

Graduate Program Directors Meeting

December 5, 2007

12:00 Noon – Russell Union, Room 2047

Present: Dr. Mike McDonald (COBA), Dr. Randy Carlson (COE), Dr. Margaret LaMontagne for Dr. Ronnie Sheppard (COE), Dr. Cordelia Zinskie (COE), Dr. Gerald Ledlow (COPH), Dr. Cassandra Arroyo (COPH), Dr. Christina Lemon (CLASS), Dr. Kathy Hubbard (CLASS), Dr. Doug Thomson (CLASS), Dr. Greg Harwood (CLASS), Dr. Edward Smith (CLASS), Dr. Peggy Hargis (CLASS), Dr. Ray Chandler (COST), Dr. David Williams (COST), Dr. Tom Case (CIT)

Absent with Notification: Dr. Dan Czech (CHHS), Dr. Donna Hodnicki (CHHS), Dr. Sam Todd (CHHS), Dr. Craig Roell (CLASS), Dr. William McIntosh (CLASS), Dr. George Cox (CLASS)

Absent without Notification: Dr. Barry Balleck (CLASS), Dr. Doralina Martinez-Conde (CLASS), Dr. Jorge Suazo (CLASS), Dr. Yan Wu (COST), Dr. Jim Harris (CIT)

1) The DrPH Program – Dr. Jerry Ledlow

- a) Dr. Jerry Ledlow and Dr. Cassandra Arroyo presented the DrPH program to the group. The program has gotten off to a very good start!
- b) Dr. Ledlow was asked whether the COPH required DrPH students to have a MPH degree before admission into the program. Dr. Ledlow said that it is not a requirement; however, they prefer students to have completed the core requirements for the MPH degree before entrance.
- c) When asked how the COPH is helping faculty as they adjust to teaching doctoral level students, Dr. Ledlow shared that they facilitate “team teaching”. They also have some of their senior faculty members mentor the junior faculty. He stated that the leadership team in the COPH intervenes quickly if a problem arises.
- d) Dr. Diebolt asked Dr. Ledlow to discuss the GRE requirement and to discuss how they handle practicums in the DrPH program. Dr. Ledlow said that the decision to eliminate the GRE requirement for people who already held a doctoral degree was made because people who have a doctoral degree have already proven that they can succeed in doctoral level work, so the GRE was deemed irrelevant as an admission requirement.
- e) In relation to the question about practicums, Dr. Ledlow said that the COPH does not use the traditional departmental models. They have separate offices for different aspects of graduate education (i.e. Academic Affairs, Research, and Practice offices). He said that the Office of Practice handles all practicum relations and that the placement of students in a practicum is concentration specific.
- f) The question was asked whether the COPH made any distinction as to where a student received his/her terminal degree (online institutions) and whether that

was used in determination of admission. Dr. Ledlow stated that the only requirement is that the institution must be accredited. He said that later, once the program was larger, the issue would most likely arise as to which institutions placed students in a higher priority level as far as which were admitted, and they would have to address this issue at that point.

2) GA and Health Insurance-Update, Part II

- a) Dr. Mack and the Finance Office worked hard to resolve this issue. Cam Reagin's group in the Finance office was especially helpful. The health insurance will be part of the fees to be paid at the beginning of the semester instead of being taken as a deduction on the student's check. This decision was made after obtaining feedback from GAs and department chairs. Dr. Mack and several people from Finance met with three department chairs who have many GAs as well as with several graduate assistants, and the GAs made it clear that this is what they would rather have happen.
- b) Dr. Mack's concern is Fall semester and making certain that the PA deadlines are met, as some faculty members are out of state during the summer.
- c) Dr. Mack thanked the program directors for adhering to the December 4th PA deadline and reiterated that this was being enforced (as well as the requirement that GA's begin work one week early) so that we could ensure that all GAs received their first paycheck early in the semester.

3) Xtender

- a) Dr. Mack announced that Pearl Middleton would be sending all Program Directors an email with a PowerPoint presentation on how to use Xtender. He stated that IT Services has conducted a S.W.O.T analysis on web Xtender and has identified problems associated with this application.
- b) Dr. Mack is still working on trying to resolve issues that they have expressed regarding the complexity of Xtender.
- c) One PD expressed her concern that, at times, BANNER did not link information to Xtender.
- d) Another PD stated that she was concerned about the deadline for admission into programs being pushed back further and further. She said that this was causing major issues with faculty leaving the state for part of the summer.

4) GA Parking

- a) Several GAs have expressed concern about parking at the RAC while they are employed as a GA. Dr. Mack has also received emails and a letter about this issue, and some female GAs are portraying this as a safety issue. Dr. Mack met with VP Joe Franklin about the GA parking issue and the fact that this created a security concern for some students. Dr. Mack is scheduling a meeting to discuss this issue with Bob Chambers, Director of Parking and Transportation, and proposing that some slots be designated for Graduate Assistants. Some concern was expressed about the potential of parking spaces being taken away from

faculty and replaced with GA parking. A proposal will eventually be submitted to the Graduate Committee and there will be ample time to discuss it.

