Minutes of the Council meeting of April 7, 2010
Approved by the Council on May 7, 2010

In attendance: J. Baronner (staff), J. Bartow (staff), K. Bendikas (Guest) F. Bolton (staff), S. Chittur, S. Commuri, N. Fahrenkopf, C. Fox, L. Fuller, T. Groves, L. Kranich (Chair), H. Miller, M. Pryse, D. Siegel (Guest), G. Yukl (Guest)

Unable to attend: J. Kimball, K. Reinhold

1. The minutes from 3/1/2010 were unanimously approved.

2. Dean’s Report – M. Pryse

   The search for a new Dean of Graduate Studies is underway, and an announcement is forthcoming within the next several days.

   The Dean mentioned that at the Senate recommendation and request, she invited science programs other than Biology and Computer Science to participate in the Professional Science Master’s initiative. Funding was offered for some Summer release time on a grant which is about to expire, but no departments responded.

   We are in the middle of Graduate recruitment season. Doctoral recruitment ends around April 15th. The Dean will contact doctoral programs after April 15th to ascertain recruitment results. The Dean summarized the recruitment process for the Council.

   President Philip announced in his e-mail today that a new Budget Advisory Group has been formed to work on a financial plan for the campus to cover the next two years. We are living in a difficult budgetary environment that has “absorbed over $21 million in state tax reductions since the beginning of FY 2008-09.” Some cuts have been back-filled along with back-filling some deans’ priorities. The 2010-11 budget remains unresolved, since the state has not yet passed its budget. The President stated the financial plan “takes into account a substantially lower resource base over the next two years.” The bottom line is that we will never revert back to the 2008-2009 financial picture. The Provost has requested the Graduate Dean (and other deans as well) to think about the possibility of budget cuts for both 2010-11 and 2011-2012. However, graduate student support has already been committed for 2010-11, so any further cuts will need to address the 2011-12 graduate support year.

   The Dean reminded the Council that GAC still has the opportunity to comment on the GSS panel’s Final Report and to consider voicing opinions on its content. The Provost is interested in GAC’s feedback on the GSS report. Dean Pryse emphasized that GAC is the only governance group we currently have that is able to address graduate education issues in a formal way. What suggestions would GAC recommend in response to the broad range of quality among doctoral programs, and how do we preserve strong programs in the face of anticipated further budget cuts? The Dean stressed that GAC has unfinished business this semester and has the opportunity to help since everyone’s assistance is needed with graduate education.
Discussion by the Council followed. The Chair mentioned that at the last GAC meeting the Council unanimously agreed to inform the Provost that we are unable to evaluate and comment on the final GSS report until we have received the individual program reports.

The Dean was asked if the University still has the Presidential Fellows or College Scholars Programs. Dean Pryse informed the Council that the Presidential Fellows Program was discontinued. It was determined that many programs were unable to complete proper paperwork in time for the mid-February deadline, and every year the same programs were provided resource money. An ad hoc dean’s advisory committee that comprised graduate faculty rearranged the stipend program resulting in a $12,000 base stipend and more programs being provided money. If we boost stipends for everyone, the money allows us to have flexibility and makes us more competitive. The Chair inquired if there are currently any merit-based programs which are used to attract the best students. The Dean mentioned that we do have a NSF AGEP program, but it ends next March. Also, we have no state funds which allow us to top off. A member did mention the Graduate First-Year Scholarship program. Upon acceptance to the University in their freshman year, qualified undergraduate scholars are offered a tuition scholarship award for their first year of graduate study provided they complete their 4-year degree, are accepted into a Master’s program, and then begin study the following semester at the University.

3. Chair’s Report - L. Kranich

The Senate met on March 8th and the Senate Executive Committee met March 22nd. The resolution on evaluation of administrators was discussed at both meetings. President Philip prefers the focus be on services rendered by administrative units rather than on individuals. There is still a debate if the review will be of administrators or administrative services. The Middle States Commission report noted that some review of administrators takes place at other SUNY campuses, and recommended such a review at UAlbany. The topic is still under discussion.

The deactivation of the Russian MA and Certificate of Advanced Study Programs was approved at the March 22nd Executive meeting and will be voted on at the April 12th Senate meeting.

Chair Kranich met with CAA Chair Heidi Andrade and Kristina Bendikas from Institutional Research on March 9th to discuss GAC review of CAA assessment reports.

The Chair mentioned that the purpose of inserting the data obtained from IR on graduate assistantships for 2004-05 into the spreadsheet distributed by Graduate Studies on the allocation of graduate support for 2010-11 was to elicit questions from GAC members concerning holes or anomalies which he would then attempt to reconcile. The Chair has been in contact with Kathy Gersowitz from CAS to reconcile the information regarding graduate assistantships within the College. It was determined that IR reported the head count whereas Graduate Studies reported the number of GA lines. The most productive means to study the data would be to compare dollar amounts but adjustments must be made for tuition
differences. The Chair and CAS are still discussing comparison methods, and conversations are on-going concerning the intervening years.

