



## Minutes of the Graduate Board

*Thursday, October 23, 2008*

Executive Conference Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Student Faculty Center

Health Sciences Center Campus

2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

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### **Members Present:**

William Aaronson, Daniel J. Canney, Edward Flanagan, Marc Lamont Hill, Barbara Hoffman, James Korsh, Dan A. Liebermann, Wes Roehl, Pablo Vila

### **Ex-Officio Member:**

Aquiles Iglesias, Dean, Graduate School

### **Graduate School Staff:**

Kathryn Petrich-LaFevre, Director of Graduate Information

Michael Toner, Research Associate

Christa Viola, Coordinator of Graduate Student Services

### **Approval of the Minutes:**

William Aaronson motioned to approve the minutes of September 24, 2008. Barbara Hoffman seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimously passed.

### **Business:**

The Dean opened the meeting by explaining that the Associate Dean was in Taiwan with representatives from the College of Science and Technology recruiting for their 3+2 program.

The first order of business regarded Policy #02.60.01: Establishing, Restructuring and Terminating Academic Programs. It was noted that the policy was developed under President David Adamany and required all changes to be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval. Last year, however, the President was given certain powers of approval. Citing a plethora of changes in course titles and the substitution of one course for another in a program, such that about six occurrences are submitted to the Graduate School weekly, the Dean asked for the authority to approve these requests without taking them to the Graduate Board first. It was, therefore, proposed that the Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee have the authority to review and approve any change of array that constitutes less than 20 percent of a curriculum and then report out to the Graduate Board on the action. William Aaronson motioned to approve the proposed procedural change. Wes Roehl seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.

The process for appointing postdoctoral fellows was next on the agenda. The Dean noted that the Postdoctoral Fellows Office performs all duties related to postdocs, including handling human resources, finance, and immigration issues. The process, which has been streamlined over the past year, has now gone electronic. Business managers are now responsible for completing the requisition and getting all approvals before forwarding the appointment letter to the Postdoctoral

Fellows Office. They are also responsible for sending visa information to the Office of International Services. The Postdoctoral Fellows Office is committed to reviewing appointment letters within 24 hours. While this will speed up the process, potential delays can still result from the federal government as it reviews visa applications for H1B or J1 status. Those with an H1B visa need not return to their home country and must be paid a higher prevailing wage. Those with a J1 visa must return to their home country for two years.

The Dean pointed out that postdocs may now perform both research and teaching duties. This allows them to hone their teaching skills. The principal investigators are able to use institutional training funds to support the postdocs while teaching. It was confirmed that international postdocs must pass the Speak test to teach.

It was further noted that postdocs can be terminated, provided concerns are documented and one month's notice is given. Travel back to their home country must be guaranteed if their contract is not finished. Also, postdocs cannot pay for their own postdoctoral assignment in order to get an H1B visa. However, some international agencies do pay postdocs directly.

The policy on doctoral committees was addressed next. The issue of impartiality of the candidate's mentor was raised. What role should that individual play in the Dissertation Examining Committee? As different procedures are used by the various schools and colleges, the mentor sometimes wields great power by chairing the committee. Two alternate procedures were provided as examples:

- In the School of Medicine, one committee member is asked the day of the dissertation to serve as the chair of the Dissertation Examining Committee. The external examiner is generally someone from outside Temple.
- The College of Education has the external examiner chair the Dissertation Examining Committee. S/he serves as a master of ceremony, with the chair taking over after a walk-through of the dissertation.

It was concluded that the process continues to work well for most defenses and that no change need be made. The Dean did, however, recommend that more external examiners be drawn from outside Temple as opposed to from outside departments. When it was questioned how long it takes for a potential reader's curriculum vitae to be reviewed by the Graduate School, it was noted that the Dean often approves, rarely rejecting, an external examiner in a matter of days.

In "old business," it was asked if the rankings for the dissertation and project completion grants could be done online. The Dean promised to check on this and advise. It was further suggested that the dissertation/project descriptions be shortened from ten pages to five. The Dean said he would take it under advisement.

In "new business," it was asked if the agenda could be provided prior to the meeting. The Dean said that it will now be posted on Blackboard within the week preceding the meeting.

### **Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned @ 3:50 p.m.

The next Graduate Board meeting will be held on Main Campus, 3B Conwell Hall, on Wednesday, November 19, 2008, @ 2:30 p.m.