

## **2017 GRADUATE COUNCIL**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**February 2, 2017**

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 8:05am.

**Members Present:** Sue Rimmer, Constantine Hatziaioniu, Norman Carver, Joseph Shapiro, Ras Michael Brown, Jonathan Howard, Wesley Calvert, Dianah McGreehan, Trish McCubbin, Buffy Elsworth, Kenneth Stickers, Sajal Lahiri, Johnathan Flowers, Wanli Zhao, Cinzia Padovani, Rachel Whaley, Julie Partridge, Tomas Velasco.

**Members Absent:** Paula Basler, Richard McKinnies, Sheena Hart, Jennifer Smith, Cynthia Sims, Justin Simpson, Greg Rose, Richard Bradley.

**Proxies:** Cornie Prozelsky for Paula Basler, Scott Collins for Richard McKinnies, Saran Donahoo for Cynthia Sims.

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Yueh-Ting Lee, Ratna Sinha, Howard Motyl, Meera Komarraju, Susan Ford, James Garvey, Brad Colwell.

#### **Consideration of minutes**

The minutes of the December meeting were passed without amendments.

Graduate Council members voted to approve the minutes– 21 voted in favor.

#### **Remarks – Interim Chancellor, Dr. Colwell**

Dr. Colwell talked about the executive orders that had been signed by President Trump and had caused a great deal of consternation among the students and faculty. He said that the university was monitoring the documents closely and even though the documents remained the same, interpretations of them were changing constantly. Presidents and Chancellors of different universities were communicating constantly on a listserv and everyone had let it be known that they were in support of the people likely to be affected by the orders. Everyone was still waiting for the specific ramifications of the orders to become clearer. The university's lobbyists were working on it. Also, Senators Tammy Duckworth and Richard Durbin had got in touch with the University's office and they were also closely watching the developments. Dr. Colwell warned that the situation should not become overtly political for individual students. He said that the media had been asking for contact details of students who had been affected for making a story but the university had denied them that information. The university had also signed national letters of support to express opposition to the orders. 88 students and 1 faculty had been affected but they were on campus. Also, none of the impacted countries were in the study abroad program. Dr. Colwell also mentioned that the university was keeping a close watch and that future applicants were a spot of bother. But the university was keeping close watch and stood in support. Dr. Andrew Carver had taken the lead in International Education and was trying to reach out on a daily basis to provide comfort to the students.

Dr. Buffy Elsworth said that her department was trying to bring in an Iranian student and asked whether that was possible to which Dr. Colwell replied in the affirmative. Dr. Susan Ford said that the university was moving forward with all applications from all countries normally and advised that departments should move quickly with the admission process so

that the Visa process could be started early for the applicants from the affected countries in order for them to start school during the Fall semester.

Dr. Ken Stickers mentioned that the executive orders extended beyond the designated countries and there had been a case where a student with a J1 Visa from Colombia was turned back at the borders stating that regulations regarding J1 Visa had changed. Dr. Stickers asked if anyone knew about this to which Dr. Colwell replied in the negative.

Dr. Hatziaioniu asked about H1B visas and how the university might be affected. Dr. Ford replied that according to news reports, an increasingly large number of firms have raised concerns and some have filed lawsuits. She added that H1B could possibly affect the hiring of faculty but also mentioned that the university was legally bound to not ask about the applicant's visa status or country of origin and all that information could not be factored into the hiring process. The only problem could be to get the applicant to get into the country. Dr. Hatziaioniu asked about any possible effects on the salary cap to which Dr. Ford said she did not have information about it but said that it would affect the graduate students about to enter the job market. Dr. Lee supported Dr. Ford's statement and said that graduate students going for internships would also be affected. Dr. Colwell assured that the university is not sitting on information and is doing everything in its capacity.

