MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

September 25, 2013 at 4 p.m.

Graduate Council Chair Richard J. Smith, Dean of The Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. in the Danforth University Center, Room 276. Approximately 62 graduate student and faculty members attended.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Dean Smith presented an overview of the structure and purpose of the Graduate Council, including charges to the standing Committees and responsibilities of Graduate Council Representatives.

As constituted in December 1964 by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and reorganized in 1990, the Graduate Council acts as the main advisory forum on matters pertaining to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, which awards all Ph.D.’s at Washington University, and serves as the legislative branch of the Graduate School. The Council is chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School. The Graduate Council meets four times per year.

Council Membership: In late spring each degree-granting program identifies one faculty representative (the Graduate Studies Director) and one graduate student representative for service on the Council for the following academic year.

There are currently three standing committees: Executive Committee (which met on September 9, and elected Professor Deanna Barch, Social Sciences, as Chair); Teaching and Professional Development Committee (chaired by Professor Richard Loomis, Chemistry); and Policies and Services Committee (chaired by Professor Bill Clark, Speech & Hearing). Committees generally meet once or twice per semester as needed.

Dean Smith stressed the importance of each representative’s function in keeping her/his department informed about the issues discussed in the Graduate Council meetings, and communicating department concerns to Associate Dean Berland as possible future agenda items.

II. Consideration/approval of the Minutes

The Graduate Council reviewed and approved the minutes of its April 25, 2013 meeting as presented.

III. Consideration/approval of new degree candidates.

The Graduate Council reviewed and approved the list of candidates for advanced degrees for August 2013.

IV. Dean’s Report

Dean Smith began with an annual report of academic integrity violations against graduate students. There were two cases of academic and professional integrity violations brought to the Graduate School level 2012-2013:
- A Ph. D. student admitted to multiple incidents of using unapproved materials for quizzes. The student received three lowered grade changes, which resulted in a negative consequence on the grade for the course.
- Two Ph. D. students admitted to unauthorized collaborations on a take home exam. Each student received a zero on the exam, which in turn resulted in a negative consequence on the grade for the course.

Dean Smith noted that last year was a light year in terms of the number of reported academic integrity violations. Dean Smith stressed the importance of being knowledgeable about academic integrity policies and procedures as well as the need for dialogue between faculty and graduate students to ensure that all students understand Graduate School policies. The Dean also noted that the updated policy adopted by the Graduate Council two years ago is available online and that print copies are also available in The Graduate School office. It is important that students, faculty, and departmental Directors of Graduate Study review and familiarize themselves with these policies and reporting procedures. Associate Dean Berland, Academic Integrity Officer for the Graduate School, should be contacted with reports of violations.

Next, Dean Smith discussed the change of date for admission into the AB/AM program. Beginning in Fall 2014, the deadline for admission will be August 1.

Dean Smith also notified the Council of a change in the policy for Leaves of Absence. Effective Fall 2013, students in the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences who are on leave of absence or on medical leave of absence will no longer be registered as non-residents while on leave. Students will need to submit a reinstatement form upon return and there will be no reinstatement fee for students returning from approved leaves of absence.

Dean Smith also noted that the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences does not have a well-defined Involuntary Leave Policy for graduate students and that a policy is in process of development by Student Health Services and the General Counsel.

Dean Smith next made a clarification about the “free trade” agreement. He reminded the Council that PhD students can register for relevant courses in other Schools of the University under the "free trade" agreement. This requires prior approval by the student’s PhD advisor as well as approval by the School in which the course is housed. He reminded the Council that the “free trade” agreement does not allow for a “second degree.”

At this point the Dean decided to address item IX on the agenda, a notice of Proposal to Change Policy on Membership of Dissertation Defense Committee. The proposed change would lower the minimum number of members for a dissertation defense committee from six to five. The Dean noted among peer institutions dissertation defense committees of four to five members are fairly common. He also reminded the Council that five members is only a minimum requirement set by the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, departments may choose to include more members on their committee. This proposal will go to the Policies Committee and will then be presented to the Graduate Council for a vote at the November 19, 2013 meeting. Should the proposal be adopted, changes will go into effect January 1, 2014.

