



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

**November 11, 2014 at 4pm**

Graduate Council Chair William F. Tate, Dean of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, called the meeting to order at 4.02 p.m. in the Jordan Formal Classroom, Danforth University Center Room 276. Approximately 46 graduate students and faculty members attended.

#### **I. Consideration/Approval of the Minutes**

The Graduate Council reviewed and approved the minutes of its September 29, 2014 meeting as presented.

#### **II. Consideration/Approval of New Degree Candidates**

The final list was sent to members of the Graduate Council prior to the meeting. The Council reviewed and unanimously approved the list as it was presented.

#### **III. Dean's Report**

Dean Tate reported that over the last several months he has had the opportunity to speak to various groups about graduate education. He noted that we have good data regarding GRE testing scores, graduate student demographics relative to applications received, and matriculation data for Washington University graduate programs. Areas that need to be addressed include the invisible pool of people that do not apply, programs where graduate students are leaving with an MA as a result of not completing program requirements, and placement information. Dean Tate pointed out that these data provide needed understanding of inputs and outputs. However, a better understanding of the learning process represents an opportunity to improve.

Dean Tate continued by explaining two challenges facing the graduate community. First, we have a culture that lacks transparency with one another. Moreover, relevant information is inaccessible to constituents and to potential students. Dean Tate stressed the need to cultivate a stronger, more transparent culture regarding graduate education. Second, there is no data collected and/or analyzed that articulates program missions and related learning goals. These information sources present another opportunity to improve. He cited NIH recommendations as an example of best practice. In addition, he noted that many of our peer institutions provide this type of information on the web.

Dean Tate stressed that graduate students and postdoctoral students should have individual development plans that include what they are expected to learn. If information is unavailable, students will be ill-equipped to make good decisions. The accreditation process requires: (1) that the unit's mission statement and learning goals be transparent, (2) that there be a substantial description of indirect and direct assessment measures used by the unit, (3) that there be a summary of these outcomes to be assessed, and (4) that a report of these assessment results and planned decisions related to them be articulated clearly. Dean Tate pointed out that Washington University has framed our answers to accreditation questions around undergraduate education, but he believes that this represents an opportunity for graduate education to improve.

After a brief discussion on the metrics for assessing the effectiveness of programs and on data related to graduate students leaving programs, Dean Tate closed his remarks on this topic by stating that many programs are doing well, but we must collectively support improvement of all units involved in graduate education.

Dean Tate finished his report by noting that 50% of departments have turned in their dismissal policy. Dean Tate emphasized that while this policy is important, he believes our focus should be on creating and communicating plans for success. This involves building our culture of transparency.

#### **IV. Report of Graduate Student Senate Co-Presidents**

Graduate Student Senate (GSS) Co-Presidents Ashley Macrander, a Ph.D. student in Education and Vice President of Professional Development of the Graduate Professional Council (GPC), and BrieAnna Langlie, a Ph.D. student in Anthropology, presented the report of the GSS.

The last monthly GSS meeting took place on November 4, 2014. The subcommittees of the GSS will meet individually next week to discuss their plans of action for the upcoming semester.

GSS and GPC sent one graduate student from each group to DC to attend the "Action Days." A follow up event was hosted last month at which information brought back from DC was disseminated. The representatives lobbied for issues concerning graduate student loans, student debt, and F1 visas.

On November 6, 2014, GSS organized a Health Forum event at which discussion panelists Dr. Alan I. Glass, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Director of Student Health Services (SHS), Ms. Debra Harp, Director of Administration (SHS), and Dr. Thomas Broun, Director of Mental Health Services, engaged in a conversation with graduate students concerning graduate student health insurance coverage. Dr. Alan Glass is currently in the process of negotiating a new health plan and graduate students openly talked about specific coverage features they would like to be included with the renewal of the health plan such as vision and dental coverage. The renegotiation of the new contract will take place at the end of this month and graduate students will take an active voice and active stand on this decision.

On November 12, 2014, GSS will meet with Representatives of Quadrangle Housing to talk about off-campus housing issues. The main goals are to open lines of communication so that students know whom to turn to when problems arise and to discuss the Quadrangle Housing renovations and the impact it will have on graduate students. Dean Tate inquired if there was a practice of recommending housing outside of Quadrangle to incoming students. Ms. Langlie noted there is a link on the off-campus housing website where students can post and/or access housing listings, but that it is not updated regularly and charges a fee for landlords who wish to advertise their rental properties.

Other announcements:

- GSS is working with campus librarians to communicate specific graduate students' needs, including creation of a family friendly space that would enable graduate students with children to have a more comfortable research experience on site.
- The Annual Graduate Research Symposium, at which graduate students across disciplines present their research in poster format, is scheduled for February 21, 2015. Faculty members are asked to encourage their students to start thinking about possible research projects.
- The GSS Diversity & Inclusiveness Committee continues work on a diversity report consisting of graduate student feedback; it is now in the design phase and will be made available soon.
- GSS is looking into concerns regarding Title IX and sexual assault related data for graduate students. They are working with Kim Webb, Director for the Office of Sexual Assault and Community Health Services, to update the SHS webpage to feature a graduate student page of resources and policies, as well to draft a survey on sexual assault and harassment for graduate students.

#### **V. Action to Consider and Approve Proposal for New Joint Degree, Master of Arts in Education and Master of Social Work**

The proposal for the New Joint Degree, Master of Arts in Education and Master of Social Work, was sent to members of the Graduate Council prior to the meeting. Prof. Cindy Brantmeier, Education, announced that students who go through this program will have elementary school certification grades 1-6.

Washington University will be the third institution in the United States to offer this joint degree. The Council reviewed and unanimously approved the proposal as it was presented.

#### **VI. Action to Consider/Approve New Graduate Courses**

The list of new graduate courses was sent to members of the Graduate Council prior to the meeting. The Council reviewed and unanimously approved the list as presented.

#### **VII. New Business**

There were no new business announcements.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

Dean Tate adjourned the meeting at 4:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*A. Djavadghazaryans*

Angineh Djavadghazaryans, Germanic Languages & Literatures  
Recording Secretary to the Graduate Council 2014-15