

MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO  
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Office of the Academic Senate Ext. 8-2743

September 14, 2021

Members Present: M. López (Chair), K. Capehart, A. Hoskins, D. Lent, J. Marshall (ex officio),  
G. Sharma, R. Sias, and D. Walker

Member Excused: B. Sethuramasamyraja

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 PM, by Chair López on Zoom.

- I. Minutes: MSC to approve the Minutes of September 7, 2021
- II. Agenda: MSC to approve the agenda for September 14, 2021
- III. Updates, Announcements, and Communications
  - a. J. Marshall announced that, as per Provost Fu, the new Interim Dean of Graduate Studies for Spring 2022 will be announced in about two weeks. By the deadline, the job opening received 10 applications.
  - b. J. Marshall offered a reminder: Next Thursday morning at 8:00 AM, is the first Graduate Coordinators Meeting of the fall 2021 semester. The committee is 'Welcome to Attend.' Marshall stated that he will be happy to serve the Zoom link for the upcoming meeting.
  - c. J. Marshall invited M. López, as chair of the University Graduate Committee, to speak at the Graduate Coordinators Meeting. After checking with the members present, López stated that there was no pressing business to bring to the Graduate Coordinators Meeting, but she would most likely attend the meeting.
  - d. M. López asked J. Marshall about the Graduate and Undergraduate Research Grants, specifically the ASI (Associated Students, Inc.) grants which are managed by the Graduate Studies Office. López explained that the last call for grants found had an April 2019 deadline, for AY 2019/2020. She stated that there was no call for the current academic year. López asked when will that grant program resume?
    - (1) J. Marshall replied that ASI has not made any determinations regarding grant funding for the current academic year. ASI did not fund grants in AY 2020/2021 due to the Fresno State campus closure related to COVID-19. Marshall explained that part of the campus closure guidelines referred to the "ceasing all undergraduate research." During the campus closure, some graduate level research was allowed to continue, but those research projects represent a small number.
    - (2) Further, J. Marshall explained that the research grants are tied funding. He said that graduate research grants are supplemented by Graduate Studies, and the Provost Office has supplemented the undergraduate research in the past. Both research grants are tied to MOUs that were not acted upon last year. Marshall stated that the research grants are on his agenda when he meets with ASI.

- i) M. López asked whether undergraduate research must take place in a lab. A laboratory setting may not be needed to carry out a study, as disciplines and research methodologies differ. It would be great if students' research can be funded, even if there is no need for a lab.
  - (1) J. Marshall explained that that was the case among the faculty. He said that we recognize that among the faculty. If the faculty completes research off campus. the faculty may not have need for lab research, and may not complete a research project plan. But he stated that ASI believes that it should be a blanket decision.
  - (2) M. López said that she can see that it can be an issue of equity, when making the award available to some disciplines and not to others. But she understands that it is the nature of some of the research areas. For example, in the History Department, faculty members may assist the students to carry out their own research. While in other disciplines, she acknowledges that students may assist with the faculty's research.
  - (3) J. Marshall agreed that that strategy (History Department's research model) is consistent with previous funding for undergrad research. But it is less so with graduate research strategies that were funded in the past.
- ii) D. Lent issued a concern that student research awards had been suspended, even before the COVID-19 closure, and recalled communication about the end of funding. Lent asked Marshall, "Has that changed?"
  - (1) J. Marshall stated that he was not aware of any talk in that regard. He said that currently, there is an active MOU. The past two MOUs were suspended in two spring semesters due to COVID. Marshall stated that he will note the concerns of the Grad Committee, when meeting with ASI.

IV. Visit by Marcee Varela, Graduate Degree Manager in the Division of Research and Graduate Studies at 2:14 PM. Presentation on APM 233.

a. Background and Concerns:

- i) M. Varela explained that the issue came to light over the summer when a Graduate Program Coordinator reached out because a student in the program had failed two upper-division classes that were required as prerequisites. The coordinator wanted to know if exceptions were ever made to APM 233, which prohibits graduate students from repeating undergraduate courses? Or the other option: The coordinator asked if the student needed to be disqualified from the program, if the repetition of courses wasn't an option?
- ii) M. Varela stated that her immediate concern is that, throughout the years, many graduate students have repeated undergraduate classes, in an effort to either receive a better grade in a specific course or to achieve a higher accumulative GPA for classification purposes.
- iii) M. Varela researched all of the past Academic Senate and Graduate Committee minutes that mentioned APM 233 or Executive Order 1037. She was not able to find any reference of discussions related specifically to graduate students. All of the minutes reference changes to the grade substitution policies and allowances for

undergraduate students. Varela stated that she was not able to find the reason why a graduate student would be permitted to repeat graduate level courses, but not undergraduate level courses.