Dr. Colwell said that the Attorney General of Illinois had filed a lawsuit against the state at the St. Clair county indicating that the state workers would not be paid if there is not an appropriation from the state legislature which supports that. Dr. Colwell said that his office had not got any information about this and even though there were some concerns at the Edwardsville campus, none of the employees of SIU had been affected as they were not paid from the state appropriation. J. Flowers asked how health insurance would be affected and Dr. Colwell replied that premiums and coverage of health insurance may be affected and the burden might be passed on to the university. He said that though the salaries of the state employees come from different sources, the health benefits are drawn from the same pool and thus, might be affected. Dr. Colwell added that the judge had ruled an impasse which made a strike possible. So, health insurance rates for employees would probably be impacted but the rates for student health insurance would not be affected.

#### **Remarks – Interim Provost, Dr. Ford**

Dr. Ford said that the Spring semester enrollment had gone as predicted. She mentioned that, historically the Spring enrollments follow the Fall enrollments closely. Fall 2016 enrollments were down from Fall 2015 enrollments by about 5-7.5% and following that Spring 2017 enrollments were down from Spring 2016 enrollments by a similar margin. The university was concerned as the applications and admissions were down going into Fall 2017 but Dr. Ford added that there still was potential because yield varied across years. Yield is the number of students from the applicants that actually show up on campus. The yield for the university had been low for the past few years and that was primarily due to the state budget problem. She added that it was also up to the individual colleges to encourage students to apply.

Dr. Ford said that she was hopeful that the board of trustees would approve the building of dorms to replace the towers. The funds for the housing are exclusive and separate from the funds that are used to pay the salaries of employees and bear the daily university expenses. A possible partnership with a private concern was also being considered and would be a 12-year long plan, if approved. It would be a progressive step in which lower residence halls would replace the towers. Dr. Ford said that prospective students had apprehensions regarding the future existence of the university and a long term housing plan would give out

a clear message that the university was here to stay. She said that recruitment programs could use that in reaching out to students.

Dr. Ford mentioned that the university and different colleges needed to watch closely, the number of graduate students admitted as the peak time for graduate admissions was February-March.

Dr. Ford said that international students were understandably stressed as a result of the executive orders of the new government and requested the faculty to be understanding and considerate and help them in various ways, one of which was by sending them to the Center for International Education.

Dr. Ford said that the search for Jim Allen's replacement was ongoing even though it was hoped that the search would have been complete by February 1. The search committee of faculty and students could start only in the Spring 2017 semester and as soon as she had the clearance to interview the two candidates given by the committee, she would set up interviews and allot two days per candidate. She said that she hoped that the recruitment could be done as soon as possible.

J Flowers asked whether travel funding for graduate students was frozen or available from the administration level. Dr. Ford replied that the funding for graduate student travel comes from the Graduate School and is approved by the Chancellor's office. Dr. Lee said that there are two sources for graduate student travel funding: 1. Non-declared application fee, and 2. fundraising. The policy of the Graduate School is that if the student gets any funding from the department or college, then the graduate school provides \$50 to match that. So far, close to 100 graduate students had been provided with travel funding. Dr. Lee said that usually the Non-declared application fee does not generate much funding and so, the Graduate School had to depend upon the donors. The Graduate School had received a few sizeable gifts in Fall 2016 semester. J Flowers asked for clarification on whether the travel funding depended on department funding or was handled on a case to case basis. Dr. Lee replied that as long as the graduate student managed to secure any funding, the Graduate School gave the student \$50. Dr. Ford said that travel funding from state funds had been frozen and some departments, particularly from the College of Liberal Arts had no travel funds and thus, there would be no match unless it came from the Dean's office. There is no ban on other departments to use non-state funds for travel but there were restrictions on how much could be used.

### **Remarks – Interim Vice-Chancellor for Research, Jim Garvey**

Dr. Jim Garvey said that SIU gets around 30-40% of grant dollars from the state and some universities have more state support. The state budget crisis resulted in difficulty in getting paid for the work that had already been done and also in negotiating for new projects with the state. Negotiations with state agencies, preparing of contracts etc. were taking longer than usual. Similarly, payments for contracts with state agencies were likely to take longer and patience was the key. However, the state is paying and reimbursements were getting made, albeit slowly. Some departments that had problems getting funding were departments of environmental sciences and fisheries and wildlife.