- b) Dr. Mack is also proposing that two “COGS Visitor” parking spaces be created behind Veazey Hall for those potential students who come to COGS for information.

5) Blueprint Update

- a) Dr. Mack announced that President Grube has the Blueprint. If Dr. Grube approves of the Blueprint, it will then go to the Vice Presidents. He assured the Program Directors that as soon as he was able to release the Blueprint, he would make it available to them.

6) Graduate Committee Update – Bologna Process degrees

- a) Dr. Mack explained to the Program Directors that the Bologna degree is a three-year undergraduate bachelor’s degree that is going to be administered in 45 European countries beginning in the year 2010 (see attachments).
- b) The Graduate Committee is currently evaluating the Bologna Process degrees and will vote on whether or not to recommend to the University that we accept these students into our graduate programs.

7) Update from Dick Diebolt

- a) Dr. Diebolt announced that there are approximately 260 graduate students that will be completing their degree this semester.
- b) There are 32 EDD students who have submitted dissertations and 8 Master’s degree students who have submitted theses. He indicated that some students wait until the last minute to submit their ETD, and that faculty members will not receive the email to verify and approve the thesis/dissertation until it has been electronically submitted and approved by COGS.

8) General Discussion / Topic Requests for Next Meeting

- a) Dr. Doug Thomson asked if it was possible to have a master directory for all GA positions across campus – those open and filled. Dr. Mack and Dr. Diebolt both indicated that this would be possible if everyone notified COGS of such positions; they do not have to do so. This is something that the graduate students have asked for, too.
- b) Dr. Mack indicated that all programs should have a handbook and should be providing a new student orientation for incoming graduate students each semester. The handbook should clearly state what is required of the student and the consequences for not meeting the requirements.
- c) Dr. Mack asked the directors if they would like to have someone speak at the next meeting about creating a handbook and on best practices in administering a successful graduate program. It was decided that this topic would be a good discussion for next month’s PD meeting.

Data Sources: Changes in Policies Regarding Bologna Three-Year Bachelor's Degrees, 2005 to 2006

On June 19, 1999, 29 European Ministries of Higher Education and major representatives of the European higher education community met in Bologna, Italy, to sign an agreement that would establish a European Higher Education Area by 2010 (Yopp, 2003). This agreement, referred to as the "Bologna Process," now includes 45 European countries that have pledged to work together to make higher education across the continent more effective through greater transparency, mobility, and collaboration. As part of this harmonization effort, these countries have pledged to adopt a three-year bachelor's degree that is to be recognized as an equitable credential within each of the 45 member nations (Jaschik, 2006).

The Bologna Process could have wide ranging effects on higher education throughout Europe. When fully implemented, it may include 4,000 institutions that enroll 16 million students (Adelman, 2006). The three-year undergraduate degree has thus become an increasingly prominent issue as the majority of Europe adopts it.

How should U.S. graduate schools recognize and evaluate the applications from prospective international students with "Bologna" bachelor's degrees? The Bologna Process and the issues surrounding three-year degrees have generated many questions about how U.S. graduate schools should construct admissions policies for applicants from Europe (Denecke, forthcoming).

CGS has responded to members' concerns about Bologna three-year bachelor's degrees by undertaking an important examination of the current policies and practices used by graduate schools to consider international student applications. This appraisal has been conducted through CGS's annual International Graduate Admissions III surveys in 2005 and 2006.

One part of the International III surveys asks graduate deans to report on the procedures their institutions have used to evaluate applications from international students who hold Bologna three-year bachelor's degrees. Responses to these questions provide valuable information needed to measure empirically how U.S. graduate schools are evaluating three-year degrees and how they anticipate evaluating them in the future (Redd and Neubig, 2006).¹ Below is a description of the changes in institutional policies and procedures regarding the acceptance

of three-year degrees from 2005 to 2006.

The survey results demonstrate that evaluating the applications from prospective international students with Bologna three-year bachelor's degrees has become a less controversial issue than previously reported. As Table 1 shows, the percentage of survey respondents who said that the Bologna bachelor's degree was "not an issue" on their campuses rose from 41% to 56% between 2005 and 2006. At the same time, the share of respondents who said their institutions were now using approaches that could result in their evaluation of applications from prospective students with Bologna degrees increased from 71% to 82%; that is, the percentage who said

Table 1. Changes in Institutional Policies Regarding Bologna 3-Year Bachelor's Degrees, 2005-2006

	2005	2006
<i>Three-Year Degrees as an Issue on Campus</i>		
Major Issue	18%	12%
Minor Issue	41%	32%
Not an Issue	41%	56%
<i>Single Institution-wide Policy or Policies Vary By Department</i>		
Single	62%	62%
Different	16%	18%
Combination	22%	21%
<i>Approach to Evaluating Three-Year Degrees</i>		
Do not accept	29%	18%
Provisional acceptance	9%	4%
Evaluation for equivalency	40%	49%
Determination of individual's competency to succeed	22%	29%

Source: Findings from the 2006 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey III: Admissions and Enrollment

they would not consider admissions applications from prospective international students with only Bologna three-year bachelor's degrees fell from 29% to 18%, and the graduate schools that offer only provisional acceptance of international applicants with these degrees declined from 9% to 4%.

