

Meeting of April 20, 2011, 2:00 p.m.
Adamany Undergraduate Library, Community Room

Agenda

I. Approval of Minutes: March 23, 2011*

II. New Business

- A. Checking Dissertations for Plagiarism Electronically:
Demonstration and Discussion
Andrew Feig, Chemistry
Kristi Verbeke, Office for Teaching and Learning
- B. Election of Executive Committee, 2011-2012*
- C. Other New Business

III. Old Business

IV. Report of the Chair

V. Committee Reports

- A. New Programs Committee*
- B. Academic Standards Committee*
- C. Graduate Admissions
- D. Academic Senate Liaison
- E. University Libraries Liaison

VI. Adjournment

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**Minutes of the
Regular Meeting of April 20, 2011
2:00 p.m., Adamany Undergraduate Library, Community Room**

Members Present: A. Biswas, L. Buis, A. Butler, A. Cano, J. Casida, T. Edwards, D. Ellis, K. English, J. Green, D. Haase, G. Mao, G. Nathan, R. Pauley, L. Schwiebert, R. Sundick, K. Thompson, C. Waites, A. Weisz, C. Winston, Y. Xu, A. Yaprak

Members Absent
with Notice: M. Clark, A. Kowluru, B. Li, A. Mathur, D. Onolemhemen, J. Stoltman

Members Absent: J. Abt, M. Anderson, J. Davis, P. Dubinsky, A. Duggan, A. Dutta, S. Ilmer, B. Neavill, M. Neely, A. Suits, J. Yoon

Also Present: C. Barduca, L. Clark, A. Feig, A. Hudson, K. Lueckeman, K. Verbeke

The meeting was convened at 2:05 p.m. by the Chairperson, Dean Ratner.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of March 23, 2011, with the correction that Geoff Nathan and Arlene Weisz were present.

Dean Ratner rearranged the agenda to allow her to leave the meeting early in order to attend a Board of Governors meeting.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2011-2012

Dean Ratner said that three members of the Executive Committee are elected, the other three, appointed. This meeting provides one opportunity to nominate people for the Executive Committee for next year. Alternatively, nominations may be made by phone to Krista English, 577-8050, or by email, krista.english@wayne.edu. Four individuals have been nominated so far. The nomination period closes on April 22, and ballots will be mailed to members shortly thereafter.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Dean Ratner provided members with an update on the Research Division-Graduate School strategic planning effort. A planning retreat is scheduled for May 16 and is organized around six topics derived from discussions with the Graduate Council, the Faculty Research Advisory Committee, Graduate Directors and others: student recruitment, career pathways, master's programs, the Graduate Director position, entrepreneurship in the curriculum and support for arts and humanities. Small groups will be established to explore issues in the six areas and group leaders have been identified.

She reported information from a recent Council of Graduate Schools legislative newsletter. The appropriations bill passed by Congress contained budget items that negatively affect graduate education. The Javits Fellowships, Trio programs -- though it's not clear whether McNair programs will be affected-- , and foreign languages programs in the Department of Education have received cuts. NSF research and related activities will be funded close to FY 10 levels, and NIH will receive a \$30 million cut. The DOE Office of Science and the NEH will also see cuts, and the year-round Pell Grants have been eliminated. None of this is good news as the reductions will have consequences for our research and educational efforts in the coming year.

Dean Ratner then thanked members for their service on the Council and its committees and said she appreciated their commitment to graduate education.

IV. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

B. CHECKING DISSERTATIONS FOR PLAGIARISM ELECTRONICALLY

Dean Ratner reported that the Academic Standards Committee has been discussing the potential for plagiarism in dissertations and theses and has been examining the use of Safe Assign, an electronic plagiarism detection program that compares a student paper against work in a comprehensive set of databases. The Committee brought the issue to the Council and invited graduate directors to attend as well to discuss whether all dissertation and theses should be checked for plagiarism.