Dr. Garvey said that the *Da Vinci Day* would be held in April like the previous year. It would be an inclusive event meant for not just the STEM disciplines but also for the humanities. Posters for the event would be out soon. Funding for the event depended on everyone and needed more visibility on campus. Various musical acts would be present on campus during the first week of April. As a part of the event, the 4<sup>th</sup> Undergraduate Research Forum would be held on April 3, 2017 whose deadline is February 28, 2017. The Graduate Research Forum would be held on April 4, 2017. Media and publicity regarding the forums would be out soon.

Dr. Garvey said that the students were quite active regarding the forums – 200 undergraduate students showed up but faculty have not. Dr. Garvey asked the faculty to show more initiative in order to encourage the students.

Dr. Garvey said that not only the STEM fields but the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities were affected. There was a need to push back and the best way was to communicate. Dr. Garvey said that he would try to organize a workshop for academicians to communicate to the public and the lawmakers on what they were doing. Dr. Garvey reported that he had attended a workshop in Fall 2016 in Washington DC with one of his groups, the American Institute for Biological Sciences – a think-tank type group involved in policy making. He said that he would like to have a group like that to come down to SIU and conduct a similar workshop.

Dr. Garvey reported that there were various marches being planned, including a March for Science in Washington DC on April 22, 2017 around Earth Day. He expressed interest in the march. C. Padovani reported that a March for Science was being planned in Carbondale too.

J. Flowers asked about STEM grants and workshop done through OSPA and Dr. Garvey replied that hopefully by the end of February or the beginning of March, the university would have grants coming through the National Science Foundation primarily meant for undergraduate education. Dr. Garvey said that the NSF had asked the university to write more bills regarding funds to support students' education. The existing ones are in Environmental Space and Engineering Leadership and the university was talking about getting one out for the Computer Sciences. The deadline was generally at the end of March. If the university ran out of time in 2017, it could try for next year too by bringing people together in crafting grants. Dr. Garvey added that the agencies that were allocated money should get it and in fact, some federal agencies might actually be more giving than in past, in anticipation of the impending scrutiny from the administration.

C. Padovani asked about the next round of applications and if the salaries would be impacted. Dr. Garvey replied that it depends on where the funding comes from. The federal fiscal year is supposed to end in September. He said that the funding for projects might be from a year or even two years ago. He explained that the federal funds are given to the state and then it can keep lying in the state coffers and that held true even for funds for national agencies. Dr. Garvey opined that the effects of the Republican administration and legislature would be felt in about two years. He added that the Republican party seemed to interested in earmarks and developing relationships with the Congress representative was advisable.

Dr. Ford added that there used to be earmarks. The university used to prepare lists of projects, with help from faculty, aligned to the interests of the Congress representatives and package and present to them. They would present some of the projects if they thought that would make their constituents happy and opined that these proposals were best kept concise, unlike grant proposals. Dr. Ford suggested resuming training sessions for faculty so that they are able to tailor research interests according the legislators and tap into an alternate funding stream (alternate to funds and contracts). Dr. Garvey added that building relationships with legislators might be beneficial for the university.

Dr. Colwell said that the scenario described by Dr. Ford was highly likely and if the process is not centralized and organized, it could happen that if the university gets a call from the Senator's (Duckworth) office and the lobbyist John Charles is unaware of the project in question, it ends up hurting the project. He assured that the university administration was only trying to co-ordinate possible efforts of earmarking projects for efficiency and it was not

about control. Dr. Garvey added that John Charles, the lobbyist, was active in Washington DC and Springfield and was the central piece of communication the university had. He added that the university had a lot of goodwill in Washington DC and need to utilize that for its own benefit.

### **Remarks – Graduate School, Dean Lee**

Dr. Lee reported that he went to the CGS Annual Conference in Washington DC in December 2016 and had learned about different formats and styles of future theses and dissertations, engagement with different constituencies by impactful and compelling stories, and recruitment and mentorship of underserved students. He gave these learning experiences as a few examples. He had also met with Representative Mike Bost to advocate graduate education in Washington DC. Also in mid-December, 2016, he went to Illinois State University, Bloomington-Normal to recruit their undergraduate students in renewable energy to SIU's Professional Science Master's (PSM) program in Advanced Energy and Fuel Management.

