved so that eventually Economics was the unit which was primarily exercising its degree granting authority and teaching the majority of the core courses. Martins added that over time the views of the members of the UGFE diverged significantly in regard to core curriculum content and delivery.

Martins then discussed the Economics Department's national ranking, described how the proposed economics degrees would be different from the current degrees, and how the proposal would be in the best interests of the university, the students and their future employers.

After Martins' presentation, Koenig asked Dean Kay Schaffer, College of Liberal Arts, for comment. When she had none, Koenig asked the Council members if they had any questions for Dr. Martins.

Theresa Filtz (Pharmacy) asked if the proposal essentially seeks to give the Department of Economics more control over (academic) outcomes. Although Martins wouldn't use the word control, he agreed that the economics curriculum should be enabled to evolve in tandem with the economics profession and its standards. When asked why economics faculty are not interested in joining the new umbrella group (GEC) Martins answer that one faculty member (out of twelve) is interested and that Economics will participate in teaching international trade and courses in macroeconomics for the GEC. Martins couldn't comment when Filtz asked if Economics faculty would participate on the GEC policy council.

Goran Jovanovic (Engineering) questioned if the UGFE failed to reinvent itself, as all programs must do for survival. Martins discussed how the UGFE made significant changes in the 90's: guidelines were revised to give departments more control, the Department of Economics identified econometrics courses, which were in addition to those in the UGFE core, which became required for the economics PhD degree. Martins added that in 2005-6, the big effort to make the core more flexible, so that every department could go in its own direction, failed.

Other points of discussion included:

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding ECON 515: who teaches it now, who will teach it in the future and which students (econ or applied econ) are taking it and will take it.
- The cost of implementing the new economics degrees

After thanking the visitors for their input, Koenig dismissed them from the room.

Discussion was then held among the Council members.

Francis gave the Council members some background on the Provost's decision to freeze graduate admissions in economics and the reasons why the two new degree proposals were brought before the Council today as abbreviated CAT I proposals. The Provost, after consultation with the Provost's Council, believes that the proposals should be handled internally and that they should be fast-tracked through the system. No student will be admitted into an economics program until at least one of the proposals is approved.

Many of the Council members felt that both proposals had academic merit, but that the amount of course duplication was shocking. Tom McLain pointed out that although many of the course titles are the same the content of the courses might be different. Grosskopf suggested that mathematical rigor could be one of the important differences. Another member of the Council felt hopeful that some of the duplication might be later sorted out.

After additional discussion, Koenig volunteered to meet with Martins, Perry and Walstad, to relate the Council's frustration over the course duplication and to suggest more collaboration in the proposals. The Council members agreed to that course of action. It was also decided that discussion of the proposals, in greater depth, will continue at the October 12 Graduate Council meeting.

Rettig warned the Council members that a change of venue for the meetings is likely.

Meeting adjourned.