MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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Fresno, California 93740-8027

Office of the Academic Senate Ext. 8-2743

September 11, 2018

Members Present: M. Wilson (Chair), K. Capehart, S. Church,   
T. Lopez, P. Mahalik, S. Tracz, D. Walker

Members Excused: J. Marshall (ex officio), N. Wang

Guests: None

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

1. Approval of Minutes from August 28, 2018, meeting

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Communications and Announcements

As previously announced, this semester’s graduate coordinators’ meetings are scheduled for Thursday, September 27, 8:00-10:00 a.m. and Thursday, November 15, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Dr. Lopez reminded the committee of the three funding opportunities through the Graduate Net Initiative and their deadlines. Applications for the Graduate Research Fellowship are due September 19, those for the Graduate Internship Grant are due September 28, and those for the Graduate Research Award are due October 19.

Dr. Wilson announced that the Chair of the Fresno State Academic Senate (Tom Holyoke) and the Vice Provost of the University (Dennis Nef) have agreed that she can continue as committee chair while FERP’ing.

4. Appointment of Corey Whitehead as representative from Arts and Humanities to the Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee

The committee voted to officially appoint Corey Whitehead as representative from Arts and Humanities to the Graduate Curriculum Subcommittee. Dr. Whitehead will be filling a vacancy that was created due to the rule that, whenever a committee member takes a sabbatical, they must resign from their committees and be replaced for the remainder of their term.

5. Discussion of elevation of Early Childhood Education Option

The committee discussed the proposal to evaluate the MA in Education’s “Early Childhood Education” option to a degree. That proposal was made in order to bring the Option in the MA in Education program into compliance with the Chancellor's Office Executive Order 1071.

Dr. Tracz provided an overview of the Early Childhood Education program, highlighting its sustained growth in terms of applicants and enrollment, thanks in large part to the growth and professionalization of the job market for pre-school educators.

Dr. Lopez suggested the committee ask for clarification on the differences between Goal #2 (“ECE graduates are caring and ethical teacher-leaders, guided by their knowledge of culturally and developmentally appropriate practices”) and Goal #3 (“ECE graduates are leaders who address the needs of their culturally diverse learners respectfully and responsibly”) from the SOAP for the proposed degree.

Dr. Wilson wondered what types of field experiences are involved in the “supervised field experiences” that students complete as part of their coursework. Dr. Wilson also pointed out that, if any evaluation is made of those field experiences, that measure could possibly be included as part of the department's assessment plans and the SOAP can be updated to reflect that.

Dr. Mahalik noted that, although the proposal describes the program as “flexible,” there does not seem to be much flexibility in terms of courses. The committee agreed that we should ask the Early Education representatives to clarify the sense in which their program is flexible and perhaps revise their proposal’s language. (If the program is flexible in the sense that it does not run in cohorts, then it should perhaps just be described as non-cohorted, Dr. Lopez noted.)

Finally, to try to ensure that the proposed elevation is accepted, the committee will suggest other aspects of their proposal be revised, perhaps following the model of the Speech Language program whose evaluation was accepted by the Chancellor’s office. The language of the teach-out policy (which is point “i” under the “Program identification” section of their proposal) needs to clarify that the option will be eliminated; new students entering the program will be earning the elevated degree and the option that currently exists will no longer be an option for them. Other parts of the proposal (specifically, point “j” under the same section) should be clear about the same point; the option will be eliminated in the process of elevating it to a degree.

6. Consideration of request from the Department of Social Work Education to waive the GRE requirement from their admissions application

The committee discussed the request from the Social Work Education department to waive the GRE requirement from their admissions application as part of a broader discussion of the merits and demerits of requiring the GRE for applicants and the extent to which GRE scores should be used for admission decisions.

The committee ultimately agreed to the Social Work department’s request after reviewing the department's request, based primarily on the committee’s precedent of approving previous waiver requests from other programs and the fact that standarized testing is not required as part of the CSU or Fresno State admission process.

Dr. Tracz suggested that the department’s claim that the GRE is biased (i.e., that there is “evidence of an inherent bias in standardization of GRE scoring,” to quote the department's request letter) should be supported with evidence or, alternatively, that claim should be modified. Suggested modifications included that there is the perception of bias or that GRE scores are not predictive of success in their program.

Also, in light of the department’s claim that “alternate means can be utilized to assess student writing levels” (to again quote the request letter), the committee suggested clarifying what (if any) writing assessment will be used to replace the GRE writing scores in the application requirements and/or admission decisions.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

The next meeting is planned for Tuesday, Sept 25, 2018, at 2:00 pm in TA 117.

Agenda for next meeting:

1. Approval of Minutes from September 11, 2018, meeting  
2. Approval of Agenda

3. Communications and Announcements

4. Presentation of alternative thesis formats: Charles Radke