I. Approval of the April 28, 2011 Minutes

II. Policies, Procedures & Awards Subcommittee

   • Survey Results and Recommendations: Best Practices and Impediments in Graduate Degree Completion
   • CGS Model Mentor Award Letter

III. Petitions & Program Changes Subcommittee Report

   • Germanic Languages & Literatures RS² proposal
   • Theatre RS² proposal

IV. Old Business

   • Update regarding WGSS 801

V. New Business

   • Petitions Subcommittee Summer Work
   • Exiting Committee Members

Lunch will be served in appreciation of the CGS members’ service.
I. Approval of the April 28, 2011 Minutes

The University of Kansas
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES

MINUTES
APRIL 28, 2011, 11:00AM
STRONG HALL – ROOM 210

Members Present: Alison Gabriele, Tanya Hart, Daniel Katz, Eve Levin, Cullen Merritt, Jim Mielke (ex officio),
Paul Mirecki, Ed Morris, Becca Peterson (ex officio), Kees Vanderveen, and Gina Westergard
Others in attendance: Randal Jelks (American Studies), Katie Rockey (COGA), and Leatrice Smith (COGA)

The meeting was called to order by Dean Peterson at 11:03 a.m.

American Studies Proposals
Dr. Randal Jelks was present to discuss the American Studies M.A. program change proposal and Responsible
Scholarship and Research Skills proposal. A motion was made and seconded to approve both proposals. The
motion was approved unanimously.

Minutes
A motion was made and seconded to approve the April 14, 2011, minutes of the Committee on Graduate Studies, as
written. The motion was approved unanimously.

Report of the Policies, Procedures & Awards Subcommittee
(Ed Morris, reporting)

- The Subcommittee prepared a report regarding best practices and impediments in graduate degree
  completion based on the results of their survey of directors of graduate studies in the College. The
  Committee will review the report and provide feedback at the next meeting of the CGS.

- The Subcommittee recommended that the Graduate Thesis/Project and Graduate Mentor Awards calls for
  nomination include the following information after listing the date the nominations are due:

  1) “Incomplete nominations will not be considered.”
  2) “No nominations or supporting materials will be accepted after this date.”

- The Subcommittee recommended that the Graduate Mentor Awards nominations must include the mentors’
  curriculum vitae. They also recommended that the College present the award recipients with a certificate
  suitable for framing and that a letter is sent to the nominees who did not receive an award.

- Additional recommendations from the Subcommittee report included posting a link to the CGS survey on
  the College website such that survey takers have access to these data and know that it was analyzed by the
  subcommittee members.

Report of the Curricular Changes Subcommittee
(Kees Vanderveen, reporting)

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the following curricular change proposals recommended by
  the Subcommittee. The motion was approved unanimously.

  o New course: ABSC 981

  o Course changes: LING 735, LING 737, PSYC 735, and PSYC 737
• A motion was made and seconded to table cross-listed courses HIST 809, HIST 810, HWC 770, HWC 775, WGSS 770, and WGSS 775 due to the need for further consultation with the departments and the CUSA. The motion was approved unanimously.

• Update regarding CHEM 950 and PHSX 971
  
  o The CGS approved the course number change for CHEM 917 to CHEM 950 on March 10, 2011, which was cross-listed with PHSX 971.

  o The CGS subsequently approved the course change to PHSX 971 to reflect the CHEM 917 number change on April 14, 2011. It was later found that the prerequisites did not match.

  o Both departments have agreed to the following prerequisites for CHEM 950 and PHSX 971. Prerequisite: CHEM 852 or PHSX 871.

Report of the Petitions & Program Changes Subcommittee
(Gina Westergard, reporting)

• A motion was made and seconded to approve the Mathematics Ph.D. program change proposal and accompanying Responsible Scholarship and Research Skills proposal. The motion was approved unanimously.

