MINUTES
Graduate Council
October 19, 2017

Present: Ex officio: M. Gallo (Chair), R. Bonhomme
Voting Members: W. Allen, G. Anagnostopoulos, C. Bashur, C. Bostater, D. Carroll,
D. Carstens, N. Daher (via phone), J. Dshalalow, H. Edwards, K. Hamed,
H. Heck, P. Jennings, Y. Liao, J. Martinez-Diaz, E. Perez, J. Perez, Y.
Sharaf-Eldeen, L. Steelman, A. Stephane, B. Webster
Guests: N. Weatherly

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m.

1) CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Michael Gallo

Dr. Gallo welcomed Dr. Nick Daher to Graduate Council representing the Department of
Extended Studies. Dr. Gallo acknowledged that Dr. Daher was present via telephone and replaces
Dr. Emily Vogt as a result of the recent separation of the Extended Studies Department from the
College of Business.

Dr. Gallo announced he would be working from a restructured agenda and informed
members of the updated Graduate Council membership list at their place settings.

2) MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 2017 GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

Unanimously Approved

Dr. Gallo noted that the minutes were modified to correct an error in the name of the new
specialization that was added to the Mechanical Engineering M.S. degree program. He thanked
Dr. Sharaf-Elddeen for making us aware of the error.

The minutes of the September 21, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved as modified
on a motion by Dr. Sharaf-Elddeen and a second by Dr. Hamed.

3) CHANGING GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS – PhD Degree Program in Chemistry

Unanimously Approved

Request is made by Department of Chemistry to change graduation requirements for the
PhD degree in Chemistry from 81 minimum required credit hours beyond the bachelor’s degree to
a minimum of 72 credit hours beyond the bachelor’s degree.

Dr. Gallo advised that after discussing this request with Dr. Liao on Monday and
approval of Dr. Freund, Chemistry Department Head, the proposed changes were modified

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slightly for consistency with Graduate Policy 2.2.2 (Credit Hour Requirements) and practice.

Discussion ensued about the rationale for this change. Dr. Gallo said that GP 2.2.2 requires at least 18 credit hours of dissertation and research and that at least 15 credit hours of dissertation (XXX 6999) must be taken beginning with the term in which a student is admitted to candidacy. It was noted by a council member that calculating the required degree hours (as presented in the proposal) was perplexing and confusing. Dr. Liao assured all that the major advisors would guide students to take a minimum of 3 credit hours of chemistry research as well as dissertation hours. Dr. Carroll suggested explicitly stating 33 hours of formal coursework and 15 hours of dissertation as the minimums. Dr. Liao liked the suggestion and made note of it.

On a motion by Dr. Martinez-Diaz and a second by Dr. Hamed, the request made by the Department of Chemistry to change graduation requirements for the PhD degree in Chemistry from 81 minimum required credit hours beyond the bachelor’s degree to a minimum of 72 credit hours beyond the bachelor’s degree was unanimously approved.

4) GRADUATE POLICY REVISION / COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS REPORT –
Graduate Policy 1.6 Final Program Examination Master’s and Specialist Students (revision) and Graduate Policy 1.6.1.1.2 Graduate Capstone Course (addition)

GP 1.6 Unanimously Approved
GP 1.6.1.1.2 Approved

Request is made by Office of Graduate Programs for Council to consider and provide review/ input for revision and addition for Graduate Policy 1.6 Final Program Examination Master’s and Specialist Students (revision) and Graduate Policy 1.6.1.1.2 Graduate Capstone Course (addition).

Dr. Gallo said the Committee on Standards reviewed the request last week and the corresponding minutes from that meeting are provided at today’s meeting. He noted the recommendation from the Committee on Standards was unanimous to recommend both the revision to Graduate Policy 1.6 and the addition of Graduate Policy 1.6.1.1.2. Because the recommendation was unanimous, the agenda item came to Council as a motion and second.

Dr. Steelman summarized the salient aspects that resulted from the October 10, 2017 Committee on Standards meeting. She said there was a need for different language in GP 1.6 because current policy consists of exclusion and exception language based on where the academic program is administratively housed. Most of the programs (including exceptions) are designed for working professionals and the proposed change in language is more in line with assessment that occurs during a capstone course. Also, committee members considered the definition of what was meant by Graduate Capstone Course as proposed in GP 1.6.1.1.2.

Discussion was turned to the addition of GP 1.6.1.1.2. Concerns were raised about the graduate capstone course being used as a substitution in lieu of a final program examination (FPE) or thesis defense. Dr. Martinez-Diaz was concerned about being limited due to the description of a capstone course, because School of Behavior Analysis requires both a capstone course and a final program examination or thesis defense. Dr. E. Perez said as Dr. Layne pointed out, the last five to six times, policy language has changed due to administrative changes. He
said the capstone course is an exit exam option that works well for the College of Business. Dr. E. Perez said that the recommended revision does not limit an academic unit in defining the requirements for the type of exit requirement. The proposed changes do not preclude having both a capstone and an FPE.

Dr. Anagnostopoulos asked if this policy was aligned with SACS-COC requirements. He thought it was important to document in the minutes that clarification of SACS requirements is needed. He asked if a student can pass a capstone course with a grade of “C”. Dr. Layne responded that per GP 4.8 a “C” grade is a pass in a graduate course. Dr. Martinez-Diaz stated that in the School of Behavior Analysis all courses must be passed with a “B” or better.

