

Graduate Council
Unapproved Minutes
2/7/19
3:00 PM
Student Center 201



Members Present: Susan Gordon-Hickey, Eric Loomis, Mark Taylor, Gwendolyn Pennywell, Debra Chapman, John Kovalski, Robert Cloutier, Kathy Bydalek, Elizabeth Adams, Bret Webb, Gayle Davidson-Shivers, Tim Sherman, Ralph Brady, Bettina Riley, Matthew Reichert, Todd Andel, Harold Pardue, Lorene Flanders, Payton Marinello, Kelly Osterbind, LaSonya Toney

Absent: Thomas Rich, Treena Finney

Guests: John Marymont, Binata Mukherjee, Richard Beaty, Bob Wood, Thomas Shaw, Heather Nix, Norma Jean Tanner, Amy Clay

Agenda and related materials were distributed prior to the meeting, handouts also available at meeting. Dr. Pardue opened the meeting. A quorum was verified.

1. **Minutes from previous meeting (10/17/18):** Minutes motioned, seconded, approved.
2. **MBA Healthcare Leadership Concentration addition:** Dr. Gwendolyn Pennywell, Dr. John Marymont, Dr. Bob Wood, and Dr. Binata Mukherjee discussed the recently submitted ACHE proposal to add a Health Care Leadership Concentration to the MBA program. Results of their survey to USA Healthcare personnel and overall expressed interest indicate the success of this program, which would not require significant additional resources. Would offer traditional classes with a certificate pathway in the works. Due to the changes in healthcare, business acumen is a must, particularly for those running their own private practice or in supervisory roles in clinics, hospitals, etc. The consensus from COM/MCOB was that their program would be geared more towards medical professionals and not the MPA focus on public sector, grants, aid, "people", etc. and the programs would not conflict. Required internal review steps did not occur before this concentration proposal was sent to ACHE, which was unintentional oversight on the behalf of MCOB/COM. Dr. Eric Loomis and Dr. Thomas Shaw expressed their concerns about potential overlap, duplication, and competition on behalf of the MPA program, which has a Health Care concentration. The MPA program has been in existence for ~10 years and has a successful track record, with 21 students currently enrolled. Dr. Cloutier pointed out that offering both programs had the potential to make our institution stronger rather than weaker based on his prior experience at another institution with a similar situation. MCOB/COM agreed to collaborate with A&S/MPA and cross list courses whenever possible and that written guidelines would be developed. Motioned, seconded, approved that the Graduate CAF committee made up of our Graduate Directors would carefully review the proposed MBA HC courses to prevent duplication/conflict of course offerings.
3. **Graduate Dean's Report:**

Dr. Pardue asked the Council if anyone had objections to him sending out email "blasts" of information to the Graduate Coordinators, as well as council members, to ensure relevant information reached all involved in Graduate program oversight. No objections.

Graduate Assistantships. Timing is crucial as adding a GA once the semester is underway is against current regulations. Programs were encouraged to submit their documentation as correctly and as early as possible to avoid delays for the GA's, otherwise their classes will be dropped and their paycheck will be delayed, and will result in an increased workload for all involved. Amy Clay was introduced and a handout was passed around showing the extensive work flow to approve assistantships. DeAnna Cobb mentioned that a one-page document has been added to the GA webpage to answer common questions and training sessions are ongoing for completing the electronic personnel action form. Further, Dr. Pardue asked the Council if assistantships should continue to be structured as limited to 20 hour work per week, tuition, stipend model we use now.

Should more flexibility be allowed to better suit circumstances such as available grant funds, etc.? More flexibility would better suit today's job market. Dr. Pardue to work on a proposal for the Council to review on this issue.

Faculty Development Council update: Four fellows have been selected.

Dr. Loomis announced USA purchased the marketing platform offered by our online admissions system and this will be our first centralized graduate marketing system. The admission fee will be slightly raised to compensate the cost in the next cycle.

Dr. Pardue briefed the council on the initiative of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans to develop state-wide "stackable" credentials/certificates that can be combined to make up a masters degree. These certificates would be 3-5 courses drawn from different participating universities across the state. The SACSCOC requirement is that at least 33% of the coursework has to be from the degree granting institution. Details are being developed and the Council will be updated as information becomes available.

High school through terminal degree progress is noted on transcripts now. The ABM program numbers are progressing as anticipated.

4. **WebAdmit update:** Norma Jean Tanner asked the Council if anyone had any questions about the online admissions system and announced the new cycle would start in August. If any programs have certain items they want to require from their applicants, this must be set up in WebAdmit before the new cycle is released and to contact Admissions for training/assistance.
5. **Provost Fellow Report:** Dr. Todd Andel shared some slides on graduate enrollment data over the past decade, which is flat for USA as well as nationwide. This information was broken down by College/School. He suggested a need for a Graduate Student Recruitment Handbook to unify efforts to increase graduate student enrollment across the disciplines.
6. **Part-Time Teaching Graduate Faculty Membership:** A recent case on approving a dissertation committee was discussed (the member in question had significant and extensive experience but was not a full or assoc. member and therefore the majority rule of USA graduate faculty on a committee was not being met). The Council agreed that a bullet should be added to the current committee form to allow the Graduate Dean to approve exceptions on a case by case basis in this situation
7. **Degree Completion Time Requirements:** Dr. Pardue asked the Council if the current Tenure Policy (handout disbursed) on granting exceptions could be utilized and formalized for granting extensions to graduate students in regards to timely program completion. Dr. Pardue to write a policy for Council review.
8. **Graduate Program/Institutional GPA requirements:** DeAnna Cobb gave an overview on program vs. institutional GPA requirements. We repeatedly have a small number of students who have to remain at USA for additional semester(s) to take enough coursework to pull their overall GPA up to a 3.0, past their degree requirements. This rule adversely affects students who have switched programs and have a 3.0 or above GPA in their degree program. The Registrar's office confirms this is the norm nationwide. Possible accreditation conflicts will be researched before a decision is reached on this topic.
9. **Research Forum Update:** DeAnna Cobb announced the annual Forum will be held on March 6, 2019 at 2:30 pm in the Student Center Ballroom. Several calls for posters have gone out and the event time has been shortened from previous years to encourage attendance. Council members were urged to publicize this event and encourage participation in their programs.
10. **Meeting adjournment:** Dr. Pardue announced that since the meeting had run over, further items would be discussed via email. Motioned, seconded, approved.