• The following approved proposals will move forward to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies upon final College approval:

  American Studies  History
  Anthropology  History of Art
  Applied Behavioral Science  Intercampus Program in Communicative Disorders
  Bioinformatics  Linguistics
  Chemistry  Mathematics
  Child Language  Molecular Biosciences
  Clinical Child Psychology  Philosophy
  Communication Studies  Physics and Astronomy
  Ecology and Evolutionary Biology  Political Science
  Economics  Psychology
  English  Public Administration
  Geography  Slavic Languages and Literatures
  Geology  Sociology
  Gerontology  Spanish and Portuguese
  French and Italian  Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Old Business
Dean Peterson reported that the Academic Catalogs will be electronically archived by University Relations. The committee preferred that at least one hard-copy be produced. A proposal will be drafted based on the committee’s recommendations.

New Business
Dean Mielke has asked faculty to participate in the Spring 2011 Faculty Elections because nominations are still needed for a few open committee positions, which are listed in Blackboard.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Dean Peterson at 12:06 p.m.
**Upcoming Meetings**

- The Petitions & Program Changes Subcommittee will meet on **Thursday, May 5, 2011**. There are no scheduled meetings for the Curricular Changes Subcommittee and Policies, Procedures & Awards Subcommittee.

- The next meeting of the Committee on Graduate Studies is **Thursday, May 12, 2011, 11:00 a.m., 210 Strong Hall**.

*Minutes recorded by Leatrice Smith; transcribed by Savanna Trent (College Office of Graduate Affairs)*

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**II. Policies, Procedures & Awards Subcommittee Report**

1. **Survey Results and Recommendations: Best Practices and Impediments in Graduate Degree Completion**

   The Dean’s first charge the Committee on Graduate Studies last fall was to “Encourage departments and programs directly to review ‘time to degree’ and degree completion impediments.” For this, the Subcommittee on Policies, Procedures, and Awards developed a survey (Caroline Jewers prepared the first draft) that was sent to department and program chairs and graduate directors on November 18, 2010, with a follow-up prompt on March 4, 2011. The final return date was March 11, 2011.

   The survey asked what the chair and directors saw as (a) “best practices” to ensure degree completion and timely degree completion (e.g., curricula, program requirements, student and faculty supports, incentives) and (b) impediments to degree completion and timely degree completion (e.g., Office of Graduate Studies and College requirements; e.g., research skills, lack of student and faculty supports, lack of incentives). Twenty chairs and directors from 19 departments and programs responded with insights and suggestions.

   The results are presented in the following pages, first, as the Subcommittee’s executive summary of the recommendations (and more) for best practices and removing impediments. Second, the responses are summarized by each question (along with subcommittee commentary). We recommend that this document be sent to the faculty who responded to the survey, along with a note of appreciation for their responding to it. Faculty members rarely receive feedback on the surveys they complete.

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   **Executive Summary of the Recommendations for Best Practices and Removing Impediments for Graduate Degree Completion**

   In reviewing the survey results, we found (or intuited) three general themes we list below, followed by what might be best practices related to them, as conveyed in the results (or intuited by us). We propose that the College Graduate Studies Committee commend them to the Dean as means for improving graduate students’ time to degree and degree completion.

   One theme concerned funding. Graduate students would make better progress to their degrees (and the programs would attract better students) by increasing funding and removing restrictions:

   - Increasing funding: increase the number of GTA and GRA lines, the GTA and GRA salaries, and multi-year salary packages; increase fellowships and their awards; increase student scholarly travel funds (i.e., funding amount and number funded; e.g., to present papers at conferences); and provide funding during the summer and for off-campus research

   - Removing restrictions: make in-state tuition easier to obtain; make tuition waivers available for GRAs and students who are on fellowships outside of the country; make summer enrollment an
option, especially when students’ advisors are not available, paying perhaps campus fees only, if on campus; and make GTA lines easier to convert into GRA lines.

A second theme concerned GTAs. Graduate students would make better progress to their degrees (and the programs would attract better students) if departments:

- Required more GTA training, both centrally through the Center for Teaching Excellence and in home departments; indeed, departments might be required to provide GTA training tailored to College (e.g., English, Math, COMS) and major course requirements (e.g., introductory, survey, research methods).