As a point of clarification, Dr. Daher asked if the proposed graduate capstone courses can be taught by a committee or one person. Dr. Gallo answered it is an “and/or statement” so the proposed policy would allow involvement of either (or both).

Dr. Allen asked if the faculty member supervising the capstone course had to be a member of the graduate faculty. Dr. Martinez-Diaz said that the School of Behavior Analysis only allows full-time graduate faculty to teach a capstone course. Dr. E. Perez said that might not be workable in online College of Business (CoB) programs with adjuncts and Department of Extended Studies as well. Dr. Anagnostopoulos suggested to leave the policy vague to give flexibility if departments experience any challenges. Dr. Bashur asked if program chairs had to sign off on capstone courses. Dr. Gallo said that College of Aeronautics has a formal scoring rubric used for capstone courses. The instructor signs it and then the program chair checks it and signs off on it also. Dr. Martinez-Diaz said that process makes sense for quality control. Dr. Hamed asked if there was a program or department advocating this change or if there were different standards for on campus students versus online students. Dr. Layne replied that there was not.

Dr. Gallo reminded council members that graduate policy language lists the minimum requirement and if the academic unit wants to make more stringent restriction, this is permissible. Policy is set at a certain level and the academic unit can set a higher bar.

Dr. Layne stated that SACS requires a Faculty Roster (by term) to examine faculty credentials such as highest earned degree in the discipline and other qualifications to teach each course. The adjunct has to meet that level of qualification. Dr. Gallo said it is the responsibility of the academic unit to assign a capstone course to the appropriate faculty member. Dr. E. Perez stated that CoB has reports on all adjuncts, tracking, and quality control procedures in place.

Questions arose about the distinction between graduate faculty and faculty who teach graduate courses. Dr. Layne replied, graduate faculty, as defined in GP 4.1, is the source for graduate student committees. She added that all members of a student’s committee must be appointed to graduate faculty and any additional individual (approved for special expertise) is not a replacement for the required number of graduate faculty. She advised that SACS-COC (and GP 4.1.4) requires that each faculty member teaching at the graduate level must hold the terminal degree, usually the earned doctorate in the teaching discipline or related discipline.

Dr. Gallo briefly touched back on GP 1.6 requesting the addition of the word “program” in sentence one of the recommended policy revision, “A final program examination is required
of all thesis students..." He then switched gears to GP 1.6.1.1.2 to state there is nothing in the proposed policy that precludes adjunct faculty from teaching a capstone.

On a motion and second by the Committee on Standards, the request made by Office of Graduate Programs to revise Graduate Policy 1.6 Final Program Examination Master’s and specialist Students was unanimously approved, including one abstention.

On a motion and second by the Committee on Standards, the request made by the Office of Graduate Programs to add Graduate Policy 1.6.1.1.2 Graduate Capstone Course was approved with 16 votes in favor, two opposed, and two abstentions.

[The revised wording (presented in bold underline font and strikethrough) is presented on page 5 of these minutes].

Dr. Gallo emphasized that if an academic unit currently has a final program examination in place and wants to change its requirements as a result of this revised policy, the unit will need to submit a Change in Graduation Requirements request to Graduate Council for consideration.

5) REMARKS FROM THE FLOOR

Dr. Martinez-Diaz announced that Dr. Weatherly will be present in his stead at the next Graduate Council meeting.

Dr. Layne said that Liz Fox has advised the deadline for materials for the University Catalog 2018-2019 need to be presented no later than the January 2018 Graduate Council meeting.

Questions were raised about the location of the November 2017 Graduate Council meeting. Dr. Layne said she will advise if the meeting will be held in Olin Life Sciences (same location as today’s meeting) or in Crawford Building (where previous meetings have been held).

6) ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Gallo announced that the next Graduate Council meeting is November 16, 2017, and the submission deadline for materials is November 2, 2017.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:49 p.m.

Rosemary G. Layne, Ed.D.
Director of Graduate Programs
Approved Policy Revision

Final Program Examination, Master’s and Specialist Students
(Graduate Policy 1.6)

A final program examination is required of all thesis students (in this case called a “defense”) and in all other master’s programs all master’s non-thesis students with the exception of the programs in the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business, and any program in the College of Aeronautics or College of Psychology and Liberal Arts, for which there is no on-campus counterpart. In which individual student mastery has been documented within an approved capstone course as defined in graduate policy “Graduate Capstone Course.” Examinations are administered by a committee as described in the graduate policy “Examination Committees” and are normally scheduled in two-hour blocks to allow adequate time for the committee to examine each student individually. A decision that a student has passed any examination requires the unanimous consent of the committee.

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Approved Policy Addition:

Graduate Capstone Course
(Graduate Policy 1.6.1.1.2)

A graduate capstone course is defined as a formal course in which a student performs independent work under the guidance of a faculty member and/or committee and demonstrates synthesis and integration across the courses in the program. The student has the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills that they have gained by completing a product that demonstrates what they have learned in the academic program. It is expected that the course evaluates depth of knowledge in the specific discipline and validates what the student has learned in the academic program. [Formal course: A classroom-based course or the equivalent in which grades of A, B, C, D or F are given].