MINUTES
Graduate Council
October 20, 2016 (revised 11/2/16)

Present: Ex officio: M. Gallo (Chair) and M. Baloga

Voting Members: W. Allen, G. Anagnostopoulos, C. Bashur, C. Bostater, D. Carstens,
J. Dshalalow, H. Edwards, K. Hamed, H. Heck, P. Jennings,
Y. Liao, J. Martinez-Diaz, E. Perez, J. Perez, T. Richardson (nonvoting)
for D. Miller-Kermani, Y. Sharaf-Eldeen, L. Steelman, R. Turner
(nonvoting) for D. Carroll, B. Webster


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

1) CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Michael Gallo

Dr. Gallo welcomed everyone and stated that Dr. Stephane is replacing Dr. Boy as the
permanent voting member for the School of Human-Centered Design, Innovation, and Art.
He introduced Drs. Richardson and Turner, who were present in a nonvoting capacity for their
respective academic units.

Dr. Gallo said that he would be working from a restructured agenda which was provided
at all place settings.

2) MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 2016 GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING

Unanimously Approved

The minutes of the September 15, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved with a vote
of 15 in favor and two abstentions on a motion by Dr. Bostater and a second by Dr. Edwards.

3) DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Dr. Rosemary Layne

Dr. Layne provided a handout with the recent update of GP 4.11 Language Requirements
for Graduate Assistantships. She said Dr. Alan Rosiene, Chair of English and Language
Programs and ESL Director, School of Arts and Communication, recommends standards for the
FL Tech English Language Proficiency policy for all students whose home language is not
English and who have been admitted into a FL Tech degree program. GP 4.11, the last paragraph
in that larger institutional policy, specifically addresses language requirements for graduate
assistantships. The September 21, 2016 update removes an exemption clause and extraneous
phrasing and changes the IELTS equivalent score for research assistants to 6.0 (previously 6.5).

Dr. Baloga added that new Homeland Security regulations went into effect in July 2016.
In order for FL Tech to issue a degree-seeking I-20 certificate of eligibility, a student must be both academically qualified and English proficient. Because of these new regulations, Dr. Baloga said the university is currently seeking certification from U.S. immigration to create an ESL “bridge program” to fulfill any language deficiencies.

4) **CHANGING GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS – Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program**

**Unanimously Approved**

Request is made by the Department of Extended Studies to change the graduation requirements for the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program.

Dr. Gallo stated the request is to replace 6 credit hours of MGT 6999 *Dissertation* with 3 credit hours of MGT 6990 *Research Methods 1* and 3 credit hours of MGT 6991 *Research Methods 2* and also to replace 3 credit hours of MGT 6008 *Legal Environment in Business* with 3 credit hours of MGT 6999 *Dissertation*. As part of this request, the College of Business is seeking approval to add a new 0-credit course, MGT 6992 *Special Topics Seminar*, as a required course that must be taken three separate times. Sample syllabi of sample topics that would be offered in this course were provided. Actual topics offered will be based on needs of each cohort.

Dr. Gallo asked voting council members to consider the new course request first. On a motion by Dr. E. Perez and a second from Dr. Bashur, the request made by the Department of Extended Studies to add new course MGT 6992 *Special Topics Seminar* was unanimously approved.

Dr. Gallo then asked voting council members to consider the request to change graduation requirements. On a motion by Dr. E. Perez and a second from Dr. Hamed, the request made by the Department of Extended Studies to change graduation requirements for the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) program was unanimously approved.

5) **GRADUATE POLICY REVISION / COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS REPORT – GP 1.6 Final Program Examination, Master’s and Specialist Students**

**Motion Approved to Deny Request**

Request is made by the College of Engineering (COE) to revise the graduate policy listed above by removing final program examinations (FPEs) for course-based nonthesis students as an MS graduation requirement [in the College of Engineering].

Dr. Gallo noted that the Committee on Standards reviewed this item on October 13, 2016 [minutes provided] and unanimously voted to recommend denial of the College of Engineering request. Because the recommendation was unanimous, this agenda item came to Council as a motion and second.