- iv) The broader concern is, after further research of the graduate programs at Fresno State, that approximately 19 programs either assign undergraduate level prerequisites for admissions to their program, or they define upper-division courses as electives or required course toward the graduate degree.
  - v) After completing her research, M. Varela and Dr. Marshall agree that it is worth re-visiting APM 233, to see (1) if the statement that references graduate students should remain as is, or (2) if the original language might have been misinterpreted, which means that the language needs to be revised or removed.
- b. APM 233 (Policy on Repeat Classes) [APM.UGC.pdf sent prior to the meeting]
- M. Varela pointed out the confusing language in APM 233:
- i) When APM 233 was originally implemented, the only statement regarding graduate students is as follows: "Graduate post-baccalaureate students are not eligible for the Policy if the class is an undergraduate course."
  - ii) Following the implementation of Executive Order 1037, APM 233 was amended to read: "Students pursuing graduate degrees are not eligible to repeat undergraduate level courses for any reason."
- c. Discussion:
- i) Chair M. López asked whether the DRGS knows the purpose of the undergraduate courses that students are allowed to take. D. Lent asked where did the wording of APM 233 come from, and he questioned the reasoning for the language in APM 233? Using the Biology Department as an example, he speculated on how enrollment decisions might have been made regarding APM 233.
    - (1) M. Varela stated that she went through each program to see which programs defined these undergraduate level courses (i.e., upper-division or lower-division, in some cases) as prerequisites, in contrast to which programs allowed them as upper-division electives or even required courses toward the degree. Varela stated that it was almost "half of the 19." But she is most concerned with post-baccalaureate students taking undergrad classes, in light of the language in APM 233.
  - ii) D. Lent suggested that a large number of post-bac students, who are Pre-Med, in his department may contribute to the current repeat course numbers. He explained that students may enroll to meet admissions and/or course requirements to get into a medical school program. Another factor is that students may re-enroll at Fresno State to retake core courses or to repeat courses to improve their overall GPA.
  - iii) M. López stated that the committee needs to look closely at undergraduate prerequisites that are used to admit students to graduate programs at Fresno State. She explained, "When graduate programs place prerequisites on admissions, we have to consider that the students may not have the courses to be admitted into the program. So, it is a fine line," when placing prerequisites on admissions. She questioned: How do we make sure that students who are coming to a graduate program have access to the prerequisite courses that are needed for admissions? Plus, how do we balance the needs of Fresno State undergraduate students who

- may need access to courses for graduation, but post-bac students may be enrolled in the limited classroom space?
- iv) Addressing M. Varela, López asked if in order for undergraduate courses to count for the graduate program, in contrast to just meeting the admission prerequisite, would an undergraduate course have to be understood as meeting the equivalence of a graduate course?
    - (1) M. Varela said, “No.” She explained that some programs, a very few, have allowed them as actual required courses toward the degree. And as long as 70% of the student’s graduate program consists of graduate level coursework, students are allowed to take up to 9 units of upper-division coursework.
  - v) D. Walker asked a clarifying question. She asked, “Once a student graduates, how does the student matriculate?” After citing several examples of Fresno State programs (i.e., Physical Therapy, Nursing, Speech Pathology, etc.), Walker stated that it was her understanding that students had to enroll through Open University, if not in a graduate program and/or already obtained a degree. Walker asked, “Can someone clarify that gap? Can someone explain Open University matriculation?” Once students graduate, Walker believed that they no longer have access to Fresno State undergraduate courses anymore.
    - (1) M. Varela explained that Open University is different than extension. She stated that students must apply to the university as a post-bac student and be admitted to a graduate program. They have to be admitted by a specific graduate program. If they are not, students have the option of taking classes through Open University if there is enough space in the classes. It’s really about registration. They don’t have to be admitted. They can take them through Continued Global Education, through Open University, not as matriculated students. If there is space in the classroom, those students who are not admitted can take the same “state-side” courses as matriculated students. Both types of students may be in classes.
  - vi) D. Lent agreed that the practice of non-degree students enrolling in Fresno State courses can be problematic for departments in the sciences. He explained that each semester there are graduate students who enroll in program in the Biology Department. When working with students, Lent will ask if they plan complete the degree? In many cases, they do not complete the master degree because they may have enrolled at Fresno State to meet the prerequisite course requirements and/or to repeat courses to raise their GPA for medical school or other health profession programs. Lent explained that students will just drop the program once they get the courses that they need. Lent said that it is not a problem if it is one or two students, but if there are five graduate students in any given semester, and they do not plan to complete the program, it is problematic.
    - (1) M. Varela said years ago, Fresno State had an Undeclared Status, for post-bac students. Students who were pre-Med or seeking prerequisites courses for medical school or other programs could enroll in Fresno State courses, but that is no longer an option. Varela stated that she also sees students in other programs (i.e., those other than the sciences) who start and are admitted to graduate degree programs, “but a few never finish.”

