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Faculty Senate - Graduate Council Year-End Committee Report

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The
2009-2010
Annual Report
of
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Graduate Council

Presented to
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and
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President of the UTK Faculty Senate

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April 15, 2010

Introduction

The following reports are “year-in-review” reports from the Graduate Council’s Curriculum Committee, Academic Appeals Committee, Credential Committee, Academic Policy Committee, and the Graduate Deans’ Group. Some noteworthy accomplishments of the Graduate Council are listed at the end of these committee/group reports.

These highlights are meant to provide a brief review of the work accomplished by the Graduate Council and its committees. More detailed information can be obtained from Graduate Council minutes and the minutes of the various committees.

Curriculum Committee

- Worked with staff in the Graduate School to disseminate information at the College and Department level regarding implementation of the Banner Student Information System.
- Reviewed all courses not taught in four or more years for continued inclusion in the Graduate Catalog.
- Considered and took action on over 1500 proposed course changes and over 300 proposed departmental changes.
- Approved new degree programs and dual degrees in several fields:
 1. College of Business Administration: A name change for the major of Management Science MS to Business Analytics MS in the College of Business Administration.
 2. College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences: Several MS majors were dropped and renamed. Revisions were the result of a departmental name change from Exercise, Sport, and Leisure Studies to Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies. Public Health was moved out of the Department of Nutrition and became its own department.
 3. College of Engineering: Four 5-year BS/MS degrees were added.
 4. College of Nursing: A new degree program was added, Doctor of Nursing Practice.
- Continued work on development of standardized tools to assess curricular changes.

Credentials Committee

- Revised its bylaws to address minor procedural issues (approved and adopted by Graduate Council February 2010).

- Completed and approved document defining mentoring expectations for faculty directly dissertation research (approved and adopted by Graduate Council March 2010).
- Conducted monthly reviews of all requests for approval to direct doctoral dissertations, as charged by the Graduate Council.
- Discussed creation of a two-tiered Graduate Faculty system (associate and full graduate faculty) to permit faculty to be approved for committee membership (associate faculty) but not for chairing dissertation committees. No action taken.
- Discussed policies for appointment of non-UT faculty to dissertation committees. Issue referred to Academic Policy Committee.

Graduate Council Appeals Committee

The Appeals committee considered 4 appeals. The main concern of all these grievances was an academic performance evaluation. Students alleged clearly unfair decisions and unacceptable evaluation procedures. A secondary concern of two of the appeals was adherence to departmental policies and procedures.

Details:

- Two students appealed a failing grade on a comprehensive exam, which resulted in dismissal from the program. The appeals committee's recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School was to reject one of those appeals, and to convene an Appeal Hearing Panel for the second. The Hearing Panel subsequently recommended rejection of the appeal.
- Two students appealed a failing grade in a course, which resulted in automatic dismissal from the programs according to the policies of the departments involved. The appeals committee's recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School was to reject one of those appeals. However, the committee recommended granting the appeal of a student who received a grade of "incomplete" for the course and, after filing an appeal of this grade, was no longer afforded the opportunity to remove the "incomplete."

Academic Policy Committee

The Academic Policy Committee worked on a variety of policy statements during the academic year of 2009-2010. The work of the committee includes the following processes: engages in discussion of current policies and proposed policies; invites input and feedback from campus groups, including the Graduate Deans' Group; and presents the recommendations to Graduate Council for final approval.

New and Revised Policies Approved:

1. **Readmission Policy Change.** The Graduate Council approved changing the terms of absence from three terms to one term for requirement of readmission. This change was brought forward since the Banner Student Information System would not accommodate different policies by undergraduate and graduate student levels. (October 2009)
2. **Dual Degree Programs (BS/MS) in Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, and Computer Science.** The Graduate Council approved adding Dual Degree Programs (BS/MS) in Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, and Computer Science. The BS/MS dual degree option allows counting the same nine graduate level hours toward the requirements in both the Bachelor of Science degree and the Master of Science degree. (October 2009)
3. **Joint Doctoral Degrees.** The Graduate Council approved a new policy to provide the framework for joint domestic and international doctoral degrees to be earned at UTK in collaboration with other educational institutions. (March 2010)

Other Policies on APC Agendas in 2009-10:

1. **Doctoral Committee Policy.** The Academic Policy Committee members have met throughout the Spring Semester in informal “brown-bag lunch” sessions to study the components of the current policy on doctoral committees and to work to improve the effectiveness of the policy.
2. **Title of “Director of Graduate Studies.”** The committee joined the Graduate Deans’ Group in discussing the title & the tasks of the individuals holding this position with their academic unit in order to make this title as descriptive as possible while accommodating the diversity of academic programs across campus. (On Graduate Council agenda April 2010)
3. **Proposed Parental Leave Policy as Presented by Graduate Student Senate.**

Graduate Deans’ Group

- Revised the Department Graduate Student Handbook Template
- Graduate Directors’ Responsibilities were revised. Graduate Deans recommended to the Academic Policy Committee the title Graduate Program Director be changed to Director of Graduate Studies since several colleges do not have departments. A clarification request changing from departments to programs was also made.
- Graduate Fellowships are used as a recruiting tool for attracting outstanding graduate students to UTK. The Deans were strongly encouraged to promote the fellowships and remind department heads and graduate directors to nominate

students and encourage students to apply for the fellowships. Fifty Graduate School Fellowships were awarded for fall 2010-2011 and were announced on the Graduate School Website on March 26, 2010.

- The program for Responsible Conduct of Research was presented to the Graduate Deans' Group by Dr. Brad Fenwick, Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement. The Graduate Deans supported his recommendation that **all graduate students** be required to complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) or UT Knoxville RCR training modules before completing their course work.

Other Work of the Graduate Council for 2009-2010

- (1) Developed and implemented an orientation to Graduate Council (August 13, 2009).
- (2) Facilitated Graduate Council's participation in the process for awarding an honorary degree (2010 to Al Gore) by establishing a Special Committee who forwarded their recommendation to the Chancellor/Provost.
- (3) Presented Graduate Council minutes to the Faculty Senate for its approval.
- (4) Represented Graduate Council in the Faculty Senate Executive Council Meetings
- (5) Convened the Executive Committee in the fall and spring semesters to guide the work of the Graduate Council.
- (6) Presented excerpts from the history of the Graduate Council in lights of 60 years of existence.