MINUTES
The Graduate Council
February 20, 2019
Student Lounge, 111 Susan Campbell Hall

Members Present: Lara Bovilsky, Ron Bramhall (ex officio), Burke Hendrix, Elim Hernandez Santos, Andy Karduna (ex officio), Seth Lewis, Jeremy Piger, Jana Prikrly (ex officio), Nicholas Proudfoot, Leslie Straka, Janet Woodruff-Borden (ex officio), and Mark Watson (ex officio)

Members Absent: Adell Amos, Alison Kwok, Celeste Mena Morales, Fabienne Moore, Phil Scher (ex officio), Hailin Wang, Angie Whalen and Hong Yuan

Graduate School Staff in Attendance: Jered Nagel, Marcia Walker

The meeting was called to order at 3:35pm.

New Business

Graduate School Five-Year Strategic Plan

Dean Woodruff-Borden explained that the Graduate School Five-Year Strategic Plan (Plan) is a vision of how we move forward with graduate education. The Plan has been reviewed by the UO President, Provost, Graduate School Deans, and now comes to the Graduate Council for feedback.

In terms of the ratio of graduate students to student body, the UO is well below the average of peer institutions. With the projected growth in undergraduate enrollment, the goal is to increase graduate enrollment proportionally to maintain and grow the ratio of graduate students as a percent of total university enrollment with a goal to equal or exceed 20 percent of the UO student body. The balance of masters and doctoral students is vital to address, as growth in master’s enrollment in professional programs and in online degree programs will generate revenue to grow doctoral funding; necessary to recruit top students. The growth needs to be strategic and grounded in quality.

Associate Professor Burke Hendrix asked if the focus will be on the growth of doctoral students. He asked if it will be that strong departments benefit and weak departments will need to fend for themselves. Dean Woodruff-Borden stated that while funds would be designated to the sciences, not all funding will go to the sciences. She said that we will have to look carefully at doctoral and master’s student programs. The goal is to increase doctoral students that we want to hire. The question is how to grow based on areas that benefit us to grow in.

Associate Professor Bovilsky noted the diversity and inclusion part of the Plan and asked if the Graduate School, rather than the student’s department, could arrange mentorship for first generation students. Associate Professor Bovilsky noted that diverse students can experience aggressions when they go into Eugene.

Dean Woodruff-Borden said that one part of the Plan is to promote the success of students from traditionally underrepresented groups. This can be done by establishing peer mentoring within Promising Scholars. She said that the community could be built through social events and celebrations of diversity for graduate students, establishing a speakers’ series with scholars from underrepresented groups, and developing training resources on working with students from diverse backgrounds for faculty and mentors. If that level of support exists on campus, those students will have support to help guide them.
Associate Dean Watson said that on-line education may be a way to expand. Dean Woodruff-Borden stated that the UO will focus on areas that can be done on-line quickly and well. There is an upcoming Deans’ meeting to discuss new master’s programs that can be offered on-line and where the expertise already exists at the UO to offer the classes.

Associate Professor Hendrix asked about the Plan’s goal to provide professional development support for postdoctoral fellows. Dean Woodruff-Borden that it makes sense to have the Graduate School be postdoctoral students’ home, because the Graduate School is ideally suited to provide professional development and opportunities for mentorship experiences to augment fellows’ work in the lab and with individual faculty mentors. In addition, the Graduate School will coordinate professional development and career workshops and create a mentoring program where postdoctoral fellows can mentor graduate students.

Doctoral Student Hernandez Santos asked if the Graduate School will be working with the Office of International Affairs. Dean Woodruff-Borden replied that she has been working closely with Dennis Galvan, the Dean and Vice Provost for International Affairs, to move forward to be more supportive of graduate students.

Doctoral Student Hernandez Santos commented that international students are often concerned about how to navigate Eugene—the smallest things can become important. Dean Woodruff-Borden stated that the Graduate School is currently working on revising their website. One audience that will be the focus of the revision will be to give international students resources and information.

Dean Woodruff-Borden asked Graduate Council members to let her know if there is anything else they think the Graduate School should be doing and should be included in the Plan.

New Graduate Performance Certificate in the School of Music and Dance

Associate Professor Bovilsky questioned the difference between large ensemble and small ensemble in the course of study. She also asked if there would be enough faculty resources in the SOMD to support this program.

Associate Vice Provost Bramhall noted that there is a lot of individual instruction with faculty specialists and asked about faculty capacity.

Associate Professor Hendrix noted that there was a small number listed of comparator schools who have performance certificated programs.

Professor Steve Vacchi and Instructor Arnaud Ghillebaert of SOMD joined the Graduate Council meeting to discuss the proposal and answer Graduate Council questions.

