

## MINUTES

### UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

March 13, 2003

Bluestone Room, Mountainlair

### ATTENDANCE

**Voting Members:** Ron Balvers, Robyn Blakeman, Andrew Hawkins, Wafik Iskander, Katherine Karraker, Brett Kenney, Barbara Ludlow, Ann Oberhauser, Kerry Odell, Tim Sweet, Virginia Thompson, Dick Walls, and Arthur Weldon

**Ex-officio Members:** Rosemary Haggett and Robert E. Stitzel

**Visiting:** John Kilwein

### **Acceptance of Minutes**

The Council was asked to submit any changes to Donna Buckhalter within the next week. She will make changes and minutes will then stand approved.

### **Programs of Excellence**

Dr. Sweet discussed the four point BOG criteria required for a degree to be designated as a Program of Excellence. There was discussion among council members regarding the point of national recognition instead of state recognition and whether a blanket statement could be made for all programs. Dr. Stitzel indicated that some of the self-study documents did not address the requested four point criteria. Dr. Karraker felt that departments and colleges did not adequately understand the criteria and maybe next time we could ask the programs to write specifically to the four criteria that the Board of Governors have asked for. Dr. Sweet offered the suggestion that we ask the subcommittee that is reviewing a particular degree program to include in their review the specific criteria and note how the program addresses those points specifically. Dr. Haggett discussed the recommendations that the undergraduate council made after their review process was completed and suggested that the graduate council could also make recommendations for next year's reviews. One council member suggested that we prepare model responses for the departments to follow.

### **Political Science as a Program of Excellence**

Dr. Oberhauser presented the Political Science, Program of Excellence. At the last meeting there was a concern about the statement of national ranking. She went back to the department to obtain the citation that supports this national ranking and has changed the review document to address that concern. Council members were concerned with the ranking of 18<sup>th</sup> out

of 25; they wanted to know who were the other 25 schools. Dr. Oberhauser read the terminology from the Political Science report that stated the ranking of schools was based on publications in the top journals in their profession.

Council questioned why both the M.A. and Ph.D. programs were not asking for Program of Excellence. Dr. Oberhauser stated that the Department verified that they only wish to have the M.A. considered as a Program of Excellence. The department feels that there have not been enough graduates in the Ph.D. program. After further discussion of the criteria a motion was made by Ann Oberhauser, seconded by Ron Balvers, to continue both programs at the current level of activity with the M.A. being recommended as a Program of Excellence. The motion was approved by a vote of 11 to 2.

### **Geography as a Program of Excellence**

Dr. Balvers reported that after discussion of this program at the last meeting he again looked at the specific criteria required for this distinction. Among the strongly favorable aspects of the program are having 100% placement of graduates and a 1.7 rate of publications per year per faculty member. Dr. Sweet asked if this program meets the criteria for assessment. Dr. Balvers stated that Geography looks at information from employers, information from their own students (alumni), and responses from external committee members on thesis committees. Committee members asked Dr. Balvers if assessment findings were used to modify the program. He stated that they have, for example, created a new thesis-based option following program assessment; this seems to be very popular and successful.

Other questions to Dr. Balvers included “Is there a relationship between assessing goals and outcomes?” Dr. Balvers said that there was. Also, “Did they include any questionnaires or survey analyses?” He stated that they did and gave examples of some survey questions as well as alumni responses. Committee members asked if there were any criteria that the program didn’t meet. Dr. Balvers felt that the stated criteria needed for distinction could have been more extensive.

After much discussion, Dr. Ron Balvers made the motion that the program should be continued at the current level of activity and that Geography be considered as a Program of Excellence. The motion was approved by a vote of 12 to 1.

### **Economics Program of Excellence**

Dr. Odell gave the presentation for the M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics. He stated that the Program submitted two separate documents, one for the M.A. program and one for the Ph.D. program. It was clear that very few students were admitted directly into the M.A. degree program and that this degree is treated as a subset of the Ph.D. program. There is no similar program within a 50-mile radius of West Virginia University and the Ph.D. in Economics is the

only such offering in the state. One of the program's strengths was the role that graduate students play in providing critical assistance in teaching undergraduate courses; they also contribute a great deal to funded research programs within the department. A majority of the doctoral graduates find work in academia while the rest work in corporate business and finance. Assessment information, as related to students outcomes, was not identified in the program's self-study report, although Economics did indicate that they use traditional assessment methods such as exams, terms papers, comprehensive exams and dissertations, as indicators of student achievement. They did refer to their graduates publication record; 11 graduates had published a total of 34-refereed articles. This was considered an impressive and strong indicator of student and program success.

Dr. Sweet asked for a motion for program continuation to be followed by a discussion of the Program of Excellence issue. Dr. O'Dell made the motion which was seconded by Dr. Ron Balvers. The motion was approved by Council.

In regards to Program of Excellence, the Council had further discussion concerning the number of admitted applicants versus the graduation rate. Dr. Balvers commented on the programs national ranking status. A motion was made not to recommend the program as a program of excellence due, in large part, to the lack of an adequate write up of this section of the self-study document. A vote was taken and the majority of council members felt that Economics should not be recommended as a Program of Excellence.

