

Doctoral Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes
December 5, 2007
Conference Room 210 A/B
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Attendance: Linda Simunek, Tom Thompson, Linda Howard, Alan Cohen, Fred Ricci, Shelley Victor, Ron Parlett, Mike Simonson, Mel Coleman, Marcelo Castro, Don Gainey and Michele Christian – recording of minutes.

The meeting began with approval of the minutes of the last meeting of the Doctoral Curriculum Committee.

Motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting called by Linda Howard

Second – approved.

Old Business

Minor in Brain Based Leadership and two courses – EDD 8260 and EDD 8261 were discussed. It was decided to take out Introduction to... out of the EDD 8260. For the EDD 8261 course, there was a discussion about part of the course description that says, “Frontal Lobe as CEO to the brain,” but no decision was made about removing that statement at this time.

Tom Kennedy had some concerns and spoke to Denise about cognitive learning and the BrainSmart program.

Also, students’ have contacted Shelley Victor and Tom Kennedy about the program. Shelley was concerned about students not knowing what they are getting into when they apply for the program.

The question was brought up that is it really Brain Science? Don pointed out that we have discussed this over and over again

Motion to approve – unanimous

New Business

Jackie couldn’t be here today, but is on the phone.

A change was made to Psychology of Aging. There was a subcommittee identified to review syllabi for the minor in Gerontology. The syllabus wasn’t received by Don in time, and APA corrections still need to be made. Don went through and made some corrections, but has not had enough time to thoroughly go through syllabi, so it still needs revisions. It was supposed to be in two weeks in advance, but didn’t get there on time. However, the review committee has been very good about getting things done on time.

It was asked if the course is on the schedule for winter, and it is not. The process of the course maintenance forms which need approval by Karen Bowser still have not been done, so the course work is not yet activated.

There were some questions about the Psychology of Aging course. The gerontology sequence doesn't match because it seems as if it is not grounded in education or for teaching gerontology. The course description doesn't mention that it will lead to an education degree, and there is a question of fully balanced foundations. The course is about how we develop as we grow older and has a humanistic view – the educational process for the elderly, the community center and how to reach people that are older. Jackie says that the educator needs a sense of psychology of growing older in order to teach gerontology.

SACS review issues include the commonality of programs and learning outcomes. It is important to identify appropriate outcomes in syllabus. So a review of all syllabi should be able to link courses and show commonality of courses in the 32 different program concentrations. Maybe there is a place to link common outcomes; take a look, then select.

Course (Psychology of Aging) is foundational for that sequence, but there seems that something is missing because education is not in description. Jackie and Don will come up with a sentence for the course syllabus that will make that clearly defined.

Jackie would like to offer minor in winter along with aging and ethnicity.

There was also a question of the application of theory to practice paper and the developmental timeline – and was it retrospectively descriptive, including circumstances of birth, growing up, school, education, career, etc. It is important to understand the context of where they are now, and the emphasis of listening to older persons to know what it means to grow old, and to provide an outline showing examples.

Trying to understand the gerontology minor there needs to be an emphasis on psychological aging; which relates to the question of it being retrospectively descriptive.

The minor focuses on the humanities, concepts and controversy in aging.

Physiological or physical – Biology of Aging will be in review at next meeting and hopefully able to be offered next summer.

Psychology of Aging does deal with some biological aging issues and seems like a good syllabus.

Marcelo Castro noted that the assignments may be calculated incorrectly. When he added the assignments up the total came to 115 points, but is posted as 100 points. Jackie will recalculate this and make changes to the syllabus.

Don believes that this course is a unique way of approaching gerontology as well and asked for a motion to approve syllabus

Motion to second – approved.

Grading Policy

Students' complain about the amount of work to be done for 6 credit doctoral courses. It was pointed out that to be a successful student, one need to do 7 ½ hours of study per week for a

three (3) credit doctorate course. So, it would make sense that 15 hours a week is needed for success in a six (6) credit course.

Mike Simonson has presented documentation about changing grading system to add A- to the current grades. There has been a review of literature, background, supporting documentation, etc.

Karen mentioned at the Lead Faculty meeting it was discussed along with grieving of grades of B by students. Vesna Beck had prepared a statement that was to be part of the doctorate syllabi, but Dr Seldine said that may be a mistake and it was decided that for now, the statement would not be added. Karen also pointed out that faculty needs to submit Incomplete Grade Agreement forms and we need this documentation for support.

No Pass/Pass vs. Letter Grades

Changeover to letter grades caused lots of problems. Impact would be far less dramatic for the A- (minus) than the pass/fail grades.

Mike pointed out that the document stands for itself – it seems inconsistent to have a B+ grade and no A- (minus)

There is also an underlying problem with inflated grades – there are lots of A's given out to students who may not quite deserve them. It seems we went from a developmental grading system to evaluative.

This committee believes that the proposal to add the A+ grade is a test case. The committee will just wait and see what happens. The question becomes are we empowered to make changes or do we just follow orders. Either would open the door for changes or let us know that we don't have any power.

Shelley asked what if this was presented at the faculty retreat to get feedback from everybody.

Fred Ricci suggested we use A/B/Failure, because B- (minus) is below passing for the doctoral program. Doing this might give faculty a reason or justification for grade (adjuncts may reflect more). If after this there is still an abundance of A grades – then it might reveal a bigger problem.

Grading scale is 0 – 4, and as such A+ would change the grading scale. B- is equivalent to a C.

The question was then asked if any studies have been done on grades and awarding of degrees. It was noted that +/- affects retention, but we don't have any data here. What is known is that the grading system in place is not working and there is a big issue of inflated grades by adjuncts. The size of the school is such that the issued needs to be addressed.

Students had a lot to do with the change in the grading scale because Pass/Fail couldn't transfer into other colleges or universities.

Ron Parlett would like to see dissertation earn a grade instead of Pass/Fail. As it stands now, for the coursework there is a grade issued and for the dissertation there is a P/F. It was pointed out that it is done like that at most universities – you don't get a grade for a dissertation – just a pass or fail.

There has to be consistency in grading and equity for students and how do we communicate appropriately. Everybody would have to look at Rubrics and say whether or not it is acceptable. Then how do we communicate to adjuncts and how to implement changes.

Because we do have a voice (Karen Bowser) there is validity to this.

We would like to propose an amendment where we collect information and study the data on this. Conceptually, we would like to move this forward, and we should be pretty aggressive about this. Full time faculty and adjuncts need to understand this and that there is something wrong with the grading – especially with inflated grades.

There is a national discussion about this and Princeton University and other schools are doing the same thing right now. The point is that we need to do something, but we need to establish timeliness of feedback, etc., move this forward and work with adjuncts and other faculty.

At the end of January there is another faculty meeting, and maybe a sub-group could be put together and some data on ideas to raise awareness of grade inflation. And change the grading scheme for one Ed.D. It is only a concept – move to faculty and ask Wayne if it is okay – then fully develop. Then work on how to get it out and how to get it approved.

Karen will support whoever, when someone speaks to Dana about this. Mike and Karen will present to Dana/Wayne, but groundwork must be done (infrastructure).