MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

5200 North Barton Ave, M/S ML 34

Fresno, California 93740-8014

Office of the Academic Senate ​​​​ Ext. 278-2743​​​​​​​

February 27, 2018

Members Present: M. Wilson (Chair), J. Marshall (ex officio), K. Capehart, S. Church,   
T. Lopez, P. Mahalik, S. Tracz, D. Walker, N. Wang

Members Excused: None

Guests: Peggy Trueblood (Chair of Dept. of Physical Therapy), Samuel Lankford (Associate Dean of College of Health and Human Services)

Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm by M. Wilson

1. Approval of Minutes from February 20, 2018, meeting

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Communications and Announcements

No new announcements from Dr. Marshall. As he announced at our last meeting, the scholarship committee is reviewing the applications for the Non-Resident Tuition Waiver (NRTW) and the decisions will come out soon. Graduate coordinators will be directly notified of the decisions.

4. Program Review meeting with DPT team

The committee welcomed Dr. Trueblood and Dr. Lankford. The graduate coordinator for the Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT) program, Jennifer Roos, was unable to attend and her absence excused.

The chair of our committee (Dr. Wilson) began by asking if the program had any updates for the committee.

Dr. Trueblood responded by reporting that the DPT program is currently in the process of admitting a new cohort. The program had 559 applicants and they interviewed 129. Their desired cohort size is 32 students.

Dr. Trueblood also reported that Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) data, as well as statistics on their website, have been updated based on the latest cohorts. The average pass rate for their licensure exam over the last three years (2015, 2016, and 2017) was 89% on the first try and 99% overall.

Dr. Tracz inquired if the program was satisfied with the pass rate, noting this was improved over data reported in the self study. Dr. Trueblood responded that in recent years the program had prioritized raising their pass rates; they purchased practice exams for their students, for example. The program’s ideal goal would be a first time pass rate of 100%, but the current pass rates are satisfactory, given that they are higher than before, comparable to competing institutions’, and satisfactory to their accrediting body.

Dr. Trueblood was also able to update the committee on its graduation rate for the latest cohort; it was 97%. Dr. Lopez inquired about the demographics of the program’s students, including the apparent underrepresentation of Hispanic students at our designated Hispanic Serving Institution. Dr. Trueblood agreed this was a concern and there was no “good explanation” for the observed racial/ethnic demographics, but also diversity of its student body is part of an ongoing conversation by the admissions committee, in particular, and the program, more generally. The program is considering revising the criteria and weights given to different criteria in its admission process, for example, thanks in part to recent training on “holistic” admission approaches. Dr. Trueblood noted that the admissions process already considers a wide range of factors: GPA is not an all-encompassing determinant; GRE writing scores are considered because of the importance of writing in the profession; and select candidates are interviewed with a set rubric.

Dr. Capehart asked whether the program was drawing undergraduates from Fresno State. Dr. Trueblood reported that Fresno State undergraduates who join the program are predominately kinesiology or exercise science majors, although any student who fulfills the course prerequisites can be accepted, and students with atypical majors can be successful. However, Dr. Trueblood also reported there has been a decline in the number of Fresno State undergraduates applying to the program. Reasons for that trend may include increased interest in the kinesiology graduate program and/or the perception that it is difficult or “impossible” to get into the physical therapy graduate program. This year resno State undergraduates students were guaranteed an interview during the admissions process, Dr. Trueblood reported, but admission is still competitive because our students must compete with a national pool of applicants (although not with an international pool of applicants, as discussed immediately below).

Dr. Mahalik then asked about whether the program was drawing international students. Dr. Trueblood explained that it is difficult for international students to be admitted to the program and that attracting international students is not currently a focus of the program. Reasons why it is difficult for international students to get into the DPT program include that they cannot be admitted prior to coming to the US unless they have fulfilled a number of criteria, including coursework and 100 contract hours with a US licensed physical therapist. Dr. Trueblood did, however, note that as part of its strategic goal of enhancing international outreach opportunities, the program does have an affiliation with a Japanese university that promotes student exchanges.

Dr. Church asked if students were interviewed by the review team, given that it was unclear from the materials provided to us whether students were interviewed or not. Dr. Trueblood said that, yes, students and many other relevant parties were interviewed as part of the thorough review.

Dr. Wang) asked about clinical training and job placement for students. Dr. Trueblood reported that thanks to the efforts of the Director of Clinical Education, Leslie Zarrinkhameh, the program is able to place students in the 30 weeks of full-time inpatient and outpatient rehab positions they are required to hold as part of obtaining the DPT degree.

Dr. Marshall asked Dr. Lankford if he had any highlights or concerns from his perspective as Associate Dean of the College of Health and Human Services. Dr. Lankford spoke highly of the current state of the program; he also said he believed that it would continue to strengthen in the future. Finally, Dr. Lankford expressed the sentiment that he wanted the Valley to be represented within the program, suggesting working with our own students to recruit them to the program.

Other questions raised included a question about whether graduates of our program stay in the Central Valley region. Dr. Trueblood informed the committee that, yes, a majority (60%) stay in the Valley region.

Dr. Wilson thanked Dr. Trueblood and Dr. Lankford for speaking with our committee and excused them.

The general consensus of the committee was that they have an excellent program as reflected in the 10-year accreditation they recently received. Various suggestions for increasing diversity and representation of Fresno State undergraduates in the program were discussed.

MSC: Recommend approval of the program with notation of exceptional quality, commend them on their ongoing discussions about diversity in their program, and encourage them to make even stronger, more concerted efforts to increase representation in line with the mission of their program and our university. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

The next meeting is planned for Tuesday, March 13, 2018, at 2:00 pm in TA 117.

Agenda for next meeting:

1. Approval of Minutes from February 20, 2018, meeting  
2. Approval of Agenda

3. Communications and Announcements

4. Preparation for Program Review with Rehabilitation Counseling.