- Reduced GTA teaching loads by reducing class size, redesigning courses, using alternative pedagogical methods (see training above), scheduling courses for efficiencies (e.g., GTA time on campus; e.g., the days and times the courses meet), allowing greater flexibility in defining GTA assignments (e.g., graders, discussion section leaders, instructors), and restricting first-year GTAs from being instructors.

- Increased English language requirements. After passing the TOEFL, graduate students might work for a year as GRAs and receiving further program-based intensive language training, especially in conversational English.

A third theme concerned students’ time to degree and degree completion. Graduate students would make better progress (and programs would be more successful) if programs had:

Graduate Student Handbooks

- They include the University and CLAS Graduate Studies degree requirements and time-to-degree deadlines, as well as the program’s policies and procedures on adhering to the requirements, meeting the deadlines, and requesting extensions of the latter (e.g., only in extenuating circumstances), all in one place and readily accessible.

- They describe the program’s degree requirements (e.g., course, research, examinations) and the contingencies for meeting (and not meeting) them in much greater detail than the KU Graduate Catalog.

- They provide realistic expectations for time-to-degree requirements (e.g., in a table). These include, for instance, passing the required courses, planning for research, defending master’s theses, writing area papers, and passing comprehensive examinations.

Annual Graduate Student Reviews and Evaluations

- They include student-completed assessments of their progress, both formal and informal (e.g., coursework, degree requirements, teaching, research, and service) that are signed by their advisors. These may also include formal agreements between students and their advisors about what progress students will make each year, as well as the advisors’ responsibilities in assuring their success (e.g., reading theses in a timely manner).

- The assessments or agreements are formally reviewed at the program or department level (e.g., graduate director, graduate curriculum committee), after which students are provided feedback on their progress (e.g., highest commendation, commendation, satisfactory, unsatisfactory) that is also filed with the department and the advisors. Students who make unsatisfactory progress complete a formal plan for remediation for the next year that is acceptable to their advisors (e.g., with timelines). Unsatisfactory progress may also warrant sanctions (e.g., not being permitted to enroll in dissertation hours).
The Survey Questions and Summaries of the Responses

Question 1. What department, College, or University policies, procedures, and practices facilitate your students’ completing their degrees in a timely fashion?

1. Tighter deadlines
   - Having department deadlines for time-to-degree requirements (e.g., master’s degree, comprehensive examination) *(these need to be realistic for students in the sense of “truth in advertising”)*
   - Adhering to CLAS Graduate Studies time-to-degree deadlines
   - Permitting extensions in time-to-degree only in extenuating circumstances

2. Curriculum changes:
   - Scaffolding courses
   - Allowing greater flexibility in course choices
   - Substituting article-style manuscripts or additional coursework for an MA thesis
   - Reducing credit-hour requirements for students who enter with prior graduate coursework

3. Streamlining comprehensive examinations

4. Verifying student progress
   - Conducting annual reviews, with renewal of funding contingent on satisfactory reviews
   - Assigning grades instead of “Progress” each semester of dissertation writing

5. Increasing GTA, GRA, and fellowship funding

Question 2: What department, College, or University policies, procedures, and practices impede your students’ completing their degrees in a timely fashion or completing their degrees at all?

1. Few summer course offerings

2. Complex, difficult to understand policies and procedures

3. Inconsistently enforced policies and procedures

4. Difficult to find and inconsistent policies and procedures on the web site *(the Graduate School web site seems to be pieced together one part at a time over time, as opposed to being based on a logical structure from the ground up)*

5. Time-consuming degree requirements:
   - Foreign language requirement
   - MA thesis
Multiple levels of examination: qualifying, preliminary, comprehensive

High credit-hour requirements, leading to years of graduate coursework

Internships that add to time-to-degree but aid professionalization.

