MINUTES OF THE 317TH GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
APRIL 21, 2009

Members present: Greg Sterling (chair), Panos Anstsaklis, Bob Bernhard, Philip Bess, Sunny Boyd, Tam Chantem, Jessica Collett, Greg Crawford, Gay Dannelly, Umesh Garg, Sandra Gustafson, Peter Kilpatrick, John LoSecco, Rebecca McCumbers, Dan Myers, Mark Noll, Cyril O'Regan, John Renaud, John Robinson, Pit-Mann Wong,

Graduate School representatives present: Barbara Turpin

Members excused: Laura Carlson, Mary Keys, John Welle, Bill Westfall, Carolyn Woo

Members absent: Larry Lamm

Invited Guests: Profs. Patricia Blanchette, Daniel Lapsley, and Phillip Sloan

Reporter: Mary Hendriksen

Prof. Sterling opened the meeting of the Graduate Council at 3:35 p.m. Members and guests observed a moment of silence in remembrance of Senior Associate Dean Terry Akai, who died suddenly on February 28, 2009.

1. Approval of the minutes of the Graduate Council meeting of February 11, 2009: Making note of corrections for two typographical errors, the minutes of the meeting of February 11, 2009 were approved.

2. News items and announcements: Several news items were circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

Prof. Sterling announced that the Graduate School Commencement speaker on Saturday, May 16th will be Dr. Don Randel, a noted musicologist and current president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Dr. Randel received three degrees from Princeton University, was on the faculty at Cornell University for 32 years as well as its provost, and then, from 2000 to 2006, served as the President of the University of Chicago, where he spearheaded a $2-billion fundraising campaign. Dr. Randel is clearly a major force in American higher education, Prof. Sterling said, and we are pleased to welcome him to campus for our Commencement. He will receive an honorary degree at the University-wide Commencement on Sunday, May 17.

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Prof. Sterling also announced that Patrick Finneran, chair of the Graduate Studies and Research Advisory Council, will receive an honorary degree as well at the University Commencement exercises on May 17. Mr. Finneran received his undergraduate degree from Notre Dame and a master's degree from East Carolina University. After serving 20 years in the military, he joined the Boeing Corporation and oversaw military plane

development in St. Louis. Mr. Finneran will lead the benediction at the Graduate School Commencement.

Prof. Sterling then addressed some issues related to restructuring plans for the Graduate School. First, planning and administration for the Summer Session are now handled by the Registrar's Office. This move has been planned since the fall of this year but was expedited after Dean Akai's death in February.

Second, the School of Architecture will become independent of the Graduate School on July 1, 2009. Thus, like the Law School and the Mendoza College of Business, its post-baccalaureate programs will function independently of the Graduate School.

Third, Prof. Sterling said, beginning this summer, he will have four associate deans in the Graduate School. Two will be Special Professional Faculty and two tenured Teaching-and-Research faculty members. In the first category, one associate dean will be current Associate Dean Barbara Turpin as associate dean of students. He is the process of hiring the associate dean of recruiting and admissions, who will replace Dr. Akai.

As for the two tenured teaching-and-research associate deans, Prof. Sterling explained that they will join the office on a part-time basis. One associate dean will oversee professional development—that is, helping to foster holistic graduate education through attention to such activities as grantwriting, pedagogical formation, and skills necessary to run a laboratory. Dianne Phillips, advisor for student professionalization and research, and Lisa Anderson, associate director of the Career Center and its designee for graduate students, will work directly with this dean. The second associate dean will oversee academic programs—in particular, helping to assess the academic quality of Notre Dame's graduate programs; exploring the range of programs that we offer, especially in interdisciplinary work, and helping to address the size of the Graduate School and its funding.