Chair Kranich sent a message to the Provost informing her that GAC will not comment on the GSS final report until it receives the individual program assessments.

GAC has been asked to comment on the Graduate Education section of the draft Strategic Plan which will be available soon.

4. Committee Reports

CAAS – H. Miller, Chair

Jon Bartow mentioned that 2-3 student petitions remain to be reviewed, and a future report will be provided to the Council. GAC and CAAS members have access to a wiki that has been created so members may access pertinent case information.

CC&I – T. Groves, Chair

The March 30th meeting was canceled due to lack of business. The Committee will meet again on March 27th.

CEPP – S. Commuri, Chair

Jon Bartow is organizing material on the different types of graduate certificate programs. After he has done so, the Committee will schedule a meeting.

5. Old Business

CAA Assessment Reports

Kris Bendikas from Institutional Research provided the Council with an overview of the CAA assessment process. All GAC members should have been given access to the CAA wiki site. She reviewed material from the wiki site containing program review materials. Reviews going back to years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 are accessible on the site, and there are four documents ending with 2008-2009 years. Kris briefed the Council on the sequence and schedule of reviews beginning with the program self-study followed by a site visit by external reviewers, the external reviewer report, the department response, and the CAA summary report. A schedule is provided for the reviews starting in 2009. An attempt is made to post CAA reports as soon as they are approved. The most recent report is for Informatics. Production of the final CAA report would be the trigger for GAC to then evaluate and comment. Kris mentioned that all attempts are made to ready reports and finish within the 12-month cycle of a visit, report, and report approval. After reviewing the Senate Charter sections, the Chair pointed out that CAA is responsible for conducting the review and evaluating and improving the evaluation process but is not authorized to make recommendations for programmatic changes. It is part of GAC’s responsibility to review
CAA assessment reports pertaining to graduate programs and to recommend changes it
deems desirable. Dean Pryse commented that while departments do not choose the external
reviewers, they are advocates for their individual disciplines and generally recommend more
resources and instructors. The Chair emphasized the confidentiality of the material being
evaluated by the Council.

6. New Business

Reactivation of the Doctoral Program in Organizational Studies

Dean Donald Siegel from the School of Business and Professor Gary Yukl, Director of the
Organizational Studies Program attended the meeting to discuss reactivation of the doctoral
program. This is an interdisciplinary program that incorporates faculty from several areas.
The program had been active and successful for many years until quite recently when the
previous dean decided to shift resources away from the program and toward support of the
MBA program. Previously, the program had been very efficient. Most students arrive with a
master’s degree, many are self-funded, and numerous students teach in the last 2-3 semesters of
their program. With the downsizing of the department over the years, doctoral students
teaching on assistantships had been extremely helpful. Countless graduated students have
obtained employment with many ending up in academia. About 15 students have yet to
complete their dissertations and remain in the program. Assistantships were funded by the
University, and new ones will be funded by the School of Business. Many students are
trained in Sociology and Psychology. Employment is available for students wishing to teach
Accounting. The School has raised over $4M in grants and has received many endowments.
The University’s School of Business was the first to be nationally accredited for both
undergrad and graduate programs. Reactivation of the program is the cornerstone of the
School of Business’s development efforts. It is extremely important to build research capital.
The School is not requesting resources but merely asking to reactivate the program. The
University is partnered with RPI where our students do not incur RPI’s high tuition costs. At
some point, the School wants to expand the numbers of tracks such as accounting, where the
best job placements are presently. There is a shortage of qualified accounting instructors. In
addition to GAC, UPC will also be reviewing this proposal. Development money is being
used to fund students. Our peer institutions have similar PhD programs.
Reactivation is important for faculty recruitment and retention. Entrepreneurship is a
growing field, and there is funding available for graduate students working in this field.

After the guests departed, the Council discussed the program’s reactivation. A concern was
raised that at some point in the future the School may not be able to provide adequate
funding for assistantships and the burden would be shifted to the University, possibly
impacting other programs. The Council was unanimously supportive of the proposal on its
academic merits but concerned about the potential resource impact in that event. The Council
chose to delay a vote until after Chair Kranich composes wording that emphasizes that the
Council evaluated the proposal on the basis of academic merit only and deferred resource
issues to UPPC. Voting will be via e-mail.
7. Other Business

Jon Bartow mentioned that he has been working with the Strategic Planning Task Force on Graduate Education. The Task Force has completed a draft report which will be distributed to the Council for comments.

Due to a large amount of unfinished GAC business, it was suggested that the Council meet for an extended amount of time at its last meeting. The Council will move the May 4th meeting to Friday, May 7th, 1:00-4:00 PM.

8. Future Meetings
   Friday, May 7, 1:00-4:00 PM (UAB 320 Conference Room)

END OF GAC 4/7/2010 MINUTES

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