

To: Graduate Academic Council
From: Timothy Groves, Chair
GAC Committee on Curriculum & Instruction (CC&I)
Date: April 27, 2010
Subject: Report and Recommendations

CC&I Members: S. Friedman, T. Groves, J. Kimball and F. Bolton (staff) were present.
S. Chittur and K. Reinhold were absent.

Four items of business were considered.

1. College of Arts and Sciences Department of Psychology – Request to change the name of the Biopsychology PhD program to “Behavioral Neuroscience”.

As a result of the Psychology Department’s self study and due to the recommendation of external reviewers, the Department is seeking approval to change the name of its PhD “Biopsychology” program to “Behavioral Neuroscience”. Because of a period of growth and change in the field, “Biopsychology” has become an anachronism. Therefore, the Behavioral Neuroscience title better describes the present field and would be more in keeping with peer institutions.

The CC&I members concurred and voted 4-0-0 (one vote was submitted electronically) in favor of the new program name.

2. College of Arts and Sciences Department of Psychology – Request to drop the GRE Subject Test in Psychology for PhD applicants to the Social/Personality program.

As the GRE Subject Test in Psychology is not required by many of the psychology doctoral programs competing for students with the University and is only required by a minority of other schools, the Department of Psychology is proposing to drop it from its admissions prerequisite. It was felt that the subject test was a deterrent to otherwise qualified applicants.

The Committee voted 4-0-0 (one vote was submitted electronically) to endorse the admissions policy change and to move the proposal forward to GAC for further action.

3. College of Arts and Sciences Department of Psychology – Request to drop the GRE Subject Test in Psychology for PhD applicants to the Biopsychology/Behavioral Neuroscience program.

Many doctoral students applying to the Biopsychology doctoral program earned their undergraduate degrees in biology or neuroscience and may not have been exposed to a great deal of the material being tested by the Subject Test in Psychology. Additionally the Psychology Department did not consider the information tested to be applicable to biopsychology’s course of study.

As the GRE Subject Test in Psychology does not appear to fairly assess the information needed to be successful in the biopsychology program, the Committee voted 4-0-0 (one vote was submitted electronically) to forward Psychology’s request to the GAC for its approval.

4. College of Arts and Sciences Department of Computer Science – Proposal to revise the Computer Science M.S. program.

The current Computer Science MS program was designed to prepare MS students for advanced PhD study. The proposed MS program is crafted for students pursuing a terminal MS degree and those wishing to additionally receive a Professional Science Management Certificate. Rather than requiring four core courses CSI 500 (4), 503 (3), 509 (3) and 518 (4) for a total of 14 credits, the new MS core is to consist of two core courses CSI 503 (3) and 518 (4) plus a choice of two courses out of CSI 500 (4), 508 (3), 509 (3) or CSI 519 (3) for a total of 13 – 14 credits. The result is the reduction of the credits needed in fulfillment of the program from 32 credits to 31 credits.

A change is also requested for the MS program's culminating requirement. In addition to a project or thesis option, an Internship, CSI 698, has been proposed. The internship is essentially a project carried out through some sort of real work experience and "must demonstrate the ability to put science and/or managerial preparation work in business, industry, or government." It will require a written report and confirmation from the employer that the work was performed satisfactorily.

A new Professional Science Management track is to be established within the Computer Science's MS program. Students intending to obtain the PSM Certificate will be advised that all coursework taken for their general MS must be at the 500 level insuring that regular, structured courses form their computer science background and not seminars and independent studies. Even though CSI 698 is to become a third culminating requirement option for all students, it will be required of those students who plan to complete the PSM Certificate as well.

Additionally, it is proposed that the Comprehensive Exam be dropped from the MS requirements. Not only was the exam felt to be adequately replaced by the Project, Internship or Thesis faculty-mentored study but also was seen as a redundant gauge of the core's success already measured in GPA terms.

The Committee voted electronically (5-0-0) in favor of the program changes presented in the proposal.