Minutes of the Graduate Board

Thursday, September 15, 2016

3B Conwell Hall, Main Campus
2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Members Present:
Jasim Albandar, Lila Corwin Berman, Deborah Confredo, Mark Franko, Daniel Funk, Sally Harrison, Jody Hey, Dustin Kidd, Ceridwyn King, Jagannathan Krishnan, Heather LaMarre, Swati Nagar, Timothy Patterson, Paul A. Pavlou, Joseph Picone, Caterina Roman, Michael Sachs, Justin Shi, Elisabeth Subrin, Ryan Vander Wielen, Ashley West

Ex-Officio Member:
Zebulon Kendrick, Vice Provost, Graduate Education

Graduate School Staff:
Tangia Boyd, Assistant Director of Business and Financial Operations
Kathryn Petrich, Director of Graduate Communications
Margaret Pippet, Assistant Dean
Michael Toner, Associate Director for Graduate Enrollment and Data Management

Approval of the Minutes:
Daniel Funk motioned to approve the minutes of April 14, 2016. Michael Sachs seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimously passed.

Business:
The Vice Provost began by welcoming new members to the Graduate Board. He advised all members that two meeting dates have changed and a revised schedule has been posted to both Blackboard and on the Graduate School website. He further noted that current committee assignments and the schedule of deadlines for fellowships and completion grants are also posted on Blackboard.

The first order of business was the U.S. Department of State’s regulations for J-1 student interns. These are students who are enrolled at a home institution but come to the United States to fulfill their education goals by enhancing their skills and gaining exposure to U.S. culture and business in such a way as to be useful to them when they return to their home country. They may stay for a maximum of 365 days and then must return home for two years. An evaluation is required at the end of the program and at the midpoint if the program lasts longer than six months. These students were formerly classified as Visiting Research Scholars – Graduate. To avoid the time limit, it was suggested that Temple University establish a dual-degree program with the student’s home institution.

The Vice Provost next addressed the 2016 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which more than doubles the maximum annual income a salaried worker can earn and still be eligible for overtime pay. The previous threshold of $23,660 resets to $47,476 as of December 1. This change also affects Postdoctoral Fellows, for whom the base stipend will be set at $47,484. Anyone earning less than these minimums are non-exempt hourly employees who are subject to overtime at 1.5 times their hourly wage.
The Vice Provost noted that the “Announcement of Dissertation Defense” form was revised at the start of the Fall term to add the dean’s signature. This was in response to numerous concerns that defenses are not being announced by departments and schools/colleges; that defenses are closed to all but committee members; and that dean’s offices are not advised about many defenses. It was further suggested that dissertation defenses be migrated from the Graduate School website to a dedicated channel on TUportal where students might more readily view upcoming defenses. When it was stated that the College of Engineering does not have a database of defenses, it was noted that all dissertations and theses are published in ProQuest and that the Graduate School also maintains its own database. On a related topic, the Vice Provost observed that requests have been increasing to have only one committee member present on campus for a defense while the others attend via Skype. He has not permitted this in keeping with Graduate School policy 02.28.16.05. The Policy Committee will be convened to address and make recommendations regarding this issue since it has become rampant.

The next issue regarded graduate enrollment. With a goal of enrolling 5,000 master’s students by Fall 2018, it was noted that enrollment has increased by 879 in the past two years. Enrollment in Fall 2016 stands at 4,288 master’s students. The greatest growth has been in P.S.M. degree enrollment, while M.S.W. enrollment is actually down by 150 students. Admission incentives continue to be offered to schools and colleges that increase their master’s enrollment as required. In Fall 2016, $750 is awarded for each newly enrolled student above the number of registered students in Fall 2015. In Spring 2017, the incentive is $1,000 for each additional newly enrolled student over the Spring 2016 number. Some deans split the funds between the school/college and department, while others give all of the monies to the department. In addition, decision deadlines for master’s admissions were announced:

- Applications submitted by November 1 must have a decision rendered by December 14, 2016.
- Applications submitted by March 1 must be decided on by April 17, 2017.

With regard to outcomes from completion grant awards, it was noted that 12 awardees from the 2015-2016 academic year have yet to complete their dissertation/project. Additionally, seven from 2014-2015 are not yet finished. It was asked if these numbers have been broken out by department for the awards committee. The Vice Provost advised that such is the case. He further noted that students who receive and accept the award cannot receive funds of any type from Temple University until they defend their dissertation or complete their project. In a related funding discussion, the withdrawal of support for a fellowship at the Center for the Humanities at Temple University (CHAT) was questioned. The Vice Provost explained that the monies in support of a CHAT fellow were never intended to be permanent as CHAT was expected to find funds to continue the support.

With no old business, discussion turned to new business. The first topic was graduate student diversity. Provost JoAnne Epps has called for a review of ethnicity across the graduate student population. The associate deans are devising a plan to increase diversity, with the Graduate School prepared to provide some funding to do so. One Board member suggested both increasing diversity in the faculty and hiring more recruiters.

Second, the Vice Provost announced sponsorship of professional development for doctoral students. The Graduate School has agreed to sponsor speakers and seminars for CHAT, as well as
refreshments for events hosted by Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society. In addition, Versatile PhD, which offers a Ph.D. Career Finder, is available through Temple’s Career Center.

Third, the requirement of the SPEAK test, which evaluates the English speaking ability of teaching assistants whose native language is not English, was questioned. The Vice Provost explained that if the student does not pass the SPEAK test, s/he can teach as the instructor of record for a course or lab but is required to take an English course. This is in accordance with Pennsylvania’s “English Fluency in Higher Education” law. It was asked if there is a less costly alternative to taking the DestinyOne course for $2,650. The Vice Provost noted that any alternative would need to be approved by the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) and legal counsel. It was further asked if the student could simply retake the SPEAK test. This would need to be addressed directly with Temple’s International Teaching Assistant Program (ITA).

Fourth and finally, the Policy Committee will be called on to address the capstone event for practice-oriented doctorates, i.e., those that are not research doctorates earned by completing a dissertation. Discussion will focus on assembling a committee that utilizes experts in the practice field to review the capstone.

Adjournment:
The meeting adjourned @ 4:10 p.m.

The next Graduate Board meeting will be held on the Health Sciences Center Campus, in the Executive Conference Room on the 4th floor of the Student Faculty Center, on Thursday, October 13, 2016, @ 2:30 p.m.