

MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO
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Fresno, California 93740-8014
Office of the Academic Senate Ext. 8-2743

September 22, 2020

Members Present: M. López (Chair), J. Marshall, K. Capehart, A. Hoskins, D. Lent, B. Sethuramasamyraja, Reva Sias, D. Walker, Theresa Taliaferro (observer)

Members Excused: N/A

Guests: Arun Nambiar (Industrial Technology, Graduate Coordinator), Athanasios Alexandrou (Industrial Technology, Chair / Jordan College Interim Associate Dean)

Chair López called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. via Zoom.

- I. Minutes: MSC to approve the minutes from 9/8/2020
- II. Agenda: MSC to approve the agenda
- III. Announcements:
 - Dean Marshall shared that the Provost has approved moving forward with the rebranding of the DRGS to the Graduate School at Fresno State.
- IV. Extension of approval for use of Duolingo in lieu of TOEFL
 - MSC to extend the use of Duolingo in lieu of TOEFL to assess English language for international student applicants into Spring 2021.
- V. Program Review Visit: Industrial Technology
 - Background Information:
 - (1) Dr. Nambiar discussed student trends:
 - (a) Most international students are from India, with fewer students coming from China.
 - (b) Trend of increase in master's students over last 5 years.

- (c) Historically, enrollment was high, with 80-90 students in the program. This number of students was not manageable vis-à-vis the size of the faculty, so the goal was to decrease the number of students to 25. IT is called engineering technology internationally so international students with engineering backgrounds transfer into the program. Improved transfer requirements were implemented in order to maintain high quality transfer students. Although enrollment decreased, the number of high-quality students and student projects (theses) has increased. The diverse educational backgrounds (engineering & agriculture) contribute to high quality projects.
- (d) Dr. Alexandrou gave a historical perspective stating that IT became successful after increasing admissions standards. Dr. Alexandrou stated that the success of the program resulted in the need for courses to be offered multiple times per year to accommodate the increased number of students, which resulted in faculty being overloaded with 30 units per year instead of 24. Therefore, admission standards were increased, which allows quality education without faculty overload.
- (e) Employment- graduates are able to find jobs in central valley or on the West Coast. An example of the starting salary of a recent graduate was 84,000 with an increase in pay to 90,000.
- Inquiry regarding gender diversity from Dr. Walker. Dr. Alexandrou states that the lack of gender diversity in the graduate program is an ongoing problem. Recruitment efforts by the department include, but are not limited, to hosting a summer camp for high school sophomores, junior, and seniors. Currently 20% of the graduate class are female (5 of the 20 enrolled). This is mostly a national issue; Dr. Alexandrou is open to suggestions to improve this number.
 - Enrollment / graduate student recruitment: See above, “Background Information”.
 - Faculty: Inquiry about faculty density and load from Dr. Lent.
 - (1) Dr. Nambiar reports good faculty density because of lower enrollment, in addition to increased WTUs for 298 projects (from 3 to 6).
 - (2) Dr. Alexandrou states that no searches will be approved for this year to replace the two retired professors.
 - Curriculum: Dr. López asked about assessment data that indicates the need for improvement in the area of communication and professionalism.
 - (1) Dr. Nambiar - assessment of presentation skills varies year to year but that final projects, and the methods course, assist students in this area. Dr. Nambiar reported that faculty can provide more guidance as student numbers are lower. The possibility of a standardized project format (thesis or journal) does not seem possible at this time because of the diverse nature of 298 projects. Dr. Sethuramasamyraja stated that students successfully present research at professional conferences. Dr. Sethuramasamyraja thinks that oral communication skills are developed in the program but that the short matriculation time may be inadequate for mastery. Dr. Sethuramasamyraja suggested that the increased time

between the end of the program and professional conferences, may give students the requisite time to more fully develop oral communications skill. Dr. Lopez discussed realigning assessment data to reflect this trend.

(2) How is curriculum being handled for Ag students?

(a) Dr. Sethuramasamyraja – there is a lot of overlap between IT and Ag Systems Management (ASM). Manufacturing related courses have been deleted, while production and sensors courses have been added. These courses align with ASM undergraduate courses. There has been a growing number of Ag undergraduate courses over the past 10 years because of the growing number of students in Ag Systems Management (ASM); 20 currently. There may be a bifurcation of the Ag program in the future.

i. Dr. Alexandrou - IT is a local program, curriculum is adjusted to meet local industrial needs.

VI. MSC to adjourn at 3:02 p.m.

The next meeting of the University Graduate Committee is scheduled for September 29, 2020.