MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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Office of the Academic Senate Ext. 8-2743

September 3, 2019

Members Present: S. Church (Chair), J. Marshall, K. Capehart, D. Lent, M. Lopez, S. Tracz, D. Walker, N. Wang

Members Excused: N/A

Guests: Koreo Masumoto, Dr. S. Moreman, Associate Dean M. Thomas, Dr. R. Perry, Dr. A. McKeith, Dr. S. Rocca

Chair Church called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. in TA 117

1. Minutes: MSC to approve the Minutes of August 28, 2019 with minor changes
2. Agenda: MSC to approve the agenda
3. Communications and Announcements

Dean Marshall shared that DRGS direct funding for student, while available for the academic year, might be limited due to the shortfall with which Academic Affairs is currently functioning.

1. Interdisciplinary M.A. Proposal Review
2. Mr. Masumoto has proposed an interdisciplinary program of study to focus on “Socially Responsible Enterprise. Mr. Masumoto has been conditionally accepted into graduate school, pending approval of this proposal.
3. With Dr. Moreman as chair, the proposed program brings together faculty and courses from Communications, Sociology/America Humanics, Social Work, and English. Committee members include Dr. M. Jendian (Sociology/Amrican Humanics), Dr. R. Simpson (Social Work), Dr. B. Saito (English), and Dr. Therkelson.
4. Responding to the question of how his proposed program differs from currently available ones, Mr. Masumoto highlighted that no program at Fresno State investigates either the ways in which business in the Central Valley may imbue social justice practices into their operations or the impact such undertaking might have on the Valley’s population.
5. In response to the question of how this program differs from the Communications one, Dr. Moreman highlighted that, with the departure of Dr. M. Niles, the Communications department has no one whose expertise is the organizational and/or leadership aspects of business. Likewise, the program currently does not allow for a viable focus on social justice/Humanics.
6. Chair Church inquired about the internship requirement included as part of the program curriculum. Mr. Masumoto responded that he would identify and secure an internship through the American Humanics program, with Dr. M. Jendian’s support.
7. In response to a question regarding the proposed culminating experience, Mr. Masumoto responded that he has yet to identify his final thesis topic but that it is likely to include an oral history component (for which he is currently preparing through a course on the specific methodology).
8. Dr. Capehart asked whether Mr. Masumoto had considered including in his committee a professor from the MBA program, as the proposed focus in so closely intertwined with business. Mr. Masumoto responded that he had not considered it, but could in future.
9. After discussing the proposal and Mr. Masumoto’s explanations, committee members agreed that Mr. Masumoto should include in the proposed curriculum some Business classes, as he did not complete any as an undergraduate and proposed none for the master’s level program. Additionally, he should pursue the addition of a committee member from the Business department.
10. Program Review Discussion: M.S. in Animal Sciences and Agricultural Education
    1. Chair Church welcomed the guests.
    2. Chair Church highlighted program strengths and weaknesses as noted from the review documents. He commended the program for fostering high graduate student morale, and recognized Program Coordinator Dr. McKeith for her extensive efforts to revitalize the program. He then began the discussion by highlighting the program’s seeming lack of sustainability, based on current student numbers.
    3. Dr. Perry, chair of the department, explained that, over the last year particularly, the program has increased its enrollment, growing to 9 students this academic year (8 in Animal Sciences, 1 in Ag Education), three of whom will graduate next spring. These students are of the highest caliber the program has had, some of whom concurrently hold or are coming back from highly profitable private sector jobs.
    4. Chair Church inquired as to the source of this growth. Dr. McKeith answered that, in the last few years, the department has hired three new faculty, who are now ready to recruit and mentor students at the graduate level. Thanks to this new faculty, the program offers small cohorts, direct mentoring, funding, and the opportunity to both teach and do applied research. All of these are a draw for students. Dr. Perry added that the faculty are fully committed to research and grants, which makes the above possible. Such research requires graduate students to assist, Dr. McKeith agreed, so it is a symbiotic relationship. Pushed by Dr. Tracz on whether any specific recruiting plans had been put in place, Dr. McKeith responded no.
    5. Dean Marshall brought attention to the fact that, although small cohorts are beneficial, Title V requires that a program graduate have at least 5 tenure/tenure-track faculty and an average of 5 students per year, which the Animal Sciences and Ag Education program does not. Responding to Dr. McKeith comment that they have turned away students in order to keep the small size of cohorts, Dr. Lopez highlighted that, long term that is not a viable option. Dr. Perry responded that the department does meet the faculty minimum and that, now that they know about the 5 graduate requirement, they will work towards meeting that goal. The problem remains the extremely large size of the department’s undergraduate program, which with over 800 majors takes much of the faculty’s time and effort.
    6. Chair Church asked about the possibility of strengthening the program’s internal pipeline, recruiting from among those majors. Dr. McKeith responded that she tends to dissuade their strongest students who wish to continue on to graduate school from doing it at Fresno State, as they would benefit from other faculty and student perspectives. Dr. Perry added that, nevertheless, 4 of the current 9 students in the program were undergraduates in their department, so there is precedent for internal recruitment.
    7. Dean Marshall asked Associate Dean Thomas whether an accelerated 4+1 program might be feasible, possibly as part of the Title V Part B grant program the university is proposing as part of this year’s USDE competition. Dr. Rocca, who is one of the grant proposal authors, offered that this has been considered for the Ag Education track. Dr. McKeith added that this would not be as feasible for the Animal Sciences track, unless students were involved in applied research from early in their undergraduate years.
    8. Dr. Walker inquired about the lack of assessment data in the Self Study. Dr. McKeith responded that, as there were no graduating students last year, they did not have yet gathered assessment data at the time of the Self Study. They have now gathered data and will submit their report by the deadline at the end of September.
    9. Chair Church asked about the course sequencing problems the visiting team noted, especially in terms of not enough courses being offered and the program’s efforts to secure external online courses. Dr. McKeith shared that the program has discarded their original plan to access courses from AgIdea, an alliance of Ag educators online. Instead, they are now in discussions with CSU Chico regarding the possibility of collaborative teaching, wherein Fresno State students would Zoom in to Chico State courses, and vice versa. This would assure that students at both campuses have access to the courses they need.
    10. After guests departed at 2:52 p.m., committee member started to discuss commendations and recommendations. Further discussion was tabled until our next meeting.
11. MSC to adjourn at 3:11 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the University Graduate Committee is Tuesday, September 17, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. in TA 117

VII. Agenda for UGC Meeting on 9/17

1. Meet with Melinda Murray for review of Interdisciplinary MA Proposal
2. Discuss recomendations for M.S. in Agricultural Sciences