M I N U T E S
Graduate Council
April 16, 2015

Present:          Ex officio:  M. Gallo (Chair)

Voting Members:  C. Rostater, J. Dshalalow, K. Hamed, P. Jennings, M. Kaya, A. Knight,
                 J. Martinez-Diaz, B. Morkos, A. Palmer, E. Perlman, J.P. Pinelli,
                 S. Rice, T. Richardson, L. Steelman, J. Strother, B. Webster

Guests:          M. Baloga, E. Kalajian, D. Micus, H. Miller, M. Silaghi, C. Young

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

1) CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Michael Gallo

   Dr. Gallo noted the handouts at each place setting: a revised agenda, April 2015
   Committee on Standards minutes, and some administrative forms.
   Ms. Young introduced the new Registrar, Mr. Dave Micus. She provided information
   on his many years of registrar experience, including the University of Wyoming, Laramie and
   at King Abdullah University.

2) MINUTES OF THE MARCH 2015 GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

   Unanimously Approved

   The minutes of the March 26, 2015 meeting were unanimously approved on a motion
   by Dr. Jennings and a second by Dr. Richardson.

3) DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Dr. Rosemary Layne

   Dr. Layne said during the past few weeks the Office of Graduate Programs (OGP)
   responded to several inquiries concerning clarification of graduate policy especially with
   respect to the new open/closed defense option.
   The most commonly asked question was, who are the “graduate faculty” who are
   permitted to attend the closed portion of the defense? She advised that Graduate Policy 4.1
   Graduate Faculty states the membership and appointment policy for “Graduate Faculty of
   Florida Tech.” Once appointed, these individuals are included on the Graduate Faculty List
   (posted on Graduate Programs website) and are invited to attend any defense or exam that is
   of interest to them. While most of these individuals are faculty members at Florida Tech,
   some are external to the institution. The distinction is that all individuals on the graduate
   faculty list (except for ex officio members) have been appointed by the dean of the graduate
   school per Graduate Policy 4.1.2.
The second commonly-asked question was whether the open and closed components of the defense were to be held on the same date and time. As stated in the March Graduate Council meeting minutes, the defense is, by definition, what is being announced by OGP (usually in 2-hour blocks). She advised that discussion from the March 2015 Committee on Standards and Graduate Council meetings concluded that the open and closed components were to be contiguous.

Dr. Gallo added that academic units who desire to change doctoral program graduation requirements as a result of revised GP 2.6.4, need to submit a “Changing Graduation Requirements in a Major/Minor” with a corresponding memo that requests the proposed changes be presented to Graduate Council for review and approval.

Discussion ensued about how to request and record open defenses. Dr. Perlman suggested to modify one universal form for all departments to use to help make the recording process easier for everyone. Dr. Jennings suggested to place the open defense requirement on a program plan so it is recorded as a graduation requirement. Ms. Young added that she can look into building this into the CAPP (electronic) report.

Dr. Gallo stated the Graduate Council deadline for the 2016-2017 University Catalog is November 2015. This means that for any curricular changes—including changes to graduation requirements—to be effective for Academic Year 2016-2017, Graduate Council must approve such requests no later than its November 2015 meeting.

4) COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS REPORT – Dr. Rosemary Layne

Dr. Layne reported that the Committee on Standards met on April 9 to address the request by the School of Arts and Communication to revise Graduate Policy 1.6.3 Oral Examinations to reflect the new policy for oral doctoral examinations, allowing each academic unit to decide whether to open the thesis or design project defense to anyone. The committee voted unanimously to refer the request back to the School of Arts and Communication for clarification language.

GRADUATE FACULTY APPOINTMENT – SEO, Hyodae

Unanimously Approved at Master’s Level

Request: is made by the Department of Marine and Environmental Systems to appoint Dr. Hyodae Seo to the master’s level of Graduate Faculty.

Dr. Gallo said that request at the master’s level is consistent with Graduate Council’s practice with respect to graduate faculty appointments for faculty external to the university.