4. Students continue to enroll to postpone repaying educational loans (or to maintain self and family health insurance)

5. Funding issues:

- Insufficient number of GTAs, GRAs, and fellowships, leading to off-campus work

- Heavy teaching loads for GTAs (GTAs sometimes are put into the classroom on their own, with responsibility for designing courses at too early a stage. Many GTAs would benefit from more training on how to expedite preparation to teach and balance teaching and research.)

- Lack of tuition waivers for GRAs

- 10 semesters GTA limit insufficient to permit students to complete the PhD

- Lack of summer funding

- Lack of funding for off-campus research

- Lack of tuition waivers while students are on external fellowships, especially when they are out of the country

- Requiring summer enrollment, especially when advisors are on nine-month salaries

Question 3. Have you redesigned or are you considering redesigning your program (e.g., coursework, comprehensive examinations, testing methods) in order to address time to degree and completion issues? What did or might that include?

Seven or 19 programs have completed redesigning their programs; another seven are in the process; five responded that a redesign was not needed. The redesigns included:

1. An agreement between students and advisors on the amount of work to be completed on the thesis/dissertation:

   - Use of contractual agreements between graduate students and their advisors as a prerequisite to enroll in thesis/dissertation hours. Students detail their progress by submitting memoranda with each thesis/dissertation chapter (any contract should be binding on advisors, too, regarding, for instance, providing timely feedback on written work)

   - Students cannot enroll in a second semester of thesis/dissertation hours if the prospectus has not been completed

2. An annual progress report that details each student’s progress in their graduate program

   - Students, committee, and advisors fill out annual progress report to be reviewed by graduate chair (these should not just be reports; they should be annual written department and self-evaluations that should trigger mandatory interventions if the students’ record reveal “red flags.”)
3. Lighten the required number (or area) of hours
   - Lighten the number of required hours to graduate (through economies, course restructuring, etc.; the degrees should be no less rigorous or “dumbed down”)

4. Reduce the amount of required non-essential foreign language study

5. Begin specialized research earlier
   - Eliminate broad introductory courses (not necessarily; they should be reviewed, analyzing redundancies, possible efficiencies through restructuring, etc.; the degrees should be no less rigorous or “dumbed down”)
   - Begin research immediately
   - Encourage the start of dissertation research earlier by a third-year paper and seminar workshop related to dissertation (three years may be too long to wait; relevant papers and seminars should be assigned as soon as students are prepared)

6. Lighten the comprehensive exam requirements
   - Reduce the amount of required general knowledge for comprehensive exams (not necessarily; the fundamental knowledge in a field should be reviewed, analyzing redundancies, possible efficiencies through restructuring, etc. Students might be given better guidance about what knowledge is most relevant to be successful as an independent scholar and original researcher upon graduation. The requirements should be no less rigorous or “dumbed down”)
   - Replace comprehensive exams (e.g., with portfolio reviews)

7. Other:
   - Lighten teaching load of GTAs by redesigning their courses or using different pedagogical methods (and by providing them with better GTA training and smaller class sizes, and by scheduling courses for the efficient use of GTA time on campus; e.g., the days and times the courses meet)

Question 4. What are your FLORS requirements (feel free to cut-and-paste from your Graduate Handbook or the Graduate Catalog)? What features of them facilitate or impede your students’ completing their degrees in a timely fashion or completing them at all?

Many programs described their current FLORS requirements, but did not comment on whether the requirements facilitated or impeded their students’ progress to their degrees. Some programs described both their old FLORS requirement and the new College Research Skills Requirement, but did not comment on whether the requirements facilitated or impeded their students’ progress to their degrees.

Impediments to Graduate Education

1. It is too arduous a requirement (e.g., “takes a significant amount of time away from students’ principal focus on research”; “can result in significant delays in progress toward completion of graduate degrees”) (but this does not mean nothing is gained by speaking another language as a means for understanding other cultures or having reading knowledge of it that might be necessary for research. Studying a foreign language should have an explicit purpose in the student’s program to justify the expenditure of time and effort.)

