

Graduate Faculty Council

MINUTES

October 15, 2008

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:08 P.M. Interim Vice President for Research Suman Singha presided.
2. Those present introduced themselves.
3. It was **moved**, seconded, and **passed** without dissent on a voice vote to approve as distributed the minutes of the meeting of April 16, 2008.
4. S. Singha discussed a broad range of budget issues with members of the Council. Topics included among others:
 - The 3% rescission required initially by the Governor and the additional 2% that would bring the rescission to the full 5%, which is within the Governor's authority to impose without legislative approval
 - The impact of fringe benefits on the rescission (fringe benefit costs are in addition to the rescission--please see the attached document titled *Reduction Reconciliation*)
 - The likelihood that the Governor will call a special session of the legislature to address budgetary issues
 - The new sunset policy for doctoral programs as well as the sunset of selected centers and institutes
 - The timely availability of information related to any planned reduction in graduate-student support funding
 - The University is contemplating moving toward a default policy of making only full-time (i.e., 100%-time) graduate assistant (GA) appointments for graduate students entering in the future. No currently-funded GA would be adversely affected provided they make timely progress to complete degree requirements. The Dean of the Graduate School could discuss prorating a GA appointment with a department or program if that were to be appropriate or necessary. N. McGary stated that the Graduate Student Senate does not support this new default policy.
 - The proposal to charge GA tuition to grants. There was discussion about the cost-effectiveness of hiring GAs on grants if this proposal were to be implemented. It was agreed that data from institutions which currently charge GA tuition to grants will be shared with GFC members.
 - No changes are currently planned in the area of GA health insurance benefits (an important recruiting tool)
 - Administrative changes being made in the Doctoral Student Travel Award Program which improve accounting procedures but have no negative impact on the availability of this funding to doctoral students
 - Administrative changes being made in the Faculty Large Grant Program in instances where grants span fiscal years. The changes result in improved accounting procedures but have no negative impact on the availability of these grants to faculty members.

There was discussion concerning the point that the University is contemplating moving toward a default policy of making only full-time GA appointments for graduate students entering in the future. Several members noted that the availability of partial GAs is important in their departments and programs and would not want to lose the flexibility of being able to offer them.

As a result of this discussion, E. Schultz **moved** the adoption of the following resolution:

It is the sense of the Graduate Faculty Council that a unilateral, "one size fits all" change in policy regarding part-time GAs may have damaging and unintended consequences to diverse graduate programs. Moreover, this major policy change should not be imposed in the midst of disruptive budget rescissions.

Be it therefore resolved that the consequences of this policy proposal should be carefully examined by a body that has graduate faculty representation across the University, prior to implementation. The Executive Committee of the Graduate School shall be invested with the responsibility of nominating faculty members for this task force.

The motion was seconded and discussed briefly. The motion to adopt the resolution **passed** by a unanimous vote.

5. There were several updates and announcements.
6. Adjournment was at 4:53 P.M.

Present: W. Abikoff, M. Accorsi (alt), A. Anderson, M. Bernstein, T. Blank, J. Bobaljik, H. Brody, J.G. Clifford, J. Cole, F. Costigliola (alt), R. Cusson, G. Dunne, P. Faghri (alt), A. Finger (alt), D. Gregorio, R. Grenier, O. Karan, W. Kraemer, J. Linnekin, N. McGary, C. Michaels, M. Musgrave (alt), J. Nardi (alt), T.J. Peters, G. Risatti, G. Robbins, M. Rubio, C. Schaefer, E. Schultz, T. Seery, J. Troyer, C.A. VanLear, M. Wallace (alt), S. Winter, and B. Zhang; A. Albert, J. Barnes-Farrell, M.A. Doyle, and J. Marsden (*Executive Committee*); and S. Singha (*Vice President*), J. Henkel (*Associate Vice Provost*), T.B. Peters (*Program Director*)

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas B. Peters
Program Director