- vii) M. López asked, “Is the issue at hand, whether we want to recommend a change to the language, to reflect that even at the post-baccalaureate level if students want to repeat courses, they can do so? Is that what we are trying to get to?”
- (1) J. Marshall replied that it seems like there are three variables: (1) “You are a graduate student. Can you repeat a course, 200-level or 100-level?” He said, “Right now, you can repeat a course.” (2) “Can you repeat a course to improve your grade? Right now, undergrads can repeat a course to improve their grades. Graduate students cannot improve their grade by repeating a 200-level course. Should graduate students be allowed to repeat a 100-level course to improve a grade?” And (3) “Where are students taking these 100-level courses? Are the courses for your major, or are they prerequisites?” Marshall said that the three variables probably need to be factored into how the policy should be worded. “Or, don’t change the policy at all.”
- viii) D. Lent asked, “Is the policy actually being enforced? The policy states that graduate students cannot retake any undergraduate courses, period.”
- (1) M. Varela said that, right now, the policy is not being enforced by anyone. Graduate students can repeat undergraduate or graduate level courses. Per this policy, students are not supposed to repeat undergraduate courses, but they are. With the graduate level courses, students can repeat courses currently, but they are not allowed grade substitutions. Varela said that’s how these conversations originated. People were trying to figure out how to be in compliance with the grade substitution rules at the undergraduate level. If a graduate student repeats any course, whether undergraduate or graduate level course, all attempts remain on the transcript, and all units and grade points are calculated into the GPA. Varela said that she is curious as to why graduate students were not allowed to repeat undergraduate classes? And why did the policy changed because it states that graduate students are not allowed to repeat courses? But they are. There is nothing that prevents them from taking the courses. In some cases, graduate coordinator and advisors recommend that students to retake courses.
- ix) With regard to graduate students taking of the same course at the undergraduate level and at graduate level, J. Marshall explained that a single course cannot count toward two degrees.
- (1) D. Lent asked, “Even if you take it twice?”
- (2) J. Marshall replied that it may be possible for a student to “take a single course for a second time, for a different degree. But the undergraduate course cannot be counted if it was already counted for the Bachelor’s degree.”
- x) J. Marshall suggested that the committee not take up the question on grade replacement, where a student can retake a course, to replace a lower grade with a higher grade. He said, “Changing the current language of APM 233 will not change the replacement policy. The question is: Should graduate students be able to retake an undergraduate course? They can retake a graduate course, but they have to count the grades for both of them. To recap, the only negative that has been discussed so far is that a graduate student may be filling a valuable space in a class that could have gone to an undergraduate student,” as D. Lent suggested.

- (1) D. Walker replied that that is a big negative at this campus. She explained that if the policy is not going to be enforced, like one graduate student may sit in this course like Open University, that's a big negative for Fresno State matriculation goals for undergraduates, when they need access to courses.
  - (2) D. Lent suggested a good solution to the current policy might be that any retakes that a graduate student is trying to make, the student should fall to the status of an Open University student, so they can only take a course if space is available. There are no replacements; everything counts, only if there is space. If there is no space available, the student may have to wait for an opening.
  - (3) While she agrees with Lent, M. López said that one important concern is the time that it will take for the graduate students to reach graduation if programs require them to take undergraduate courses. She said if we can't guarantee that there will be space, but we require grads to take undergraduate courses, students may not finish the programs in a timely fashion.
  - (4) M. Varela stated that students cannot be enrolled in Open University and "state-side" at the same time. If a student needs to enroll in an undergraduate course through Continuing Global Education, that will pull the student from "state-side" enrollment for a semester.
  - (5) D. Lent asked if the student's state-side record could be denoted with a flag, so that the student cannot retake a course without the instructor's permission?
  - (6) D. Walker noted that the flag denotation would be helpful for students' enrollment records at Fresno State. But it would not be helpful, if students take the repeated courses at another institution.
- xi) M. López called for a motion to continue the APM 233 conversation at the next meeting. The motion to do so was called and approved.
  - xii) M. López invited M. Varela to the next meeting, should the members have more questions.

