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Graduate Council Meeting : 2012 : 03 : 22

Graduate Council

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Graduate Council USFSP
Thursday, March 22, 2012
Meeting Called to Order at 2:02 pm

Members Present: Tina Neville – Chair, Donna Knudsen (Ex-Officio), Lisa Starks-Estes, Kim Stoddard, Veronica Carroll (Graduate Student Member)

Members Absent: Kate Barker

Guests: Dr. Chris Meindl, Melanie Riedinger-Whitmore

1. Approval of the minutes from Dec. 1 2011

- Delayed for guests until 2:20pm.
- Approval of previous minutes (November 17) was delayed at last meeting, will approve now
- **Tina Neville moved to approve November 17 minutes, Kim Stoddard seconded, all approved**
- **Lisa Starks-Estes moved to approve December 1 minutes, Kim Stoddard seconded, all approved**

2. New Course Proposal for Wetlands, People and Public Policy course taught by Dr. Chris Meindl

- 14 students enrolled last semester
- Dr. Meindl has taught the class 4 times
- Are there any major changes to the syllabus? The only thing that has changed is a book occasionally
- There is no undergraduate level for this course – it is a stand alone course
- **Lisa Starks-Estes moved to approve New Course Proposal for Wetlands, People and Public Policy Course, Kim Stoddard seconded, all approved**

3. Change of Program Proposal for Environmental Science and Policy (adding MA non-thesis option)

- Many questions and observations for discussion:
 - Why is this being proposed as an MA rather than a non-thesis option within the current MS?
 - It appears that it doesn't really fit the MA degree so are we are viewing this as a new program proposal. It appears, with these courses, a new degree program is being requested. These are not MA courses as it appears to us.
- Henry Alegria, chair of the ESP program was called at 2:45pm and put on speakerphone.
 - Dr. Alegria was asked: "Why are you proposing this as an MA rather than an MS degree? It doesn't seem to fit as an MA, so we are confused. Response: Depends on your background and how you look at it. This was the whole crux of the discussion last time. In the sciences, we frown upon the idea of an MS with a non-thesis option. Half of the courses are science, half are policy.
 - Dr. Alegria continued to clarify: the MS degree is driven by a thesis,

only 4 courses that everyone has to take, beyond that the 6 remaining courses, people can choose, someone graduating with an MS degree what you're looking at is the thesis, if you take a way the thesis, if you have an MS without a thesis, there is no cohesiveness, no focus, with the non thesis MA, everyone has to take the common courses, so there is a cohesiveness, the MS degree, the thesis is what everyone looks at

- Grad Council question: So the MA is asking for a capstone course instead of a non-thesis project? Dr. Alegria responded that students would take all of the core courses, then their comps and finally, work on a capstone project to finish off the degree. Grad Council follow-up: What you're describing as capstone experience as it being a course is different than what most programs require for a non-thesis. May be a difference in communication. This is different from a non-thesis option where there's still a committee and the choice of courses is still guided by that committee with a non-thesis project.
- Grad Council comment: It sounds like you're talking about a different program, much different: faculty driven. If it were that different than you would need to submit a new program proposal or is it an MS with a non thesis option? This needs to be clearer for us to be able to make a decision. We are not quite comfortable with what you're suggesting. We need to do some more research because it sets a precedent. We don't have an understanding of how this can really be the program you're submitting. This is a graduate council for the whole university
- Dr. Alegria assured the Council that he had consulted all the appropriate people all the way up to Tampa and advised that it is just a small change and that is the way it should be proposed.
- The call to Dr. Alegria ended at 3:06pm for additional discussion by the committee.
- Kim Stoddard volunteered to research non-thesis options at other campuses to see if the proposal as it stands is a norm for the M.A. A vote on the proposal will await the results of her research.

4. New Course Proposal for Florida Ecosystems course taught by Melanie Riedinger-Whitmore - please note that this is being proposed as an elective to the Biology undergraduate program.

- Originally submitted as an undergraduate because of the 5000 level which allows both undergrads and graduate students to take the course, Melanie has taught this class before
- The class was offered on this campus both as undergraduate and graduate.
- The course has never had pre-requisites. It has been a very popular course
- Put it in as a 5000 level course to make it available to the Florida Studies students
- This course is offered at different campuses under different titles
- **Kim Stoddard moved to approve New Course Proposal for Florida Ecosystems course taught by Melanie Riedinger-Whitmore, Lisa Starks-Estes seconded, all approved**

5. MA change for COE (information item)

MA Exceptional Student Education

- Information only item regarding MA Program, not a substantive change. We already have it on the books.
- No new resources, same faculty, the MA Program is not a new program, already in catalog, fixed some errors, added some new information
- Students will have to see Kim Stoddard for approval of electives.
- FYI given to curriculum program committee already
- Hope to start it in the fall
- Donna: We never terminated the program. This is going to help the college and the programs in terms of enrollment.

Discussion was held and council supported the change for this item

6. Next meeting: April 26th (tentative) at 2:00 in the library conference room (POY 319).