3. Admissions update: Dr. Turpin gave a brief overview of 2009 admissions statistics to date. For prestigious scholarships, she noted that Presidentials in Arts and Letters had an extremely high acceptance rate—with all 16 slots available now filled. The Fernández (students from Puerto Rico) and Gaia Fellowships (academic focus on Latin America) did well. Less happily, the Graduate School has only 6 "accepts" to its 19 offers for Diversity Fellowships (10 available), 14 "accepts" for Presidentials in Science and Engineering (18 available), and 3 "accepts" for the Notebaert Fellowships this year (5 available).

Dean Sterling said that he is convinced that Notre Dame must offer a larger stipend to its Diversity fellows to be competitive. In addition, he believes a problem with filling the Presidentials in science and engineering is that, we do not have any fellowships for international students. Under the terms of the funding agreement, presidential fellowships can be offered only to United States citizens.

Prof. Kilpatrick disagreed with this assessment of the yield difficulties with science and engineering presidentials. There are good domestic applicants for the scholarships, he said. He believes the issue to be either competitiveness of the offer or prestige of the University. Other institutions are able to offer these same applicants stipends of $30,000 or even $35,000—as compared to our offer of $26,500.

As for competitiveness of the stipends in general, Prof. Sterling said that despite dramatic increases to stipends for Notre Dame's prestigious fellowships—Presidentials were brought from $22,500 to $25,000 in the humanities and social sciences, and up to $26,500 in science and engineering—some Ivy League institutions are offering standard stipends of $25,500 and, as Prof. Kilpatrick has noted, up to $35,000 in science and engineering.

Dr. Turpin concluded her presentation by saying that application numbers are up overall for the Graduate School, with Engineering experiencing the sharpest increase: 20 percent. The application percentage increase for other programs ranges from 3 to 8 percent.

4. Committee reports:

(a) Stipend allocation Committee: Prof. Sterling said that a draft report is circulating among committee members now and undergoing robust discussion. The committee will be ready to present a report to the Graduate Council and DGSs in the Fall of 2009.

(b) External Grant Requirement Committee: Prof. Blanchette, chair, reported that committee members are reluctant to recommend an across-the-board grantwriting requirement. In some fields, grants available are for large-scale projects with a faculty member as the principal investigator. Other issues arise with eligibility of grants for non-citizens. The committee's current thinking is that if there is to be a requirement, it must be imposed by individual departments.

More positively, Prof. Blanchette continued, committee members have suggestions on how the Graduate School can increase the number of grants Notre Dame students write:

- The Graduate School's database of grants is now available on the website: http://www.grad.nd.edu/gfd/. Departments should supply new and updated information to the Graduate School on these and additional grants.
- Information on upcoming grant deadlines can be circulated via e-mail to students.
- For internal Notre Dame competitions—for example, the Fulbright Fellowships—we need to provide students with clear directions on how to enter the competitions as well as increase the efficiency of the selection committees—for example, faculty committees for the Fulbright and DAAD fellowships could be combined.
- For other grants—those without internal competitions—we need to help our students write *better* applications–either through more faculty input and

mentoring, or by way of instruction or workshops from Dianne Phillips, the Graduate School's advisor on student professionalization.

- For some early-stage grants—for example, the National Science Foundation (NSF) grants, which are awarded in a student's first year of graduate studies—we need to start the grantwriting process early, even as early as the admit stage. That may mean bringing some students to campus in the summer for early mentoring.
- We need better recordkeeping—DGSs should report how many students applied for grants and how many received them.

Finally, Prof. Blanchette said, the committee is exploring incentives for grantwriting—for example, topping up grants that are nearly equivalent to current stipends or providing incentives to even *apply* for some grants with particularly difficult submission processes.

Prof. Kilpatrick said he was in favor of a requirement that if you are eligible for grants, you must write one. If not, then you will be required to do some other task equally as advantageous in terms of professional development—for example, helping a member of the faculty to write a grant.