## V. Discussion: Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Options Proposal

### a. Outstanding Question:

- i) In response to D. Walker's question from the previous meeting on Sept. 7, 2021, M. López answered, "No," and she stated that there was a miscommunication at the meeting. The committee did receive CRMHC's latest version of the options proposal. But the latest version of the proposal offered two different things: (1) It noted four possible culminating experiences, and (2) They cannot require the Thesis and Project units to be in addition to the 60 program units. The department will have to figure out how to make those units count. In light of the correct proposal received, Chair López repeated her recommendation from last week: "Because licensure is not crucial to graduation from the program, that those be the units that students can take in addition to [the required courses], not as a part of the program, but if they need for their classes to meet licensure requirements."
- (1) In response to Chair Lopez's update of her communication with CRMHC, D. Walker confirmed that the proposal is the most updated version, and Y. Castillo misspoke, when she stated, "I thought we had fixed it, and I gave you the wrong proposal."

- (2) M. López agreed that the CRMHC options proposal is correct, as written.
- b. Recap of Discussion from September 7, 2021:  
 M. López recapped the major areas of that will impact the CRMHS proposal:
- i) The inconsistency that some students must complete 63 units, when the program is 60 units.
  - ii) A clear purpose for the four culminating experiences.
  - iii) The national exam can substitute or take the place of the comprehensive exams, but it should not be a separate option in the program.
  - iv) The department is currently under staffed.
- c. Discussion:
- i) Culminating Experiences:
    - (1) M. López stated that CRMHC must explain the culminating experiences differently, in contrast to the way they are communicated in the proposal.
  - ii) Current Staffing in the Department:
    - (1) M. López noted that the department is understaffed, and any approval vote will have to address the number of staff.
    - (2) D. Walker said that if someone take them up on completing 298 or 299, the program will be understaffed. Right now, they funnel students to the comprehensive exam. They do not have the right faculty to student density.
    - (3) M. López said that staffing is especially an issue, when we understand that they expect that their programs will actually grow, once they have the separate options.
    - (4) J. Marshall recommended that if the vote is yes, an approval letter should state, "due to faculty moving into administrative roles," more faculty is needed.
  - iii) Culminating Experience, National Exam, and Comprehensive Exam:
    - (1) D. Walker stated that they are looking at an increase in enrollment. The program currently has 90 students. She questioned what it might be like if 90 students signed up to complete a project or thesis?
    - (2) M. López explained that currently 96% of the students take a comp instead of thesis and project. But students do currently have the option of taking thesis or project. But again, staffing is an issue.
    - (3) J. Marshall stated that the culminating experience must be within the 60 units.
    - (4) G. Sharma agreed that López's statement makes sense. The courses that students have to take for licensure can be the extra courses that they take. But for graduation, she stated that some students prefer project and thesis over comprehensive exam. Further, Sharma explained that to take away an option for one program, but to leave that same option in three other programs that exist in the department would be unfair. Sharma stated that students in other programs have the opportunity to take project and thesis, in place of comprehensive exams. For example, students in Student Affairs and College Counseling have the option of project and thesis. Sharma said that students take them for many reasons, and "we will never take the option of project and thesis away from them."
  - iv) Returning to faculty numbers in the department, D. Lent suggested using the argument related to tenured faculty density. Given the drive in the CSU system and

at this campus, improving the tenured density for a growing and well-respected program is critical.

- d. Recommendations:
  - i) Chair López moved to approve the two options proposal for the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program, with the recommended changes to the proposal, to include the four major issues that were discussed. Since the changes will be reflected in the catalog copy, the committee does not need an updated proposal. CRMHC just needs to update their catalog revision copy to reflect the changes and submit the revised version to the DRGS.
  - ii) However, if the program decides to eliminate the project and/or thesis options, the proposal will come back to the graduate committee for a second evaluation.
  
- e. The committee voted unanimously to approve the program options for the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling program.

VI. MSC to adjourn at 3:00 PM.

The next scheduled meeting of the University Graduate Committee is Tuesday, September 21, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom.

#### Agenda for September 21, 2021

- I. Approval of the Minutes from September 14
- II. Approval of the Agenda for September 21
- III. Updates and Announcements
- IV. Continued discussion: APM 233
- V. Discussion: Athletic Training program change proposal