These results suggest that over the past year discussions of three-year degrees have led to the adoption of policies that permit the acceptance of international students with Bologna degrees into the majority of American graduate schools, under specified circumstances. Our nation's graduate schools generally appear to have begun to think about the potential benefits of changes in their international admissions policies. These changes could have positive effects on both the number and quality of international students considered for enrollment in the future (Denecke, forthcoming).

There do, however, appear to be some differences in how public and private colleges and universities have resolved issues regarding admission of students with Bologna bachelor's degrees. As Table 2 illustrates, a majority (55%) of public colleges and universities said they held discussions among

Table 2. Processes or Procedures Undertaken in the Past Two Years Regarding the Issue of the Bologna Three-Year Degrees, by Institutional Control

	Public Institutions	Private Institutions	Total - All Institutions
Discussions among graduate school staff	55%	41%	52%
Discussions among graduate council members	34%	10%	28%
Discussions with faculty and/or departments	42%	27%	38%
Enacted admission or enrollment policy changes	15%	2%	12%
None of the above	26%	34%	28%

Source: Findings from the 2006 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey III: Admissions and Enrollment

graduate school staff at some point in the past two years regarding policies or procedures for evaluating students with Bologna three-year degrees. A smaller share (41%) of private institutions had held such discussions (136 public and 41 private colleges and universities responded to the most recent International III survey). In addition, about 42% of the public university survey participants held discussions with graduate school faculty and/or department personnel, versus 27% of those from private institutions. And roughly one-third of respondents from public institutions said they held discussions among graduate school council advisory members (faculty members who advise the graduate school on matters related to curriculum and degrees), compared with about 10%

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Data Sources

of private universities (respondents may have selected multiple responses).

Public institutions were more likely to use these discussions to create changes in admissions policies regarding students with Bologna degrees; about 15% of public colleges and universities had instituted policy changes sometime within the past two years. Only 2% of private colleges and universities said they enacted such changes. Finally, 26% of public institutions had not done any of the listed activities regarding the issue of three-year degrees; about 34% of all private institutions said they had not undertaken these activities.

The comparison of activities initiated by public and private colleges and universities to review processes and procedures involved with Bologna degrees is not intended to be a measure of quality or performance between these school types. Rather, it suggests that public institutions (which tend to enroll a larger number of international graduate students) may have faced these issues earlier, and had to engage their faculty and staff more fully in developing policies to evaluate, admit, and enroll international students with these degrees. As the most recent International III survey report shows, the institutions with the largest enrollments were more likely than smaller schools to have undertaken discussions on the Bologna degrees (Redd and Neubig, 2006). Because most of the largest institutions are public colleges and universities, it is likely that the differences between these colleges are accounted for by enrollment size more than by any other factor.

The overall growth in the percentage of institutions that have discussed or adopted policies related to Bologna degrees, combined with the sharp decline in the percentage of programs that do not accept students with such degrees, indicates that as time passes and more international students enter larger and smaller colleges and universities, more institutions of all types and enrollment sizes will expand their current policies or implement new ones.

However, one fear sometimes expressed about the growing acceptance of students with Bologna three-year degrees is that it might lead to a decline in the quality of international graduate students enrolling at American universities. However, evidence from prior CGS international surveys suggests that this fear has been unfounded. The 2005 and 2006 CGS international graduate applications and admissions survey results show that admissions selectivity (the percentage of applicants who were offered admission) remained at 24% from last year to this year (Brown, 2005; Brown & Neubig, 2006). Further, the 2006 CGS International Graduate Student Admissions Survey II report found that the vast majority of respondents (88%) indicated that the quality of new international admits was "about the same" this year as it was in 2005 (Brown, 2006). In other words, while more graduate institutions reported increasing willingness to consider students with Bologna degrees, graduate deans have indicated that the overall quality of the international

students with these degrees to whom they have offered admission has not been adversely affected.

Over the past year, the majority of U.S. graduate schools have adopted policies that permit the evaluation of international students with Bologna degrees under specified circumstances. American graduate schools appear to be adopting a policy of being open to considering students with these degrees, but this policy is supplemented by maintaining high standards with a close examination of prospective students' eligibility for graduate study. Greater acceptance of international student applicants with three-year bachelor's degrees, balanced with quality considerations, may be a major issue for U.S. graduate schools in the future.

¹A full report on the survey results is posted on the CGS Web site at

http://www.cgsnet.org/portals/0/pdf/R_intlenrl06_III.pdf

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