Prior to opening up Council’s discussion, Dr. Lisa Steelman summarized discussion from the Committee on Standards meeting. She said the Committee on Standards had a lengthy
discussion and agreed that the proposal was not clear how the individual student would be evaluated. The consensus was that the proposal was underdeveloped and did not work through alternatives to not taking the FPE. The student evaluation was left to the department after the fact, which raised concerns about quality control.

Dr. Kalajian clarified why this request was being made. He said that many engineering programs in Europe are five-year programs and that many certification boards are re-evaluating their standards. He said that this concept is not breaking new ground and that other universities have followed suit (University of Arizona, New Mexico State University, Stanford, and University of Michigan). He added that the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill has a waiver where a student can write a scholarly paper or portfolio, that there are other mechanisms out there to measure mastery of knowledge, besides an examination. If the student has mastered the courses and earned a high GPA, then the student understands the material. He stressed that the current method of using a FPE is not used to evaluate their programs. He stated that COE faculty time is valuable and could be better used in scholarly work.

Dr. Sharaf-Eldeen expressed that his colleagues agree that the FPE is not an effective use of time and that the faculty agree with COE’s proposal. Dr. Jennings noted that the oral exam shows the student has mastered skills based on doing well in class, but may not necessarily prepare the student to perform. He suggested to study the outcomes of an exam after the student has already taken it to see if there is any correlation with student performance.

Dr. Hamed was concerned with entirely doing away with the whole examination process instead of adjusting the examination process. He stated the solution may be to improve the exam.

Dr. Baloga cited capstone projects used in the College of Business and College of Psychology and Liberal Arts. What is the purpose of the final program examination? What is the mechanism used to measure it? She stressed that these questions need to be answered.

Dr. Gallo clarified distinctions between final exams (in courses), final program examinations, and assessing student knowledge to improve a program (i.e., when a student is evaluated and information goes back in the aggregate to continuously improve the degree program).

Dr. Steelman said ideally the end of program evaluation integrates across the courses, which can be done through examinations and capstones. These mechanisms demonstrate a synthesis and integration across the courses. Dr. Edwards added the assessment of the individual is looking at the synthesis of course material, asking if the student can think critically to put those concepts together. If a student has done well in classes but has not done as well on a final program exam, she said there will be an attempt to work with the student as well as to address the structure of the examination itself.

Dr. Richardson added that SACS has very intensive standards compared to those of other regional accreditation agencies. He said we want to know and assess if students can think critically, did they learn what you expected them to learn, and can you prove it? He stated other ways to prove this would be offering a capstone or a portfolio analysis.

Dr. Baloga stated that the purpose of the final program exam is for student analysis. She stated at one point do you assess if the student has mastered the program in totality – to “connect the dots?” What is the ultimate outcome? She was also concerned about FPEs that have been
administered that are lacking in integrating aspects of a program. She stressed the need for COE to make the final program examination serve a purpose.

Dr. Hamed suggested that from an educator's point of view, you may want to do reverse engineering, asking what are the objectives you want students to do and build the test to measure this. Why test in only two courses and not all 10?

In addition to the salient comments highlighted, members also expressed a variety of opinions that included (a) revising COE's initial request to make the wording more clear and amending the motion to reflect the revised wording, (b) surveying other SACS-accredited institutions to see how they address final program examinations for their master's degree programs, and (c) reviewing graduate policy to see if providing master's students with three attempts to pass a FPE is too generous. The heart of the discussion was centered on three core issues: the primary purpose of a FPE, the extent to which COE's FPEs are commensurate with this purpose, and suggestions on how FPEs could be structured so they serve the intended purpose.

Dr. Gallo suggested to call the vote and reminded voting council members that Committee on Standards owns the motion and second. He clarified that voting in favor is to support the recommendation made by Committee on Standards to deny the request.

On a motion and second by the Committee on Standards, the request made by College of Engineering to revise the Graduate Policy 1.6 was denied with a vote of nine in favor of Committee on Standards recommendation to deny, two opposed, and six abstentions. Therefore, the motion and recommendation made by Committee on Standards to deny College of Engineering's request to revise GP 1.6 was approved (motion passed).

6) ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Gallo announced that the next Graduate Council meeting is November 17, 2016, and the submission deadline for materials is November 3, 2016.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

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