(c) Completion rates: Prof. Boyd, chair, distributed a handout that compared ten-year attrition rates in various disciplines collected by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) (a major study of 12,000 students with a 1992 to 1995 start date) to those at Notre Dame. She said that CGS reports an overall attrition rate of 30 percent—one that has been remarkably consistent for the past 60 years. At Notre Dame, the overall ten-year attrition rate is closer to 40 percent; however, with a newer cohort, it drops to 35 percent. Prof. Boyd noted that Notre Dame's attrition rate for engineering is markedly higher than national levels. Some reasons for this will be examined in the committee's forthcoming report.

In addition to the quantitative comparison, the handout also contained a chart with qualitative reasons for attrition—for example, slow academic progress, poor academic fit, financial difficulties, and lack of mentoring—as reported by Notre Dame DGSs. The chart tabulates responses for thirteen programs, representing about 500 students. "Bad fit" was the most frequently cited reason for attrition, with poor academic progress and "bad fit" together accounting for 65 percent of attrition. Prof. Boyd noted that of the students who left for personal reasons (15 percent), 35 percent left to follow a spouse or significant other.

In response to a question from Prof. Renaud, Prof. Boyd confirmed that engineering has *early* attrition (2.7 years). In contrast, the mean time to attrition in the humanities is 4.5 years.

Prof. Sterling thanked the members of all three committees for their hard work throughout the academic year and said he looked forward to receiving their reports next fall.

5. Proposal for a minor in quantitative psychology: Prof. Lapsley, current DGS for Psychology and incoming departmental chair, was invited to the meeting to answer questions about a proposal for a minor in quantitative psychology. The proposal was first presented to Council members at the February meeting and subsequently revised by the department in response to members' concerns. Prof. Lapsley noted that the changes and clarifications extend to two issues:

- Is the minor open to *all* graduate students, or only to psychology students?
- Can there be a minor in its own field?

Addressing the first issue, Prof. Lapsley noted that the department has now revised the proposal to open it to all doctoral students at the University. He pointed out, however, that there are real resource issues at stake—both as to actual seats in the lab and, because this is a very "hands-on" program, the mentoring available to students. Yet, because Psychology is welcoming three new quantitative faculty members in the fall, the department has agreed to offer the quantitative minor to interested doctoral students in any program.

As to the second, more conceptual, issue, Prof. Lapsley noted that a minor in quantitative psychology is pervasive nationwide. Indeed, if Notre Dame did *not* offer such a minor, it would be in the distinct minority. The quantitative minor is a credential that helps enormously with placement.

Prof. Sterling interjected that, as promised at the last meeting, he raised the issue of the statistical training proposal with the Provost. Prof. Burish informed him that he is waiting for input from one individual on the report but promised a formal response by this summer.

Prof. Collett asked whether Psychology might consider making individual arrangements with various departments that would allow their students to earn the minor credential. This might be a middle ground between opening it up to all students and restricting it only to psychology students. She noted that this is the practice at the University of Kansas.

Prof. Sterling said that giving preference to psychology students might be one way to address the issue of space.

Prof. Lapsley noted both that there is an application process for the minor and that the requirements for fulfilling it are quite rigorous. These two factors will limit the number of non-psychology students who will be interested in earning the quantitative minor.

Prof. Sterling called for a vote on the minor in quantitative psychology. It was 18 in favor, 0 opposed, with one abstention. He noted that minors need not go to the Academic Council for approval [see http://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/4884/minutes.gradcouncil.020608.pdf. page 4].

6. Strategies for increasing the number of National Science Foundation grants at Notre Dame: Two Notre Dame professors with experience in awarding National Science Foundation (NSF) grants were invited to today's meeting to discuss strategies for improving the number of grants awarded to our graduate students: Phillip Sloan, of the Program in Liberal Studies, and Ani Aprahamian (who was ill but gave her presentation to Prof. Blanchette to deliver) of Physics.