Andrew Feig, a member of the Academic Standards Committee and graduate director in Chemistry, explained that the Committee decided to review approved dissertations to determine if plagiarism was an issue at the University. Twenty dissertations were chosen at random from a range of departments and checked using Safe Assign. The result was that roughly 10% contained material that would be considered actionable plagiarism. He said this was consistent with experience in his own department before the use of Safe Assign became mandatory there. Since the time the Safe Assign requirement was instituted and expected standards were explained to students 18 months ago, no cases of plagiarism have been found. It can thus be used to deter as well as detect plagiarism. Other plagiarism check programs are available, but Safe Assign is available from Black Board and free to university users. LaCeisha Clark, Office for Teaching and Learning, demonstrated the use of Safe Assign to members, noting that it is easy to use and that either the student or faculty member can submit the assignment for a check.

Professor Feig emphasized that the more difficult part is understanding and interpreting the report that Safe Assign produces for each submission. He cautioned that the report requires an understanding of the field and must be reviewed carefully and that the numerical score may be misleading. Establishing procedures for dealing with plagiarism and publicizing these are vital. The earlier the plagiarism check is done, the better opportunity there is to use it as a teaching device. In his department, the criteria are that less than a paragraph of plagiarized material, the graduate director talks with the student; more than a paragraph, the whole graduate committee becomes involved, meeting with the student and advisor to address how the plagiarism occurred and how it will be fixed. The graduate director does not allow the dissertation to go forward until the plagiarism is corrected. In the last year, in 21 dissertations nothing larger arose than concern with a few sentences. Students are told at orientation that their dissertations and other papers will be checked for plagiarism, and so it becomes part of the department culture. The system is not perfect in that Safe Assign cannot access all the material that exists, such as articles behind firewalls and in proprietary databases.

Members discussed the issue. The qualifying examination and prospectus as well as classroom papers could be submitted to Safe Assign and used as teaching opportunities. At the draft stage, students can correct items picked up by Safe Assign, and Safe Assign allows submission of multiple drafts, but once the paper is turned in to the instructor, items picked up by Safe Assign

can constitute plagiarism. Sometimes students don't understand what it means to plagiarize, and a consistent Safe Assign requirement can help teach them to be better scholars.

Discussion turned to who should do the Safe Assign evaluation of dissertations. Because there is some interpretive analysis of the Safe Assign results, it is important to have criteria and agreement on what these are so the unit deals fairly and consistently with students. If the advisors were responsible for the Safe Assign check, there would be a wide variance in evaluation of the results and a large number of people would need to be trained in use of the software. Disciplinary knowledge is important to understanding the results, so the Graduate School would not be appropriate to do the check. There was consensus that the Graduate Director in each unit should be responsible for the check – the evaluations would be consistent, the number of dissertations is not so large at the unit level to be onerous and OTL can provide the needed training. Many journals, especially in the sciences, also use electronic plagiarism checking software on articles submitted to them. Any policy and best practices developed by the Graduate School for use of Safe Assign should be reviewed by the University's Judicial Officer to assure student due process.

Dean Ratner said that students need to understand their responsibilities as scholars and the consequences for not acting in accordance with ethical principles. There was general support for the use of Safe Assign, and the Graduate School will develop a policy and best practices for review next fall.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. NEW PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

A written summary of the status of proposals before the Committee was distributed with the minutes of the last meeting.

B. ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

A written summary of the status of issues before the Committee was distributed with the minutes of the last meeting.

C. GRADUATE ADMISSIONS

Kathy Lueckeman reported that applications for Spring/Summer were up 112% and for Fall, up over 77%. New registrants for both Spring/Summer and Fall are also up, but continuing students are down.

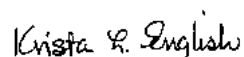
D. UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES LIAISON

Anne Hudson reminded members that, given the presentation on plagiarism, the Library personnel do a lot of presentations on avoiding plagiarism and are available to do such presentations to classes.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Krista L. English
Secretary of the Graduate Council