Secondly, he reported about graduation and degree completion. In December 2016, SIU had more than 60 graduate students who had earned a Doctoral degree and more than 320 students who earned a Master's degree.

Thirdly, regarding graduate enrollment, Dr. Lee reported that, SIU had 2963 graduate students and had lost about 284 students as compared to the enrollment in Spring, 2016 and commented that this was primarily due to the lack of state budget. Dr. Lee said that the Graduate School would need all kinds of help to increase enrollment (of tuition paying students in particular) and would work with the Graduate Enrollment Taskforce to deal with the challenges such as recruitment, retention, and internal operations such as no decision applications. Dr. Lee reported that for the past few months, he had been meeting with the different directors and chairs to improve SIU's internal efficiency.

Fourth, he reported that the total number of applications for different assistantships and fellowships increased. This happened partially because the Graduate School offered different workshops or training activities and partially because the budget situation drove the students to look for more funding resources.

Fifth, Dr. Lee reported that the Willis Schwartz award selection had just been completed. Seven applications were received and two students received the awards. Dr. Lee thanked the selection committee members Dr. Shaikh Ahmed, Dr. Qingfeng Ge, Dr. Andrew Carver, Dr. Ian Suni, and Dr. Lingguo Bu for their time and evaluation.

Finally, Dr. Lee reported that the updating of the Graduate Catalog was in progress and it would include both electronic version and hard copy. The Graduate School had worked with Dr. Jim Allen's office and even though he had retired; they continued to work with his office on both Graduate and Undergraduate catalogs.

Dr. Lee also reported that the Graduate School was also going to hold the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition. They had received four entries and the deadline had been extended from February 1 to February 6 as a few students called and expressed interest. They would invite the Graduate Council research committee, including Dr. Lahiri, to help select the top three presenters.

Dr. Lee also reported that the Graduate School had finished the Spring 2017 issue of Graduate Saluki Stories; the theme was diversity, academic excellence and internationalization/globalization. The electronic copy was ready and the hard copies would

be ready shortly. The next issue would focus on identity, loyalty and professional success. He then asked everyone to encourage their current or past graduate students to submit their compelling stories for the upcoming issue.

C Padovani remarked that the faculty at Mass Communications and Media Arts were informed of the Faculty Mentor Award only a week ago and needed more time to work on it. Dr. Lee replied that in alliance with Dr. Jim Garvey's office, the Graduate School had started the Faculty Mentorship Award of Excellence, but cannot give money to the selected faculty due to budgetary issues. The Deans of various Colleges had been asked to select their best graduate mentor and submit the names to him. In the beginning of April, there will be a research conference of both Undergraduate and Graduate students, and that is where the best graduate mentors will be recognized. Dr. Lee also added that, whereas the deadline for submitting the names was February 24, the Graduate School would be flexible if another week was needed. C Padovani said that she and her college did not know that the dean had to select the graduate mentor and had thought that they had to come up with a system. She also noted that all faculty are special in their own way. Dr. Lee noted that SIU's faculty were very strong and that made the Graduate Program at SIU one of the top 100 in the nation. He said that he had sent two attachments to the Chairs and Graduate Directors using the model from Florida State University and one document from CGS regarding the best mentor program and said that it could be used as a starting point. He added that this initiative would give only one plaque to each college.

M Komarraju asked for a clarification as to whether the Dean or the graduate students should select the faculty mentor. Dr. Lee replied that it is up to the college. M Komarraju asked for the Graduate School's opinion to which Dr. Lee replied that the process could be either one or a combination as long as it could be defended. He also reported that the Graduate School had just received an estate gift of \$100,000.00 from a private donor and would like to use the interest-generated money to support the mentorship award when it is materialized. It would be very important to collaborate with each college dean for this initiative.

J Flowers said that if the Deans wanted the opinion of the graduate students, GPSC could be of help in communicating to the students as it has considerable depth in the student body but it has not heard anything regarding that. Dr. Lee replied that the process of selecting the graduate mentor was up to each college and that was agreed upon in the informal meeting of the Deans.