On anmotion by Dr. Perlman and a second by Dr. Jennings the request made by the Department of Marine and Environmental Systems to appoint Dr. Hyodae Seo to the master’s level of Graduate Faculty was unanimously approved.
5) **GRADUATE POLICY REVISION**

Refer Request Back to School of Arts and Communication for Clarification Language

Request is made by the School of Arts and Communication to revise **Graduate Policy 1.6.3 Oral Examinations** to reflect the new policy for oral doctoral examinations, allowing each academic unit to decide whether to open the thesis or design project defense to anyone.

Dr. Gallo noted the Committee on Standards’ vote to remand the request back to the proposer for clarification language was unanimous and therefore comes to Council as a motion and second.

Dr. Palmer opened the discussion by presenting salient aspects of the meeting. He said he did not think it was our place (Committee on Standards) to decide what they (School of Arts and Communication) wanted, including thesis and non-thesis options, and that more clarification was needed.

Dr. Strother explained that the intent was to have this request mirror what was recently passed for the doctoral-level open defense option. She added that she would like the open defense policy only for thesis and design projects, not for the oral final program examination (FPE). Dr. Strother was open to modifying the language and welcomed suggestions. Dr. Layne volunteered to assist Dr. Strother in revising the language.

Dr. Jennings asked how many departments have oral final program exams only? Dr. Hamed responded that several DEIS programs have oral examinations as their only FPE option. Dr. Perlman said that this is true for Physics and Space Sciences as well.

The vote was called and resulted in a vote of 14 in favor and two abstentions to refer the request back to the School of Arts and Communication for clarification language.

Dr. Gallo thought it might be beneficial and informative to get a sense of Graduate Council’s position with respect to permitting anyone to attend a non-thesis master’s student’s oral FPE. As a reminder, a FPE measures the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which are statements that indicate the skills and knowledge students should have upon graduating from the degree program, including (a) substantive advanced knowledge of their chosen field, (b) the ability to synthesize and apply their knowledge to solve problems, and (c) effective written and oral communications skills. This assessment is performed using the academic unit’s Academic Program Assessment Committee’s (APAC) approved scoring rubric. He asked all who would be in favor of having an open master’s thesis/research design project defense and non-thesis oral FPE? This option drew no interested parties. All who would be in favor of having an open master’s thesis/research defense? This choice drew five interested parties. Finally, he asked who would be in favor of having an open master’s non-thesis oral FPE? This did not draw any interested parties.
6) INFORMATION ITEM

A request is made by Registrar Charlotte Young and Dr. Monica Baloga, Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness, to inform council members in anticipation of enforcement of course prerequisites as they appear in the 2016–2017 University Catalog.

Dr. Baloga said the enforcement of prerequisites for graduate courses is being made to ensure that the catalog reflects an accurate list of course descriptions. She would like for each academic unit to examine its graduate course offerings with prerequisites to determine if this level of course restriction is essential. If not essential, the prerequisite should be removed through standard procedures set forth by the Registrar’s Office and approved by Graduate Council. If background knowledge is desired or strongly encouraged, the course prerequisite should be removed and the course description modified with “equivalent background knowledge” recommendations.

Dr. Perlman said that many graduate courses are taken by students outside the department offering the course. He suggested that the academic unit teaching the course consult with other academic units so as not to cause other units’ students undue problems with prerequisites not being met. Dr. Jennings noted that if a graduate student is from another university, he/she would not have the Florida Tech course indicated as a prerequisite. Dr. Kalajian said that if a course builds on another course, a prerequisite is appropriate; however, if background information is suggested as guidance for the student, we may want to remove the prerequisite restriction and instead indicate “equivalent background knowledge commensurate with (insert here).”

Dr. Gallo advised that to request to remove a prerequisite and/or change to suggested wording, please submit for Graduate Council review a “Request to Change the Requirements for a Course” form for each desired course.

7) ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Gallo announced that the next Graduate Council meeting is September 17, 2015, and the submission deadline for materials is September 3, 2015. He wished everyone a safe, happy and healthy summer break.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Rosemary G. Layne, Ed.D.
Director of Graduate Programs