

# Program Directors Meeting

March 26, 2008

12:00 Noon – Russell Union, Room 2080

**Present:** Dr. Mike McDonald (COBA), Dr. Randy Carlson (COE), Dr. Margaret LaMontagne (COE), Dr. Cordelia Zinskie (COE), Dr. Cassandra Arroyo (COPH), Dr. Jennie Rakestraw (COE), Dr. Greg Harwood (CLASS), Dr. Ray Chandler (COST), Dr. David Williams (COST), Dr. Donna Hodnicki (CHHS), Dr. Craig Roell (CLASS), Dr. Michael Moore (COE), Dr. Christina Lemon (CLASS), Dr. Tom Case (CIT), Mrs. Susan Davies (Admissions), Dr. Dick Diebolt (COGS), Dr. Danny Dixon (CLASS), Dr. Doug Thomson (CLASS), Dr. Doralina Martinez-Conde (CLASS), Dr. Yan Wu (COST), Dr. Ahmed Adu-Oppong (COPH), Dr. Elizabeth Downs (COE), Dr. Jonathan Bryant (CLASS), Dr. Trina Khmelko (CLASS) for Dr. George Cox

**Absent with Notification:** Dr. Dan Czech (CHHS), Dr. Kathy Hubbard (CLASS), Dr. Edward Smith (CLASS)

**Absent without Notification:** Dr. Sam Todd (CHHS), Dr. Jorge Suazo (CLASS), Dr. Barry Balleck (CLASS), Dr. William McIntosh (CLASS), Dr. Ronnie Sheppard (COE)

1. Announcements from the Program Directors:

- No announcements were received from the group.

2. Discussion – Blueprint for Graduate Education:

- Page 1 Discussion –
  - Dr. Zinskie asked whether we would/could try and compete with the other “online institutions” in terms of smaller class sizes. Dr. Mack responded that these online for-profit institutions such as the University of Phoenix are able to have significantly smaller class sizes because their faculty are part-time instructors, instead of full-time tenure-track faculty. This enables them to afford small class sizes. We should compete based on the quality and expertise of our faculty.
- Page 2 Discussion –
  - Dr. Mack said that the University has approved the COGS Mission and Vision statements.
  - Dr. Wu asked who would be determining the time frame for deleting a program. Dr. Mack stated that this would be a discussion item for the Dean’s Council and the Provost.
- Page 3 Discussion –
  - Dr. Moore asked about the process of reviewing and assessing online graduate programs. He expressed concern of knowing whether the student enrolled in the course is actually the person who is completing the coursework. Dr. Mack said that there are ways of verifying through proctors and other such measures that a student is taking an exam or submitting an assignment. Regarding assessment, the CET has expertise in assessing courses and programs- it would seem logical to engage them. Dr. Mack recommended that the process of assessing the programs should also

involve employers and alumni – to determine if the students we are graduating are well-training employees and to determine if our alumni can suggest improvements to the education that they received. Quality issues and concerns should be discussed and addressed in the individual departments and colleges. Dr. Rakestraw remarked that it will be important to insure that the quality of each online course be assessed at the same level. Dr. Moore suggested that this is more complex than just a departmental issue. He feels that this is a larger issue that should be addressed at the University level. Dr. LaMontagne stated that quality could be ensured through the course outline; however certain courses do not lend themselves to being taught online. She gave an example of a course that she taught online, which had previously been taught on campus, and the rate of failure was significantly higher. When she taught the course the next semester (on campus), the success rate increased.

