MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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April 9, 2019

Members Present: M. Wilson (Chair), J. Marshall (ex officio), K. Capehart, P. Mahalik,
N. Wang, S. Church, T. Lopez, D. Walker

Members Excused: S. Tracz

Guests: Vivien Luo (Associate Professor of Construction Management and author of Master’s in Construction Management proposal), Brad Hyatt (Chair of Construction Management), Jesus Larralde (Associate Dean of Lyles College of Engineering), Ram Nunna (Dean of Lyles College of Engineering)

Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm by M. Wilson

# 1. Approval of Minutes from April 2, 2019, meeting

# 2. Approval of Agenda

# 3. Communications and Announcements

Dean Marshall reminded the committee of the following three things.

First: A team, including Dean Marshall and D. Walker, will meet today (April 9th, 2019) at 3pm to select recommendations for this year’s University Graduate Medalist. Those recommendations will be forwarded to the President’s office.

Second: The Graduate Coordinator Reception will be held tomorrow (April 10th, 2019) in the Vintage room at 3pm. Melissa Jordine (the university’s director of assessment) will be speaking on graduate core competitiences. Matt O’Doyle of the library will be speaking about the library’s resources.

Third: The Annual Graduate Student-Faculty Mixer will be celebrated on May 7th, 4–7 pm at Smittcamp Alumni House this year. The Mixer is intended to celebrate the work of graduate students and the faculty. The focus of the event is to recognize the outstanding graduate students who the programs believe are ambassadors.

S. Church also raised the following issue, which he has identified in his capacity as a graduate coordinator. When a student has a grievance against an individual faculty member, our university does not have an adequate processes for mediating that student-faculty conflict. Students can file formal letters of complaint and speak with graduate coordinators or other administrators, but compared to those existing processes, a more formal conflict-mediation process with trained mediators or other advocates for fairness may be more successful at satisfactorily resolving student grievances.

# 4. Meet with team from the Construction Management Engineering program

## 4.1. Introductions

The team representing the proposal for a Master’s in Construction Management (CM) were welcomed. They began by providing an overview of the impetus for and development of the proposal. They related the following information.

● Out of the 23 CSU campuses, Fresno State is one of seven that have a BS in CM. Only one campus (East Bay) has a Master's program. Long Beach, like Fresno State, is working towards a Master’s in CM. Even if Long Beach also starts that program, Fresno State’s would still be only one of three campuses in the CSU system with a Master’s in CM and the only one in the Valley.

● Here at Fresno State, CM is the only engineering program with an undergraduate but not a graduate degree.

● As discussed at greater length in the written proposal, a survey of current undergraduate CM students at Fresno State, as well as a survey of employers of construction professionals in the Central Valley, suggest there’s a demand for Master’s in CM, especially one that mixes CM, engineering, and business in a way that is geared those pursuing middle-management positions.

● The Dean of Lyles College of Engineering said he believed industry would provide support for a Master’s in CM program at Fresno State. The form that support would take was not specified.

The committee then asked questions developed at our last meeting.

## 4.2. General Questions

*Question:* Have they considered a 3+2 or 4+1 plan for CM undergrads similar to Engineering?

*Response:* There is a pathway for motivated/high-achieving students to complete the undergraduate and graduate CM degrees on an accelerated basis.

*Question:* Candidates without a CM undergraduate major must complete 18 units of “foundational” or “prerequisite” courses?

*Response:* Yes, those courses contain key content necessary for the Master’s program. Nevertheless, the Master’s will hopefully attract more than undergraduates with a CM major. Mid-career professionals with several years of work experience will hopefully be attracted to the program, for example. (See below for more on prerequisites.)

*Question:* How will the program be overseen? Who will coordinate and what release/compensation will be given? How is this accounted for in the calculations for needed faculty to cover required coursework?

*Response:* The Dean of the Lyles College of Engineering said the graduate coordinator would likely receive 3 WTUs of assigned time per year to start. That amount could grow if the program grows, he said. (The committee recommended accounting for the graduate coordinator’s reassigned time as part of the proposal.)