2. “English is such an international language at this point in history” (see the comments above)
Facilitate Graduate Education

1. One program reported that FLORS facilitated their students’ doctoral research, but did not comment on whether the requirements facilitated or impeded their students’ progress to their degrees.

2. One program remarked on the utility of a foreign language in making “graduates citizens of a larger civic and intellectual work,” even if an impediment to progress to degree (see comments above).

Several programs commended the new Research Skills Requirement for its “relevance,” “efficacy,” “flexibility.” One added that the change from the FLORS requirement to the Research Skills Requirement will off-set the addition time to degree required by the new Responsible Conduct of Research requirement.

Question 5. Are there other matters we might address?

Six of the ten respondents cited current levels of graduate student funding as an impediment to graduate student recruitment and graduation in a timely manner.

Impediments to Graduate Training

1. Graduate student funding

   - Low GTA salaries
   - No multiyear packages
   - Few annual and summer dissertation fellowships
   - In-state tuition difficult to obtain
   - Inflexibility in converting GTA lines to GRA positions
   - Little funding for student scholarly travel

2. GTA duties:

   - Too much teaching required of per GTA position
   - The ten-semester GTA limit, which has been changed to eleven months
   - Increase the flexibility in defining GTA assignments
   - Overly strict English language requirements. The last two would improve KU’s ability to recruit international graduate students (the subcommittee respectfully disagrees. The requirements may not be rigorous enough. Even after passing the TOEFL, graduate students should perhaps work for a year as GRAs, receiving further intensive English language training, especially in conversational English)

3. CLAS Restrictions

   - Lack of clarity about which graduate training rules are enforced and which are open to interpretation and
• Inflexibility in allowing programs to adapt broad guidelines for graduate training to fit their
disciplines’ expectations and norms and individual student circumstances

Facilitates Graduate Training

1. One program wondered if having a required number of graduate student credit hours would help put
programs and students on notice about progress to degree.

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2. CGS Model Mentor Award Letter

Dear X:

Each year, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences requests nominations from graduate students
for the College Mentor Awards. You were among the professors nominated this year. Congratulations!
This honor attests to your work mentoring your graduate students.

The College is fortunate to have you and other talented advisors among its faculty. Unfortunately,
it has too few prizes to honor every nominee. Although ultimately you were not selected as a recipient this
year, we would like to share with you some of the impressive compliments your students voiced in their
nomination.

[Add here a couple of sentences drawn from the nomination.]

On behalf of the College, we thank you for all your efforts to enhance the educational experience
of your graduate students and assist them in their professional development.

Sincerely,

XXX
Chair, CGS Committee on Awards

Cc: Dept. Chair

III. Petitions & Program Changes Subcommittee Report

The Responsible Scholarship and Research Skills proposals for Germanic Languages and Literatures and
Theatre are available on Blackboard for review.

IV. Old Business

The course proposal for WGSS 801 was approved by the CGS and the CAC as a new course. However, the
course was not a new course but instead a course change. Although the course proposal passed as a new
course, WGSS 801 Feminist Theory is in essence the same course as the original.

The current course description in the Catalog is as follows:

WGSS 801: Women and Gender Studies: Theory and Methods (3). This course will be
intensive interdisciplinary overview of the major theories and research approaches in literature on
women and gender. The topics covered will include the following: 1) an overview of feminist
theories; 2) an overview of how feminist theories can be integrated with research methods in
various disciplines; and 3) examples of applications of feminist theories and methods to specific content areas. Open only to graduate students. LEC

The course proposal that was approved by the CGS and the CAC is as follows and serves as the final approved version for the Catalog:

**WGSS 801 Feminist Theory** (3). A survey of contemporary feminist theories produced within and across disciplines (including but not limited to, eco-feminism, and liberal, cultural, materialist, psychoanalytic, radical, and black feminist thought). Prerequisites: graduate standing and consent of the instructor. SEM

V. New Business

1. Petitions Subcommittee Summer Work

2. Exiting Committee Members