

## GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

**CHAired BY:** David S. Chapman

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**DATE:** 31 March 2008

**PLACE:** 300 Park Building

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Russ Askren, Steve Bealer, Ann Marie Breznay, Nicki Camp, Bill Hesterly, Jay Mace, John Martinez, John McDonnell, Pat Murphy, Sally Planalp, Kevin Rathunde, Mary Jane Taylor, Rick Wacko, Robert Young, Jingyi Zhu

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Chapman, Fred Rhodewalt, Nancy Nickman, Lisa Blair, Graduate School

**EXCUSED:** Patrick Tresco

### **FINAL AGENDA**

#### **1. Approval of Minutes – 25 February 2008**

The minutes of the 25 February 2008 meeting were approved unanimously.

#### **2. Upcoming Proposals and Reviews/Extra Meeting**

Dean Chapman reviewed the upcoming proposals and program reviews. With a number of program reviews backlogged and just now coming to the Ad Hoc Committees, an additional meeting would be advantageous. However, Council members charged with writing the Ad Hoc reports have time constraints that preclude completion of the reports prior to late May.

It was agreed that an additional meeting in early May would not be possible. The program reviews will be heard in the August meeting, with the option of calling an additional meeting in early August being left as a possibility.

#### **3. Proposal to Rename the Genetic Science Learning Center to the Center for Science Understanding in the Department of Human Genetics**

Kevin Pompei, Associate Director of the Genetic Science Learning Center, presented a proposal to rename the Genetic Science Learning Center as The Center for Science Understanding.

The Center currently offers a broad range of science education professional development for Utah educators, which is being extended to include all areas of science. However, the current web site, which is award-winning with 1.7 million visitors from 175 countries, remains focused on Genetic Science.

The Council's first concern is that the proposed name is ambiguous, with no reflection of the Center's mission or goals. The mission statement is also too vague and broad, and needs specificity. The Center should also obtain letters of support from the College of Science, the College of Mines and Earth Sciences and the College of Education.

While the Council agrees that a name change is appropriate, the concern is that the Center will go from a too-specific name to a name that is too broad and far-reaching for the mission statement as it is currently written in the proposal.

**ACTION TAKEN:**

**Motion:** Approve the proposal to rename the Genetic Science Learning Center as the Center for Science Understanding in the Department of Human Genetics.

**Vote:** Unanimously against.

**Action:** Inform the Genetic Science Learning Center of the Graduate Council's decision to deny the proposal. Dean Chapman will convey the concerns of the Graduate Council to Louisa Stark, Director of the Genetic Science Learning Center.

**4. Graduate School Task Force Findings for the Department of Biology**

In fall 2007, Senior Vice President David W. Pershing asked the Graduate School to evaluate a proposal from a group of faculty in the Department of Biology to form a new Department of Environmental and Organismal Biology (EOB). The Graduate School formed an EOB Task Force to respond to Senior Vice President Pershing, with the following membership: Associate Dean Fred Rhodewalt (chair), Dana Carroll (Biochemistry), Barbara Graves (Oncological Sciences), James O'Connell (Anthropology), Rick Rabbitt (Bioengineering), and Dean David Chapman (ex officio). The Task Force was charged with determining the structure that would best serve both the university and the department, as well as how to resolve the internal issues within the department.

Associate Dean Rhodewalt informed the Graduate Council that the EOB Task Force had completed its work and sent a final report to Senior Vice President Pershing for transmittal to Dean Pierre Sokolsky (College of Science) and Chair Neil Vickers (Department of Biology). Dr. Vickers has forwarded the recommendations to the faculty of the Department of Biology. Dr. Rhodewalt described briefly the Task Force process, findings and recommendations.

The Department of Biology will go through the Graduate Council Program Review in the 2008 – 2009 academic year, which will be helpful in implementing the recommendations.

**5. Adding Concentrations to Student Transcripts – Graduate Level**

Dean Chapman was asked by the Chair of the Academic Senate to comment on a proposal from the Curriculum Policy Review Board and the Undergraduate Council to establish a policy of creating “concentrations” (variously called tracks, areas, options, plans, specializations and sequences) for students and for recognizing concentrations on the student transcript. A copy of the proposed policy (Edward Barbanell, 25 February 2008) was distributed.

The Council members agreed unanimously (straw vote) that it would be highly impractical to develop “concentrations” for graduate level students. Most graduate degrees are highly personalized and any concentration would be evident from the thesis or project undertaken and from coursework recorded on the transcript. In cases where another indication of concentration is needed, the department could generate a certificate.