## 4.3. Students

*Question:* The delivery method is identified as primarily face-to-face, but the program is at least partly targeted at working professionals in the field. The survey of prospective students indicated they preferred online or hybrid. Why not consider some online delivery?

*Response:* Initially and at least in the short term, the program will be face-to-face, except for some MBA courses that could be taken online. The survey of prospective students suggests they like face-to-face, too, and any online program that could be created now would not currently be able to compete with other online programs. In the longer term, a hybrid or fully online program may be possible, although they wish to get the right course content and the right instructional training for faculty before trying to do so.

*Question:* The program is targeted toward professionals who want to move into middle-management. Has there been input from industry that they need middle-managers with MS degrees vs., for example, an MBA?

*Response:* The survey of industry professionals suggests that, yes, there is demand for employees with the mix of CM, engineering, and business that the proposed Master’s in CM engineering would provide.

## 4.4. Faculty

*Question:* Will the current CM faculty be adequate to teach graduate and undergraduate courses?

*Response:* The current CM faculty will be adequate, given the ideal size of the Master’s program (a cohort of 15 to 20 students), and given the size as well as expected growth of the undergraduate program. (See below for more on how they plan to use the same number of faculty to continue to cover the undergraduate program while starting the Master’s program.)

## 4.5 Curriculum

*Question:* Can they explain a bit more about the replacement of three undergraduate CM elective courses with the Master’s courses? How will replacing undergraduate courses with graduate courses impact the CM department’s faculty and undergraduate students?

*Response:* There will be no net impact on the undergraduate program, even if/when that program continues to grow. The undergraduate elective courses are not currently full, so those courses can and will be run less frequently at fuller capacity. That change will free up faculty to teach in the Master’s program.

*Question:* For candidates without an undergraduate CM degree, will they be conditionally accepted to the Master’s program and then take these prerequisite/foundational courses the first year prior to any graduate courses? The program’s time-to-degree statistics will tend to be worse if that’s the case. What will be the logistics to assure timely completion of the degree?

*Response:* Expectations should be clear to applicants on the website and throughout the admissions process. For candidates entering the program without the prerequisites coursework already completed, “bootcamps” like in the MBA program or other avenues may hasten their time-to-degree.

*Question:* In terms of the prerequisites for all the business courses that are part of the proposed Master’s in CM, will these be waived? If so, is that a good idea? And are students planning on that extra time?

*Response:* A memorandum of understanding between the proposed Master’s in CM program and Fresno State’s MBA program has been obtained. They also worked with the Director of the MBA program to identify MBA courses that would be beneficial to their Master’s in CM candidates. Fresno State undergraduates with a CM major will have complete some of the prerequisites for the MBA courses as part of their undergraduates work such as Accounting 4A.

*Question:* Several electives are upper-division undergraduate courses. Does proposal account for fact that courses taken for undergraduate degree cannot count for another degree?

*Response:* An advising note in the proposal addresses this issue.

*Question:* What is the rationale for MBA 232 (Investments and portfolio management) as a possible elective course?

*Response:* The MBA courses, including that one, were selected by consulting with the Director of the MBA program and also reflecting on what students learn as part of their undergraduate and/or other graduate CM courses.

## 4.6. Assessment

*Question:* Table 1 in this section (p.17) does not follow the university template and leads to confusion with respect to CLOs vs. SLOs. Any reason why?

*Response:* Although the Master’s in CM does not intend to seek accreditation at least in the short term, the proposal was written following the template provided by an accrediting body for Master’s in CM programs. That template is not always consistent with the one used by our university for assessment, especially in terms of the verbiage. The proposal will be rewritten to follow the university’s template and verbiage.

*Question:* The Course Assessment Matrix (p. 18) is empty. Was that intentional?

*Response:* That matrix was an example of the framework for a course assessment matrix, but that being said, they agree that SOAP development is needed, and it will be added to the proposal.

After explaining the next steps in the process for the proposed Master’s in CM, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

The next meeting is planned for Tuesday, April 23, at 2:00 pm in TA 117.

# Agenda for next meeting:

1. Approval of Minutes from April 9, 2019, meeting
2. Approval of Agenda

3. Communications and Announcements

4. Presentation on International Admissions

5. Prepare for visit from Psychology team