

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

MINUTES, Meeting 396

October 1, 2010

2:00 p.m., 177B Administration Building

PRESENT: L. Bennett (CAS), J. Berman (PSYC), J. Phillips (ENGL), G. Emmert (CHEM), D. Sherrell (MKTG), J. Page (MUSIC), S. Utt (JOUR), E. Rakow (COE), K. Meyer (LEAD), L. Weiss (HSS), D. Hochstein (ENGR), R. Meier (CIVIL), A. Curry (BIOMED ENGR), D. Irwin (UNV. COLLEGE), K. Ward (SPH), B. Park (Library), K. Weddle-West (Graduate School), J. Brownlee (Graduate School),

ABSENT: J. Dhaliwal (FCBE; D. Sherrell, proxy), M. Logan (CCFA; S. Utt, proxy), D. Wark (AUSP), R. Koch (NURSING), A. Mount (GSA), W. Jackson (Faculty Senate), T. Woodman (Graduate School)

K. Weddle-West called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. when a quorum was attained.

Everyone was asked to introduce themselves in order to help all new members get acquainted.

396.1 Approval of minutes: L. Bennett made a motion (2/ E. Rakow) to approve the minutes from meeting #395, held on September 3rd, 2010. The motion was carried by voice vote.

396.2 Announcements:

396.2.1: K. Weddle-West informed the council that there have been problems with students turning in certain forms on time. Masters students need to submit thesis committee forms earlier. Also, Doctoral students need to submit the comprehensive exam forms on time. K. Weddle-West requested that everyone encourage their students to be more attentive to the deadlines and submit all forms in a timely fashion.

396.2.2: K. Weddle-West was excited to announce that the Masters degree in Social Work has been approved by TBR and THEC. She thanked Jerome Blakemore, Linda Bennett, and all others involved for their hard work on this proposal. "Way to go!"

396.3 Discussion Items:

396.3.1: K Weddle-West announced that the Graduate School Recruitment Fair will be held on November 2, 2010, from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. in the University Center Ballroom. This will be the 4th Recruitment Fair hosted by the Graduate School. We are fortunate in that our budget for

this event has increased substantially. This year we will be able to provide more marketing and advertising for this event, in order to reach a larger audience. We will continue to target our own students, specifically those in honors programs, such as Emerging Leaders, Black Scholars, and Professional Honor Societies. In addition, we will reach out to other schools in the Mid-South area, such as Rhodes College and Lambeth. K. Weddle-West thanked the graduate faculty for all of their help, noting that their participation is key to the success of these Recruitment Fairs. She stated, "Without your help we would not be where we are right now. I sincerely appreciate your efforts."

396.4 Old Business: regarding grades awarded through course validation and credit-by-exam

K. Weddle-West briefly reviewed the issue at hand, which was discussed at length last year. Essentially, the lack of specific language in the Graduate Catalog regarding the appeal of grades received through either course validation or credit-by-exam has proven to be problematic. Therefore, it is necessary to add a statement to the Graduate Catalog regarding a student's ability to appeal these types of grades in order to clarify this issue and prevent more problems from arising. The following statement was provided as an example of the language to be added to the Catalog. "Due to the fact that the validation/credit-by-exam process is a repeat of a course the final grade cannot be appealed." There was much discussion about the ways in which awarding credit differs between the two processes. It was suggested that the processes be addressed individually in the catalog, rather than by one general policy statement. Thus, two different statements were written and subsequently voted on.

396.4.1: Vote on grade appeal policy for course validation – L. Bennett made a motion (2/ G. Emmert) that the following statement be added to the Graduate Catalog, "The only remedy of an unsuccessful validation is to repeat the course." The motion was carried by voice vote.

396.4.2: Vote on grade appeal policy for credit-by-exam – G. Emmert motioned (2/ L. Weiss) to include the following statement in the Graduate Catalog, "The only remedy to an unsuccessful credit-by-examination grade is to enroll and complete the course." The motion was carried by voice vote.

396.2.3: K. Weddle-West announced the recent release of the long-awaited National Assessment of Doctoral Programs, published by the National research Council. Before viewing the results of the study, K. Weddle-West gave a quick overview of the Report Brief in order to familiarize the council with the methodology used to find the results.

For each program, two rankings for overall program quality are given, the S-ranking and the R-ranking. The Report Brief provides an explanation of each. "The S (or survey-based) rankings are based on a survey that asked faculty to rate the importance of the 20 different program characteristics in determining the quality of a program. Based on their answers, each characteristic was assigned a weight; these weights varied by field. The weights were then applied to the data for each program in the field, resulting in a range of rankings for each program. The R (or regression-based) rankings are based on an indirect way of determining the importance faculty attach to various characteristics. First, groups of randomly selected faculty were asked to rate the quality of a sample of representative programs in their field. Based on the sample program ratings, weights were assigned to each of the 20 characteristics using statistical techniques; again, these weights varied by field. These weights were applied to the data about each program, resulting in a second range of rankings."

In addition to the S and R rankings, "The report also offers illustrative ranges of rankings for each program on three separate dimensions of doctoral education -- research activity, student support and outcomes, and diversity. These rankings are based on the "S-ranking" approach described above, but only the characteristics relevant to each dimension were included in the calculation." E. Rakow helped explain the various aspects methodology used in this National Assessment of Doctoral Programs. He demonstrated how to view the results using the interactive excel spreadsheet provided by the NRC, as well as how these results should be interpreted. Using the philosophy program as an example, E. Rakow walked through the individual program evaluation data. Next he demonstrated how to view our program's data in comparison to the data from the correlating programs at other institutions. E. Rakow went through each column in the Master tab of the spreadsheet, explaining what our numbers represent when compared to other schools. Once this demonstration was complete, K. Weddle-West asked the council to join her in applauding E. Rakow for his tremendous help with this project. She also reminded the council that these results provide us with good benchmarks for evaluating our programs. The report results, as well as any additional information can be found at <http://www.nap.edu/rdp/>. Also, the Chronicle developed a visual aid to help with data interpretation. This tool can be found at http://chronicle.com/page/2010-Rankings-Doctoral/321/?sid=pm&utm_source=pm&utm_medium=en.

There being no further business to discuss K. Weddle-West adjourned the meeting at 3:38 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Kyle.