

Minutes of the Graduate Board

Thursday, November 30, 2006

3B Conwell Hall, Main Campus

2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Saroj K. Biswas, Elizabeth Bolman, Beth Bolton, Daniel L. Canney, James L. Daniel, Jay Fagan, Edward Flanagan, Laurita M. Hack, Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek, Barbara Hoffman, Deborah Howe (for Mary Myers), Richard Hricko, Novella Keith, James Korsh, Jagannathan Krishnan, G. Augusto Lorenzino, A. Marjatta Lyyra, Elizabeth Moran, Roberta A. Newton, Wes Roehl, Michael Sachs, Jagbir Singh

Ex-Officio Member:

Aquiles Iglesias, Dean, Graduate School
Zebulon Kendrick, Associate Dean, Graduate School

Graduate School Staff:

Cheryl Jackson, Assistant to the Dean
Kathryn Petrich-LaFevre, Director of Graduate Information
Margaret M. Pippet, Assistant Dean
Michael Toner, Research Associate

Guest:

Barrie Ashby, Associate Dean of the School of Medicine
Peter Jones, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Approval of the Minutes:

Michael Sachs motioned to approve the minutes of September 21, 2006. Roberta Newton seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimously passed.

Business:

Acknowledging invited guests, Dean Iglesias opened the discussion with the topic of Teaching Assistants for GenEd. The transition to Gen Ed will occur over a four-year period:

- Courses will be increasingly piloted from Spring 2007 through the 2007-2008 academic year.
- Incoming freshmen will begin taking GenEd courses in the 2008-2009 academic year and continue as sophomores in 2009-2010 and as juniors in 2010-2011.

Peter Jones explained that while a plan has been outlined for implementation of GenEd courses, definitive numbers are not available. How many sections of a course and how many students will be in each class cannot be predicted until waivers are requested by the individual schools and colleges. Preliminary numbers will not be known until February or March 2007.

Because core courses will continue to be offered during the transition phase, it is a question of how to staff GenEd courses with TAs. Are additional lines needed or should current lines be reallocated? One suggestion was to have Academic Interns pulled into teaching. Another was to have departments offering GenEd courses find TAs within their own assistantship pools to cover the classes. A third suggestion was to redesign GenEd courses so fewer or no TAs are needed. It was also proposed that the administration should fund TAs in the short term to ensure coverage.

The Dean stated that one solution he would not allow would be to pull adjunct professors from the graduate student population as this is unfair. They would not earn as much as TAs and would not receive tuition remission.

Kathy Hirsh-Pasek summed up the conversation: during the transition from Core to GenEd, either resources should be increased to fund GenEd coverage or GenEd course offerings should be reduced so they can be staffed with available resources. In conclusion, it was decided that the Dean, in consultation with Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and Michael Sachs, would prepare a statement asking the administration to increase resources to meet the needs of GenEd. When prepared, the statement would be presented to the Graduate Board for electronic vote on Monday, December 4, 2006.

Discussion turned to the subject of the “R” grade policy. An “R” is intended to demonstrate continuous enrollment in a course over multiple semesters. Currently, the “R” is changed to a grade only during the last semester that the course is taken. The revised policy ensures that the “R” is replaced with a letter grade for the total number of credits required by the department to complete that course requirement for the degree. Each department will stipulate the number of required credits, and the Graduate School Assistant Dean will make the grade change as instructed. The revisions to Policy 02.24.11.01 were then brought for a vote. Dr. Sachs motioned to approve the changes; Dr. Hirsh-Pasek seconded the motion; and it passed unanimously. The revised policy takes effect in Summer 2007.

The Dean next presented the Council of Graduate Schools’ 2006 International Graduate Student Survey. He noted that while overall the number of international students studying in the United States increased 1%, that number decreased 7% for Temple. This particularly affects the College of Engineering and the College of Science and Technology and, to a lesser degree, the School of Medicine. The Dean explained that this knowledge led the Graduate School to review the minimum scores required on the TOEFL. Upon reflection and comparison with aspirant institutions, a decision was made to lower Temple’s minimum requirement from 575 paper-based, 230 computer-based, or 88 internet-based to 550 paper-based, 213 computer-based, or 79 internet-based.

The Dean pointed out that Temple previously had a tiered approach to TOEFL scoring. Students were to meet a set score. If they did not but did meet the stated minimum, then they were required to take Education 20 to improve their English skills. Departments paid for their graduate students’ enrollment in the course. It was noted that other institutions do not utilize multi-level scoring. Discussion by the Graduate Board concluded that the new policy should state only the minimum. It was further noted that non-native speakers of English will still be required to pass the SPEAK test to become a TA since it is state law that TAs be able to communicate in English.

Before adjourning, James Korsh offered several thoughts for future discussion:

- Early credentialing by the Graduate School harms prospective students.
- The online graduate application is off-putting.
- Fellowship standards should be changed such that departments are guaranteed an award.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned @ 4:30 p.m.

The next Graduate Board meeting will be held on Main Campus, 3B Conwell Hall, on Wednesday, January 17, 2007, @ 2:30 p.m.