First, Prof. Sterling explained that he met with NSF directors in Washington, D.C., in March. He discovered then how few of the prestigious NSF grants Notre Dame students win. These grants provide students with $30,000/year stipends for three years and are usable over five years. There are normally 10,000 applicants for the 1,000 awards. Currently, Notre Dame has only one NSF grant, with a total of 28 from 1990 to the present. In contrast, the University of California system regularly takes in 250 NSF award winners every year.

Prof. Sloan began by explaining that there are two kinds of NSF grants: (1) predoctoral fellowships—applied for by undergraduate seniors or first-year graduate students; and (2) grants for improvement of doctoral dissertations.

He explained that a crucial issue in winning these grants is that graduate students must be "first-year" students, which means that they can have no more than a certain number of graduate credit hours—for example, 18. He believes that some institutions manipulate this requirement a bit—many applications are from second-year students who fall just under the maximum credit-hour limit. This strategy allows students to craft a mature proposal. Prof. Sloan also noted that proposals are judged within a larger hopper—for example, economics is together with the history and philosophy of science. He also emphasized that the degree of mentoring is very important in winning a grant.

As for the second kind of NSF grant, Prof. Sloan continued that he believes that NSF grants for improvement of doctoral dissertation research are underutilized. These grants primarily supply travel and support for work off campus—funds not normally available through the student's university—and allow doctoral students to undertake significant data-gathering projects and to conduct field research. With these grants, the dissertation director functions as the principal investigator, with proposals submitted jointly. Resubmissions are possible and encouraged. He believes that this process can be extremely helpful to students in focusing a dissertation.

Prof. Blanchette then delivered Prof. Aprahamian's presentation, which began by noting that NSF grants are only one of "endless possibilities" for graduate fellowships. The NSF grants are run through the directorate of Education and Human Resources (HER) Graduate Education. Its program solicitation deadlines are very early—generally in the first week of November. Applicants must be U.S. citizens and have no more than one year of graduate study. As Prof. Sloan has emphasized, grants are more likely to be successful when a student is planning work in conjunction with a mentor. Furthermore,

the grants focus on two factors: intellectual merit and broader impact. The first criterion means that the research must be *transformative.* The second encompasses four factors:

- Potential for leadership
- Role model for younger scholars
- Commitment to enhance diversity
- Commitment of outreach to community

Prof. Myers pointed out that when the NSF counts graduate credit hours for the purpose of these applications, the hours must be in a sanctioned NSF field. Thus, students who have a master's degree in an area different than their area of application are good candidates, as they have the requisite intellectual maturity without an excessive number of credit hours.

Prof. Sterling said he would like to have a standing faculty committee for Fulbright fellowships and another for NSFs. Collaboration with the University's office for undergraduate post-baccalaureate fellowships would be mutually beneficial. He would also like to explore the possibility of faculty identifying promising students early, and then inviting them to campus during the summer to work up a NSF grant proposal—for which they would receive a stipend.

Prof. Collett said that in her field, sociology, the University of Arizona does precisely that. Newly admitted students receive stipends to attend summer workshops on how to write NSF grants. The advantage of these workshops is that it is very helpful to participants to read each others' work.

Prof. Sterling also said that we need Notre Dame faculty to participate on NSF review boards. This is a form of service that would facilitate applications of our students. He added that he had considered the idea of offering admission at Notre Dame to all NSF grant winners who are undergraduates—the students who win the majority of these grants. It would be one way to jumpstart the number of NSF doctoral students at Notre Dame and assure a pool of very good students, who have their stipends paid for by the NSF. Unfortunately, other institutions already do this and the competition is very keen.

Prof. LoSecco questioned how it is that undergraduates win the majority of these awards—given that we have heard how important it is to demonstrate a mentoring relationship with a faculty member in the grant application. These undergraduates would not even know the identity of their graduate institutions by the November submission deadline.

Prof. Sterling offered that perhaps there is a different set of criteria for undergraduates and first-year graduate students on the degree of mentoring required.

Given the hour, Prof. Sterling said that the discussion would continue at another time and thanked members for their work throughout the year. He adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.