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Academic Policy Committee Report - March 2, 2016

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ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 2, 2016
Graduate School Conference Room

Members Present: M. Aydeniz, E. Boder, J. Bonom, S. Forrest-Bank, P. Gellert, V. Kupritz, K. Rooker (GSS), M. Stehle (Chair), and S. Galloway.

Also present: M. Albrecht, C. Cox, S. Kania (Chair, Graduate Council), T. Saenkhum (Director of ESL), D. Thompson, and G. Tipps.

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Maria Stehle, Chair, at 2:10 p.m.

2. Minutes

Minutes were already discussed at Graduate Council meeting. Minutes were unanimously approved. In the future, Minutes will be sent via e-mail for electronic approval (at least in cases where Graduate Council will discuss prior to next APC meeting).

3. English Placement Proposal

Presented by Tanita Saenkhum, Director of ESL and Greg Tipps, Associate Director of Graduate Admissions (on behalf of Yvonne Kilpatrick, Director of Graduate Admissions). Two documents were distributed to APC prior to meeting: (1) Proposal to change language in Graduate Catalog for English Proficiency and (2) to Add English 122 language to Graduate Catalog.

Saenkhum explained they are requesting to revise language in catalog to make it coincide with current program practice. During spring admissions season 2015, she led a pilot program of pre-placing entering graduate students based on their TOEFL or IELTS score. Students without test scores or who questioned the validity of their score were, as in the past, evaluated at UT. The pilot program was deemed a success. As at other universities, the TOEFL/IELTS score were an accurate predictor of English level. The standard for requiring students to enroll in English 122 is higher than the standard for admissions (see Proposal). In the past between 200 and 300 students took UT's placement exam. With new procedure, much fewer took it. Importantly, placement can be streamlined and accomplished much earlier before student arrival at UT, which will also allow her department to know how many sections of English 122 to create.

Saenkhum explained that graduate students are no longer mixed with undergraduates in English 121. Instead, a new course, English 122, was created specifically for graduate students. Generally, the material in English 122 is more appropriate to graduate student needs.

A variety of related issues were discussed:

Coordination with CIE:

Thompson expressed concern about communications because when she shared with Pia Wood in CIE, Wood had not seen it before. Tipps explained that CIE is not involved in the English Placement exam because the ESL office is in charge of administering English placement and instruction, which is separate from CIE responsibilities.

Graduate Catalog:

Two sections of the catalog to revise: (1) language for English Placement and (2) language for English Certification. Tipps explained that the language for English Certification is from the Graduate Admissions Office.

Enforcement: How will the policy be enforced and what will be the sanctions for students who either do not take the required class or get lower than C? The policy has long stated that students who get lower than C must re-take. This revision does not address that policy. Saenkhum did not know what percent of students do not take the class but reported 3 to 5 students per year enroll

at last term before graduating. The most commonly expressed reason for not taking English 121 (now 122) was “scheduling conflict.”

After discussion, it was recommended students take class in 1st semester and require it in first year.

Applicability of policy: Saenkhum and Tipps clarified that the policy applies to all students who are not native speakers of English.

Timing: The proposal, if approved, will be effective for Fall 2016.

Overall:

There was general support for the proposal and its potential for improved efficiency, as well as transparency in showing incoming students and applicants the level needed both for acceptance at UT and for passing out of the English class. There was no dissent.

Further action:

Stehle asked Tipps and Saenkhum to revise the proposal based on today’s discussion. Kania recommend bringing revised proposal to Council’s next meeting March 31 and, if possible, to Graduate Deans’ meeting March 10. The purpose of announcing the motion to Graduate Council before the next meeting is to allow some time for units to seek input and respond .

4. Proposal for CVM Exemption from new Grading Policy

Stehle initiated discussion of Dr. Claudia Kirk’s request for the College of Veterinary Medicine to be exempted from the new Grading Policy (approved at the November 19, 2015 Graduate Council meeting and approved by the Faculty Senate on February 1, 2016

Kania reported that Kirk is in Washington, DC and asked for postponement to next meeting, but he suggested discussing in the interest of time.

In response to Stehle, Kania affirmed that this proposal falls within APC charge based on bylaws. He noted that College of Law has separate grading scale. Thompson wondered why this issue was not raised earlier. If APC had understood CVM concerns better, Graduate Council might still have passed the change. Now that it is approved, their request for exception procedurally makes sense. Gellert noted that they could have proposed a friendly amendment to the motion at Graduate Council.

Albrecht noted Registrar’s Office concerns about programming new scale in Banner and also having to revise the grading scale explanation on the back of hard copy transcripts.

Kania explained CVM grading includes C’s and that students do not fail with such grades. This situation is already in place in CVM although it is unclear how given old and new policy. CVM Standards is not in our catalog. It is what they provide accreditors.

Albrecht noted that there could be an issue coordinating different grading scales with joint PhD-DVM degrees and new DVM-Doctor of Public Health. Kania added that also other students can take Vet courses, although they rarely do.

Motion from Gellert: *To approve in principle of CVM exemption to the new grading and ask CVM (Kirk) to bring specific language to Council.*

Motion seconded by Forrest-Bank.

Motion approved unanimously.

Albrecht noted Kirk should also suggest language about CVM for Catalog.

Both will be items for discussion at Council not necessarily for voting. APC expressed hope that Dr. Kirk, or an alternative representative, attend the Graduate Council meeting to answer questions.

5. Meeting adjourned at 3:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Gellert