



MEMO

January 22, 2006

TO: Dr. Susan Muller, Chair
University Curriculum Committee

Dr. Darrel Mullins, Chair
Faculty Senate

FROM: Dr. Joaquín S. Vilá, Assoc. Professor
Graduate Council Chair, 2006-2007
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RE: Questions on review procedures for graduate courses & curriculum

In regards to the question on the curricular review process set forth by the Faculty Senate at its meeting of September 26, 2006, the Graduate Council has discussed the matter on a number of occasions, and set time aside to meet with membership from UCC. We have come to a consensus on this matter.

Basically, the Council is persuaded that there is a need to maintain the current format for review of curriculum proposals/ course changes in order to better serve current and future needs of graduate education at SU. This is made more evident given ongoing efforts exploring the viability of a doctoral program at SU. The Council also holds that it echoes the observations made by the UCC membership on this issue (UCC Minutes –*Draft*, Nov. 2, "Summary of concerns from the UCC members").

Accordingly, the Graduate Councils would like to express its position in regards to the review of graduate curriculum as follows,

1. *All curriculum should go through Faculty Senate committees*- The Graduate Council fully agrees and would note that all curricular recommendations/ decisions from the Graduate Council are subject to review by the Faculty Senate as indicated in Chapter 8, Article I, Section 1 of the handbook.
2. *Voting membership on curriculum committees should be elected*- It is the practice of the Graduate Council that the Graduate curriculum Committee reviews proposals and makes a recommendation to the Council as a whole. Each is then considered and voted on by the full membership. Though the membership of the Graduate Curriculum committee varies from year to

year, these are elected by the Council from its members. Their main curricular responsibility, however, is to review and recommend actions to the Council. All final decisions are determined via a vote of the Council. As such, the Council membership includes four (4) elected representatives (one for each school) which is close to one third of the voting members, i.e., their votes carry significant weight. Moreover, this representative structure is included in the bylaws voted on by the faculty as a whole and approved by the Faculty Senate (Spring 2002). At all times, the procedures in place have been subject to extensive review and a vote from the faculty, and far from unilateral, arbitrary or capricious development and implementation.

3. *The process of curriculum review should be consistent across SU schools-* Though the Council was a bit unsure about what was meant by this, the membership is in agreement that review of graduate courses is subject to the same (i.e., consistent) review and approval process. Proposals are received and considered only after approval from each of the curriculum committees from the four schools and/or when pertinent, after being acted upon by Sec. Ed./ K-12 Committee and TEC when involving teacher education curriculum. It is then, and only then, when the Graduate Council acts on any proposals. Recommendations are subject to review by the Senate and subject to approval from the provost. It is our understanding that this process is parallel to that followed for undergraduate courses and thus, '*consistent*.'

We have two final observations to present to those concerned. First, if there are concerns about the clarity or accuracy involved in the use of the name 'University Curriculum Committee' to address only undergraduate courses as has been the norm for some time now, a name change/ adjustment would be something for this committee and the faculty to explore. This is not a matter for the Graduate Council to interfere with.

Second, the Graduate Council is also very much concerned by the lack of consistent representation in the Council from the Faculty Senate over the last few years. Again, the bylaws clearly state (Chapter 8, Article I, Section 2) that membership of the Council includes a "liaison from the Faculty Senate." Though we are all well aware of the increasing time and effort demands arising from an ever proliferating number of committees, this is the price of faculty governance. The Council is hopeful that the Faculty Senate will take affirmative steps towards ensuring their continued representation and participation in graduate education at SU.

On behalf of the Graduate Council,

Joaquin S. Vilá, Chair