HD Motyl commented that while mentioning the number of Master's and PhD students that have graduated, the MFA students should be considered along with PhD students as it is a terminal degree. Dr. Lee acknowledged and agreed with the comment.

### **Report – Council Chair, Professor Velasco**

Dr. Velasco started his report with The Big Event and handed over to the two representatives who were present in the meeting to talk about it. The representatives said that The Big Event had started at Texas A&M University in 1980 and April 1, 2017 would be the first time for the Big Event at SIU. They encouraged everyone to register for the event and get their graduate students to register too. The Big Event has direct projects like Green Earth, Boys and Girls Club, Touch of Nature etc. and indirect projects like making cards for veterans to hold inside the Student Center. Students would have different options to choose from. It was meant for the community and the colleges. Transportation would be provided to people in two shifts: morning and afternoon. They said that their website, <http://thebigevent.siu.edu/> had all the information about all the projects available and there was space for 1332 individuals to participate in the event. They also reported that the Carbondale Healthy Coalition was

conducting a Stay Safe event for children starting from age 9 to children in their teens. The idea was to foster a sense of community and bond and the representatives passed around promotional material for everyone's perusal.

Dr. Meera Komarraju asked if registrations are organized or if someone got to register by just showing up. She also asked about how was showing up for the event worth it. The representatives answered that the students would sign up using Office 365, get a waiver form, then get a link and would register via Sign-Up Genius. Through this the students would get to see the different projects, the blocks of time used by them, missions of the different organizations etc. Also, different organizations would register different number of students. Dr. Komarraju asked if all that held true for faculty to which the representatives replied in the affirmative. The representatives added that each project will have a site leader and it was advisable to register early.

Dr. Velasco passed around the flyer for "Statehouse Rally to Save Higher Education" to be held on Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at 1 PM in the Illinois State Capitol, 1<sup>st</sup> floor rotunda.

Dr. Velasco then brought up the document released by the Chancellor, "Non-Instructional Program Review Report". One of the two co-chairs, Ray Goldsmith and Judy Marshall, was unable to attend the meeting. Therefore, Dr. Velasco tabled the meeting for the next meeting. He mentioned that it was important to discuss the document, specifically as it concerned the Graduate School. He passed around the report for everyone to read and think about.

### **First Reading of Resolution in Support of Graduate School at SIUC**

Comments:

Dr. Sajal Lahiri asked for examples of duplication of efforts mentioned in the resolution. Dr. Velasco replied that he was not part of the committee but the committee recommended that the admissions processes of the undergraduate, graduate and international students were put together. He said that since J Flowers was part of the committee, he might be able to help but also added that he would like to postpone the discussion for the next meeting as one of the co-chairs was absent.

J Flowers replied that the recommendation to merge the Undergraduate and Graduate admissions comes from the opinion that they follow the same processes. The recommendation was made in order to have depth of staffing and to use staff members who were unused. Flowers added that in the meeting, he made it clear that there were major differences in the different offices and the idea that they could be merged was problematic.

Dr. Ford said that the Undergraduate admissions process was mostly automated and the decisions were made based on a small number of parameters. As a result, there was limited need of interactions between Undergraduate Admissions staff and different colleges. Graduate Admissions is much more complicated and individuals coming into the Undergraduate Admissions admitting staff can be trained in a matter of weeks. On the other hand, staff admitted who had come in into the Undergraduate Admissions needed months of training. The level of interactions between the Graduate Admissions Officers and the Graduate Director is substantial, ongoing and significant. Dr. Ford opined that the rationale is that the Graduate Admissions staff is overwhelmed with work and the Undergraduate Admissions staff could fill in and help them when do not have anything to do. She felt that that the job profiles are vastly different and because the Undergraduate Admissions staff would require months of training, it was not a very good idea to combine the two.