Lastly, Dean Smith informed the Council about an important upcoming issue, a new proposal on Dismissal and Probation for Academic Reasons. The proposed timeline is that Policies Committee will
be reviewing the proposal this fall. A final draft will be circulated to the Graduate Council at its Feb. 19 meeting with the goal of bringing the proposal to the Graduate Council for a vote at its April 24, 2014 meeting. Dean Smith encouraged faculty DGS to bring this timeline to the attention of his/her department as a heads up as departments may want to schedule a meeting to discuss this proposal. The proposal was discussed by members of the Executive Committee. During discussion Dean Smith acknowledged both the controversial nature of this proposal and the need of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences to instate a formal dismissal policy for Academic Performance to protect student's rights.

V. Report of Graduate Student Senate Co-President

GSS Co-President Shankar Parajuli, a Ph.D. student in the Division of Biology and Biomedical Sciences, presented the report of the Graduate Student Senate (GSS). He gave a brief introduction and stated that the goals of the organization were to serve as a channel of communication between the graduate students and the Graduate School administration, faculty and staff and to work towards improving and enhancing graduate student life.

This year's early GSS events included the New Graduate Student Orientation, co-sponsored with the Graduate School and held on August 19, 2013, for over 300 new graduate students, and the New Graduate Student Barbecue on August 25, 2013, with about 100 students in attendance. To represent the GSS on the national stage, Mr. Parajuli attended the Fall Legislative Action Days organized by the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) from September 14th through the 17th in Washington D.C. The GSS held its first general body meeting on September 3rd with approximately 35 people in attendance. Mr. Parajuli reported that the GSS has complete representation in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences with the exception of Classics department.

Mr. Parajuli noted that in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the GSS, an official logo will be unveiled at the Graduate Research Symposium in February. The GSS hopes to implement several changes and improvements during the 2013-14 academic year including organizing a diversity forum, creating networking opportunities through the Career Center, encouraging its working committees to meet at least once a month in addition to GSS general body meetings, as well as maintaining important documents online for reference and for future use. The GSS will also host the Outstanding Faculty Mentor Awards in April 2014.

VI. Action to consider and approve proposal for new Doctor of Philosophy in Plant and Microbial Biosciences.

A proposal to create a Ph.D. program in Biology and Biomedical Sciences (Plant and Microbial Biosciences) was presented to the Graduate Council for approval. Associate Dean John Russell, DBBS, Dr. Barbara Kunkel, Biology, and Dr. Petra Levin, Biology Science, were present to answer questions about the proposal.

For specific details on the function and structure of this proposed degree, Dean Smith referred the Council to the document emailed prior to the meeting. The Graduate Council voted unanimously to approve the proposal as presented.

VII. Action to consider and approve proposal for new Doctor of Philosophy in Statistics.

A proposal to create a new Ph.D. program in Statistics was presented to the Graduate Council for approval. Dr. Jeff Gill, Political Science, Biostatistics, and Surgery, was in attendance to answer questions about the proposal.
For specific details on the function and structure of this proposed interdisciplinary degree, Dean Smith referred the Council to the document emailed prior to meeting. Following questions and discussion, the Graduate Council voted unanimously to approve the proposal as presented.

VIII. Action to consider and approve new graduate courses

Ann Cooper, Graduate School Registrar, reported that one late course for Fall 2013 had been added to the course list after the April 25, 2012 meeting. She then presented the list of new graduate courses for Spring 2014 to the Graduate Council to approve. The Graduate Council voted unanimously to approve the list.

IX. Notice of Proposal to Change Policy on Membership of Dissertation Defense Committee

See the Dean's Report in item IV of the agenda. Document was distributed at the meeting and will be emailed to Council representatives.

X. New Business

No new business was brought before the Graduate Council.

XI. Adjournment

Dean Smith adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassidy Thompson, Romance Languages and Literature
Recording Secretary to the Graduate Council 2013-2014