

Graduate Faculty Council

MINUTES

September 19, 2007

Hugh Clark Meeting Room -- Whetten Graduate Center, Room 200
3:00 P.M.

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:03 P.M. Vice Provost Gregory J. Anderson presided.
2. It was **moved**, seconded, and **passed** without dissent on a voice vote to approve as distributed the minutes of the meeting of April 18, 2007.
3. There were several announcements and an update concerning the recent work of the GFC Executive Committee.
4. G. Anderson introduced GFC member R. Brooke Morrill, President of the Graduate Student Senate (GSS). Morrill spoke briefly about the recently-held GAIN (Graduate Appreciation and Information Night), and he introduced Anastasios Maurudis, Vice President of the GSS and also a GFC representative.
5. G. Anderson noted the recent retirement of long-time GFC and Executive Committee member Emilio Pagoulatos and the recent appointment of GFC and Executive Committee member David Cournoyer as Interim Dean of Social Work. In addition, he noted that GFC and Executive Committee member Luke Achenie has left UConn to accept a position at another institution (Achenie had been serving on the Executive Committee while Erling Smith is serving as Interim Dean of Engineering). Anderson announced that Jean Marsden from English is serving on the Executive Committee while Cournoyer is Interim Dean and that a member will be appointed to the seat left vacant by Achenie's departure. Concerning the seat on the Executive Committee held by Pagoulatos, Anderson noted that the GFC will hold an election at the October meeting to select Pagoulatos' successor.
6. The Council considered the following policy statement, approval of which is **moved** and seconded by the Executive Committee:

Policy for Graduate Assistant Maternity Benefits

Period of Leave. Any female graduate assistant who needs maternity leave will be granted a period equivalent to that afforded to faculty. During this leave she will continue to receive her assistantship stipend at the same appointment level. Currently the leave period is 6 weeks following natural childbirth and 8 weeks following childbirth by caesarian section. Further, her stipend support will be maintained during medically necessary leave prior to delivery upon receipt of a written order from her physician.

Additional Leave. Following this period of time, the student will have to return to her duties or take unpaid personal leave. Note: while faculty and staff have the option of using accrued vacation or leave time through the FMLA, graduate assistants do not, since they do not accrue vacation time and are not eligible for FMLA-based leave.

Adjustment of Workload. If the student wishes to reduce her hours of appointment and her stipend following the maternity leave period to spend more time with her child, that outcome will be negotiated in good faith between her supervisor and herself. For example, a unit may be willing to reduce a 20 hour GA to 10 hours (the minimum to maintain health coverage) or to change her duties to provide further accommodation once the maternity leave period has been completed.

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Flexibility of Work Hours. Another suggested best practice that can be followed under the right circumstances is that of banking extra hours in anticipation of extended leave. Under this scenario, a student may arrange to work more hours early in her pregnancy so that she may be able to have more time following the permitted medical leave period with no reduction in her stipend. This will be worked out with her supervisor and a memorandum of understanding filed with the appropriate offices. If the graduate student's duties involve teaching, another appropriate arrangement is to share teaching duties with one or more other teaching assistants. Under this scenario the pregnant student would teach extra hours for those other students early in her pregnancy. The other students would then cover the pregnant student's duties following her delivery and permitted maternity leave. In this way a student could be given additional leave time at no reduction in stipend level. Any such arrangement as mentioned in this paragraph is subject to approval of the unit head or his/her designee.

The motion was seconded and discussed briefly. The motion **passed** on a voice vote.

7. G. Anderson introduced Provost Peter J. Nicholls who addressed the Council and responded to questions. Topics included:
 - The arrival on campus of President Michael Hogan and the appointment of several new Deans
 - The New Faculty Initiative
 - Establishing priorities for major equipment purchases

- The Eminent Faculty Program
- The replacement of Arjona and Monteith (two smaller buildings are to be built rather than the single larger building originally planned)
- Planned renovations of the Gant Complex, Torrey Life Science, and certain facilities in the School of Engineering

The Provost responded to several questions from the floor.

8. The Council considered the draft document *Graduate School Grievance Procedures*, approval of which is **moved** and seconded by the Executive Committee. It was noted that the procedures cover graduate students, faculty, and post-doctoral fellows. There was discussion. A. Maurudis asked if the Graduate Student Senate (GSS) had had the opportunity to review the draft document. In order to allow for review by the GSS prior to final Council action, C. Schaefer **moved to table** the matter. The motion to table was seconded and **passed** without dissent on a voice vote. A. Frogley noted that the various sections of the document should be checked for consistency and agreement.
9. The Council considered a *Resolution on Author Rights and Institutional Repository*, adoption of which is **moved** and seconded by the Executive Committee. Several questions and concerns were raised by members. Additional background information was requested before the Council takes final action. A. Frogley **moved to table** the matter. The motion to table was seconded and **passed** without dissent on a voice vote.
11. J. Henkel gave a PowerPoint presentation concerning the work done to date to develop a strategic plan for the Graduate School. G. Anderson noted that A. Albert and D. Cournoyer contributed to this effort over the summer months.
12. J. Henkel distributed handouts concerning efforts currently underway to develop a set of metrics across Graduate School programs. He explained the handout and asked members to review it and provide feedback.
11. Adjournment was at 5:05 P.M.

Present: W. Abikoff, A. Albert, A. Basu, J. Bobaljik, M. Bock, H. Brody, T. Byrne (alt), D. Casa (alt), J. G. Clifford, S. De Guise, A. Donahue, M-L. Fernandez, A. Frogley, J. Glaz, W. Glenn, P. Goes, D. Gregorio, R. Grenier, R. Gross (alt), J. Kaminski, T. Kehle, J. Madaus, A. Maurudis, S. McBrearty, B. Morrill, M. Rudnicki, C. Schaefer, E. Schultz, A. Shvartsman, L. Strausbaugh, T. Torgersen, C.A. VanLear (alt), K. Venkitanarayanan, S. Winter, Bi Zhang, M. Doyle (*Executive Committee*), G. Anderson (*Vice Provost*), J. Henkel (*Associate Vice Provost*), T. Peters (*Program Director*), A. Wilhelm (*Data Base Manager*)

Regrets: J. Dovidio, A. Engler, G. Robbins

Speaker: Peter J. Nicholls, *Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas B. Peters
Program Director