Dr. Hatziadoniu said that most of the Graduate Admissions work was done by the department and Dr. Ford disagreed with that. She said that much of the initial consultation and interaction with the Graduate Applicants are done at the Graduate School level. Graduate Admissions are

complicated and therefore, there is a considerable amount of training of Graduate Staff and Directors. Moreover, there are a considerable number of applications from international students and on the other hand, all international applications for Undergraduate students are handled by the Center for International Education. So, the Undergraduate Admissions staff have no knowledge of international admissions. There was one instance when a Graduate Admissions staff had to be filled in for, for a period of six months. The understanding was that there was no one from Undergraduate Admissions who could replace the person and so, the replacement was borrowed from Transfer Student Services because the processes were closer and that person had to undergo a month-long training before doing anything. She re-emphasized the vast difference in the staff of the two offices and questioned the wisdom of the proposed merger and the ensuing extensive training.

Dr. Lee said that when prospective graduate students apply, the applications are reviewed and sent by the Graduate School to the departments. The departments then send back their recommendations (and not decision) back to the Graduate School. The Graduate School is also especially involved in the international students' admissions process.

### **Report – Deans Council, Dr. Komarraju**

**Dr. Komarraju** reported that since the last Graduate Council had met, there had been several Dean's council meetings, both formal and informal. In a Dean's council meeting in December 2016, the importance of graduate programs were discussed. The graduate programs could be kept current by examining the prerequisites of the students and comparing them with those of the peer universities, and also by providing guidance to students during the entire time of their stay, especially the summer months when there is no assistantship money. Approval for the Spring GA contracts were also discussed and they were told that it is possible to have admissions in Spring with 9-month contracts that would cover Fall. Also, for Fall 2017, they could spend on GA budget what they had spent in the previous year. Preference would be given to 50% contracts rather than 25% contracts, even though the 25% contracts would also be there. The decision of whether to award 9-month contracts or semester-long contracts rested with the department/college.

Dr. Komarraju said that in the January meeting they discussed the importance of submitting grades that were due and that would especially pertain to the Graduate Student instructors. In January 2017, 650 credits worth of student grades were not given in a timely manner. The delays could severely affect the students including their financial aid or continuation of their stay at SIU. She iterated that the Graduate Instructors needed to know that they had to get that done and entering grades in D2L did not automatically populate Salukinet. Dr. Ford added that students' parents' anger was often directed towards her office because grades had not been submitted and that had prevented from the student from getting a job.

Dr. Whaley said that the system is onerous and it had happened that an entire class's grades were not submitted as a result of one student's grades not being submitted. The university should look into the system. Dr. Komarraju replied that the university needed a level of thoroughness and until the system changes, they would have to do what it takes to ensure that the grades are submitted. She added that she ensures that the Graduate Instructors do not leave for vacation unless the grades have been turned in.

J. Flowers asked if not allowing a student to leave for break was even legal to which Dr. Komarraju replied that she would stay back to ensure that the grades have been submitted.

Dr. Komarraju then reported that they had talked about the listening sessions that the office of Diversity and Transfer had sent out information about. The importance of the listening

sessions had been discussed in addressing the diversity and inclusivity issues on campus. The discussion also included issues regarding the presentation of classroom materials in a culturally sensitive manner and addressed the topic of classroom bias that they students might be experiencing or reporting. The topic of how the instructors should present material keeping in mind issues of diversity both in an academic setting and outside of the classroom was discussed.

Dr. Komarraju said that the last topic discussed was the syllabus and that it was not a legally binding document but a set of expectations. If there was a change of date or assignments during the semester, it should be done with the signed agreement of the students so that the ground rules are not changed for them midway and their expectations are met.

### **Report – Faculty Senate, Howard Motyl**

[The audio is unclear at this point. The following points are drawn from partial notes and are subject to change]

HD Motyl reported that the Faculty Senate had voted to eliminate two separate minors in Kinesiology. A Business Specialization Management had been added in the College of Business. A major of Industrial Design was added to the College of Liberal Arts.

HD Motyl reported that the Faculty Senate had voted on the JTF Report on Academic Prioritization and Program Prioritization and had asked for extensions.

### **GPSC Report, J. Flowers**

[Please find the report in the attachment]

Comments for the report:

During the presentation of his report, as J Flowers proceeded to report on GPSC's discussion of the draft absence policy generated by the Faculty Senate's Undergraduate Education Policy Committee, Dr. Norm Carver said that there was instructions from the president of the Faculty Senate to not proceed with this report as it was still a work in progress and there would be no vote on it. J Flowers said that his constituency had directed him to go ahead with the report and thus, he would do it.