Associate Professor Bovilsky asked about student workload for the certificate. She noted requirements include four credits of applied lessons each term, one large ensemble per term and one small ensemble per term. Professor Vacchi explained that the chamber ensemble includes many small groups.

Associate Professor Bovilsky then asked about there were enough faculty resources if there are 8 to 12 new students who will be taking one-on-one lessons with faculty. Associate Dean Stratka replied that studios now are not full. A full load would be 18 students, and graduate student numbers are currently down.

Professor Hendrix noted that there is a list of comparator schools, but the number of schools on the list is small and there is a large variation. Associate Dean Stratka said that the list is not comprehensive, but the schools on the list have good music programs. Professor Vacchi added that the list does include one public institution that offers performance certificate programs and these were the schools they could quickly identify. He noted that more may exist.
Associate Professor Bovilsky stated that the Graduate Council could not vote today because there was not a quorum, Council members will be asked to vote by email after they have received the information about the certificate.

By email vote, the Graduate Council voted unanimously to approve the new Graduate Performance Certificate in the School of Music and Dance.

Revision to Master's Degree Requirements in Economics

Associate Dean Karduna stated that the Graduate Council will be voting by email on this proposal.

By email vote the Graduate Council voted to approve the Revision to Master's Degree Requirements in Economics with one abstention.

Policy on Repeatable and Non-Repeatable Graduate Courses

Associate Professor Bovilsky, who is on the Graduate Council Subcommittee for Policies and Procedures, stated that the concern is to avoid circumstances in which students take a course multiple times to increase their grade point average. The solution is to have all graded attempts of repeatable courses taken at the UO calculated into the term and cumulative GPAs. Assistant Dean Nagel added that the language stating a grade threshold to repeat a course has been removed.

The Graduate Council voted unanimously to recommend to the Graduate School adopting the proposed Policy on repeatable and Non-Repeatable Graduate Courses with an effective date of Fall 2019.

Proposed Change to Doctoral Year of Residency Requirement

Assistant Dean Nagel noted that the current policy does not allow for students to complete the coursework for a doctoral degree on a part-time basis, which limits the ability of students to pursue degrees while working. It also causes problems for students who need to take leave during their first year, since the previous requirement calls for three consecutive terms.

The new policy states that at least 27 credits of graduate coursework toward the doctoral degree must be completed at the UO while classified as a doctoral student. In addition, coursework completed as a UO master’s student may count toward the doctoral residency requirement if the master’s program is in the same major as the doctoral program, and no more than one calendar year has lapsed between the last term of enrollment as a master's student and the start of the doctoral program.

The Graduate Council voted unanimously to recommend to the Graduate School adopting the proposed change to Doctoral Year of Residency Requirement.

Proposed Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Associate Professor Bovilsky noted that the subcommittee focused on actions that need to take place when students are making unsatisfactory academic progress and are placed on academic warning and academic probation. A student on probation will be required to create an academic improvement plan in consultation with their advisor. If a student is on academic probation for more than one term, a graduate program may recommend that the student be disqualified from their program.

Associate Professor Hendrix suggested adding language to the policy that departments will notify the Graduate School if they believe the Graduate School needs to monitor the student’s progress.

Doctoral Student Hernandez Santos suggested that if a student were having problems with their dissertation, there could be a requirement that the student take a course or workshop to help them improve in areas where they may be deficient.
Associate Vice Provost Bramhall asked about the reporting requirement and asked if the Graduate School should be notified when a student is put on probation. Assistant Dean Nagel said the Graduate School should be notified and the Graduate School should receive a copy of the academic improvement plan.

Associate Professor Lewis noted that the majority of warnings will probably occur when the student’s cumulative GPA drops below 3.0 and asked if there could be a letter that was automatically sent which included resources for that student. Assistant Dean Nagel thought that might be difficult as different departments have different GPA requirements.

Associate Dean Straka asked if the Graduate School flagged students who do not complete nine credits per term. Assistant Dean Nagel said that the Graduate School does flag those student and sends them a letter letting them know they need to take nine credits and to not let it happen again. Dean Woodruff-Borden commented that going below the nine credits could also affect a student’s GE position.

Assistant Dean Nagel commented on the policy language on disqualification which states that the final dismissal recommendation to the Graduate School must come from the Department Head of the student’s home department, the Associate Dean of the student’s School or College, or the Dean of the student’s School or College.

Dean Woodruff-Borden said that the final dismissal recommendation should be by someone at the Dean level so that there is consistency in the process.

Associate Dean Karduna said that the policy will be fine-tuned and the Graduate Council would see the revised version.

The Graduate Council adjourned at 5:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Proudfoot
Graduate Council Secretary