#### **J.D. in Law Program of Excellence**

Dr. Stitzel stated that he had previously presented this program and that Council had approved its continuation, but now he was addressing the issue of Program of Excellence. He stated that the program did not provide any data addressing the four BOG criteria. Although there were massive amounts of information, most of it addressed names, dates, and places and was not the kind of information needed to support the Program of Excellence designation. Council members agreed that while the Law School does do a good job-graduating lawyers from WVU, they did not provide the requested data supporting listing as a program of excellence. A motion was then made that this program not be granted Program of Excellence status. Council approved the motion unanimously.

#### **M.A. and Ph.D. in History**

Dr. Arthur Weldon presented the MA and PhD in History. The History Department at WVU is one of two such programs in the state that awards a masters degree and is the only history program that awards a Ph.D. The program in West Virginia and Appalachian Regional History serves the entire state and is made possible by a unique collection at the WVU library. As far as assessment is concerned, the department sends out a very detailed questionnaire to alumni. Of the 38 graduates who responded they all had positive comments about their education at WVU. Enrollment has been good despite a decrease in the number of tenure track

faculty from 23 to 18; and of the 18 faculty only 15 are devoted entirely to History; 3 have joint appointments within WVU. Council felt positively about these degrees.

Dr. Wafik Iskander made a motion, which was seconded by Dr. Ron Balvers, to continue the program at the current level of activity. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **MS in Industrial Relations**

Dr. Karraker reported that this was a unique program that graduates a large number of students. Students complete the program in 12 to 15 months. Most of these students have little business background. The program uses most of the standard types of assessment and also utilizes surveys and has discussions with their alumni advisory committee. The stated entrance standards for the students are somewhat vague, but after review of GPAs and GRE scores of recently admitted students, it was judged that most entering students have GPAs in the expected range, however many do not have GRE scores at all or they are not in the range of 40<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> percentile. Dr. Karraker stated that their plans for improvement include a new placement coordinator to obtain more placement opportunities for their students as well as other improvements in the program. In terms of enrollment, they admit approximately half of the people who apply and they graduate almost all of them. They plan to stay the same size. Their graduates do get jobs and it is a popular program. Faculty seemed to be well qualified.

The council recommended that the program be continued at the current level of activity. A follow-up report for the review cycle of October 2004-05 was requested that addresses two issues: 1) the establishment of a complete assessment program, and 2) the reexamination of entrance requirements. Dr. Ron Balvers made the motion, seconded by Dr. Barbara Ludlow, and approved by council unanimously.

### **Geology**

Dr. Stitzel reported on this program on behalf of Dr. Kashy Aminian who could not be present. He indicated that the PhD program has always been small and is tightly integrated within the larger MS program. The program has always been strong in quality of research contributions. Over the years the program has developed a national reputation in Petroleum Geology, but in recent years they have reoriented their focus to include Environmental Geology. They specialize in Environmental Geology and Geology of Fossil Fuels and Minerals. There is no other similar program within a 50-mile radius of WVU. They have an active assessment program, which utilizes the standard forms of assessment that most masters and doctoral programs have. These include exit surveys as well as written and phone surveys of alumni to determine how graduates feel about the education they received at WVU. In the last five years there have been 23 journal publications and 31 presentations at professional meetings involving the graduate students. In terms of planning to improve the quality of the program, they say they have already put in place some of the tools to improve the degree, such as the incorporation of GIS training as a formal component of the PhD program. In addition, the students are urged to gain skills in remote sensing, engineering-related procedures, and soil science techniques. The

program is expanding its computer strengths. Some required pieces of data either were not collected or could not be found in the self-study document. This may be due to the fact that Geography and Geology were only recently made separate programs.

Council recommended that the program be continued at the current level of activity and that they provide a follow-up report addressing: 1) data left out of the report on new enrollee and enrollment figures in the MA program and applicants and admissions in the PhD program; 2) the graduation rate of geology students be separated from that of Geography; and 3) explain why there were no PhD graduates in 2002. The follow-up report should be provided by the October 2004-2005 cycle. Dr. Balvers made the motion, which was seconded by Dr. Iskander, and approved by Council.

### **MLS - Legal Studies**

Dr. Kenny had presented this program at the February Council Meeting and at that time the council asked him to revisit it at the March meeting. Council asked the subcommittee to clarify the section concerning Plans to Improve the Quality and Productivity of the Program. Dr. Kenney said that this section has now been rewritten and the document also has been changed to reflect a need for a follow-up report in the review cycle of Fall, 2004-2005. Dr. Kenney felt that while at the last meeting Council had tried to evaluate this program using traditional means, the MLS is more of a non-traditional program.

Dr. John Kilwein was asked to speak to Council to answer some of the concerns that were raised previously. He stated that what the program is hoping for is that if Council decides to terminate the program, they should not eliminate the degree because WVU might want to reconstitute it as a program based in Morgantown, perhaps using a distance learning component and offer it across the state; such a change would address the issues of number of applicants and declining enrollment. Dr. Kilwein believes that the Charleston area may no longer be able to sustain the program. Dr. Kilwein felt that this program was unique and was the only one in the country when it was developed, and it has been getting good national attention. Dr. Kilwein also pointed out that the reason admission requirements were not rigorous was because this program traditionally attracted older people already well into their professions.

A recommendation was made to continue the program at the current level of activity with a follow-up report to be submitted October 2004. The report should address: 1) Program enrollment; 2) Possible expansion of the program; 3) Trends in applicant qualifications; and 4) State and regional interest beyond the Charleston area. A motion was made and seconded; council voted and approved the recommendation unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.