**Dr. Carver** said that there was a first reading of the student absence policy at the Grad Council which was largely in support of the Provost's version and were going to have a Second reading. Because the policies will not go into effect until both the Faculty Senate and Grad Council approve them, and the Faculty Senate had come up with something radically different, there is no point in going ahead and voting on it. He hoped that after some discussion, there would be something consistent that would emerge.

At the end of the report, Dr. Velasco suggested that some parts of the report could have gone to the Faculty Senate to which J Flowers replied that he was told by his constituency to present the report and he had acted accordingly.

**Dr. Komarraju** asked whether the term faculty used in the report included graduate students who were instructors of record. J Flowers said that it extended to all faculty (tenured or non-tenured) and also the Graduate student population.

**Dr. Carver** said that there was no point in going ahead with the Second reading because a point of commonality and consistency had to be reached and he had similar views as J Flowers. He added that if people wanted copies of the policies, they should contact him.

**Dr. Ken Stickers** said that he did not see it mentioned in the documents but asked whether it was understood that accommodation of students did not mean relieving coursework but giving them due opportunities to complete work that was required for the course. Sometimes, he came across students that misunderstood that excused absences meant not having to do work. J Flowers agreed with him. Dr. Stickers said that the problems that he ran into were that sometimes what was in the best interest of the students was prohibited by the university policy. In extreme cases, the best students could take a leave of absence but in general, students run into all kinds of problems like with financial aid, getting behind in the program etc. Sometimes, the problems of the students were exacerbated instead of being solved as a result of institutional policies and hoped that they would be addressed. J Flowers indicated that the general body has offered some possible solutions.

**Dr. Velasco** reiterated that the university will pass the policy only when both the bodies: Faculty Senate and Graduate Council agreed on the text.

**HD Motyl** said that he wanted to clarify that the Faculty Senate had not approved the document unanimously and were working towards a cohesive policy.

**Dr. Ford** said that policy changes in the university come from the Chancellor and no policy change would take place without the Chancellor's approval. It was the first step to bring the policy to a faculty body, then it would go to student bodies and all involved constituencies and then would ultimately have to be approved by the Chancellor. Passing a process in Faculty Senate or Graduate Council did not make it policy. Graduate Council has the authority to pass policy that directs Graduate Education in the operating papers. Something that affects the whole campus would need the Chancellor's approval.

**Dr. Carver** asked whether they could do a Graduate students' absence accommodation policy to which Dr. Ford replied in the negative and said that absence policies need to be common.

**J Flowers indicated** GPSC's general displeasure about the tone of the document to which Dr. Velasco replied that there was a mistake on the part of the Faculty Senate in the circulation of the document.

#### **Report from Council Vice Chair, Dr Partridge**

J Partridge said that there is the search for the Director for the Center for International Education. The Provost had asked the Graduate Council to provide three names from which one would be selected. She had one name and was looking for two more. She hoped that the names would be submitted by the end of the week or early next week.

Secondly, J Partridge said that she needed two representatives from the Graduate Council to serve in the Steering Committee for the Higher Learning Commission and Accreditation Review. She said she knew that several members in the Grad Council (herself included) were involved in sub-committee work and this was for the Steering Committee. The workload would not be other than attending meetings, reviewing, and providing inputs. She said that she needed three to four names from which two would be selected. She also mentioned that this did not have a specific deadline yet.

**J Partridge** said that in the Executive Committee they had discussions about the ad hoc mentoring program and she had started compiling information about the various ways that that had been done in various campuses. She said that if anyone with relevant information should contact her.

**New Programs Committee Report – Professor McKinnies (proxy: Jennifer Lynn Smith)**

**Second Reading: Resolution in support of the addition of an Accelerated Master’s Degree Program in the Department of Economics in the College of Liberal Arts**

Graduate Council members voted 18 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstained. The Resolution passed.

**Second Reading: Resolution in Support of the Proposed Elimination of the Urban Landscape Concentration in the College of Agricultural Science**

There were not enough members to complete the quorum. So, there was no vote.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:11.