- Dr. Hodnicki announced that the Center for Online Teaching is working to create a standard process for all online programs/courses.
- Page 4 Discussion –
  - A question was asked about why did the Blueprint propose so many online students. Dr. Mack said the emphasis on online graduate students was both practical and pragmatic. It was practical because enrollment in online graduate programs is growing rapidly nationwide, whereas face-to-face enrollment is growing very slowly. It is pragmatic because it much more expensive to grow face-to-face graduate programs than online ones. If the 20% increase was all in face-to-face students, then it would be very difficult to garner the assistantship funding needed to support so many students. The Blueprint proposes a mixture of both online and face-to-face graduate programs. Dr. Mack indicated that he supports the current face-to-face programs that we have and that there is no intent to make Georgia Southern an 'online only' graduate degree institution.
  - Someone asked if marketing online programs helps face-to face graduate degree programs. Dr. Mack said that marketing online programs is also marketing graduate education at Georgia Southern, and this should increase the presence of our university among potential graduate students.
  - Dr. Moore asked how departments would be expected to do more with the same amount of resources. He also expressed concern about how reallocated resources to support the online programs/courses would affect Ed.S., master's, and undergraduate education. He does not feel that 20% is a reasonable goal without increasing resources. Dr. Mack indicated that the Blueprint did propose additional resources to support graduate enrollment growth.
- Page 5 Discussion –
  - Dr. Moore asked if we would consider applicants who received their degrees from online universities when we are looking for faculty to teach for our University. Dr. Mack stated that we currently have Graduate Faculty at GSU

with online degrees. Another graduate program director in the room spoke highly of a new hire in her department who has an online terminal degree. Most of the program directors seemed to feel that this evaluation should be done on a case-by-case basis.

- Dr. Hodnicki asked if GSU would be offering any Ph.D. programs. Dr. Mack said that COBA has proposed a Ph.D. program.
- Dr. Roell stated that CLASS may sometimes produce graduates that the state may feel are not “career ready” because they don’t necessarily become employed in the field of work in which they obtained their degree. Dr. Mack suggested that, in most cases, these students would still be employed in a position that is directly related to his/her degree; and, therefore, would be considered fine. Dr. Bryant suggested that some students may not always be gaining a degree for career reasons, it may be for their personal interest.
- Dr. Wu felt that there might be a misconception regarding what constitutes uniqueness. He feels that the dissertation is a better determinant of uniqueness – not the actual curriculum.

- Pages 7-8 Discussion –

- It was suggested that it would be easier to create a culture that was more highly valued if the “Road Blocks” that are mentioned in the Blueprint were more positive, instead of punitive. Dr. Mack asked if something punitive could be identified in the Blueprint to help him understand the issue. An example was discussed of asking each graduate program to create a handbook for graduate students. Dr. Mack said that the Dean’s Council was thinking in terms of these being minimum standards that would improve graduate education, and not as punitive.
- There was also some concern with mandating that Program Directors be tenured faculty members. Dr. Mack said that he was aware that this was difficult for some departments and accepted that some untenured faculty would be Program Directors.

- Pages 8-16 Discussion –

- Dr. Rakestraw asked why we were proposing to eliminate the evaluation of international transcripts by the World Education Services. Dr. Mack answered that we were not proposing to eliminate the evaluation of international transcripts; rather, we would like to find a way to do this without it costing international applicants so much money (\$130).
- Dr. Arroyo suggested that a distinction be made between those Graduate Assistants who teach, those who conduct research, and those who work in Administrative/Student Services positions.

### 3. Handouts –

- Dr. Mack distributed a list of graduate level courses currently listed in the catalog that have not been taught in the past five years. He said that this is a form of false advertising to prospective students, who may matriculate with the idea of taking some of those courses. **Dr. Mack asked that each**

**Graduate Program Director look over the list and submit any course deletions to the Graduate Committee to remove those courses from the catalog.**

4. Update from Dick Diebolt –
  - Dr. Diebolt announced that Graduate Clearances for the spring semester were progressing well.
  - Dr. Hodnicki asked where the list of alumni (from the previous meetings survey results) was obtained. Dr. Diebolt said that the names were received from the Alumni Relations office. He agreed to forward the survey to the departments so that they could send them out to their respective graduates, in hopes that more responses will be received.
5. General Discussion –
  - Dr. Roell asked if departments could now offer Graduate Assistantship positions for fall semester. Dr. Mack said that COGS has not yet received the number of allocated GA's per college from the Provost office. As soon as we receive this information, it will be distributed to the Deans – who will distribute to the departments.
  - Dr. Mack announced that the GA Allocation Committee would not be implementing any changes for this upcoming fall semester.
  - Susan Davies announced that the Graduate Assistant Interview Day would be held on Friday, March 28. There will be approximately 60 students on campus for interviews.
6. Next Meeting – The discussion of the Blueprint will continue. Also, Angela Leverett will present an example of a graduate student recruiting plan.