

**MINUTES OF THE 319<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING  
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
JANUARY 25, 2010**

**Members present:** Greg Sterling (chair), Rich Taylor (for Greg Crawford), Peter Kilpatrick, Phil Bess (for Michael Lykoudis), Dan Myers (for John McGreevy), Rick Garnett (for Nell Newton), Carolyn Woo, Gaye Dannelly (for Jennifer Younger), Sunny Boyd, David Campbell, Sandra Gustafson, Mary Catherine Hilker, Chris Maziar, Mary Ann McDowell, Mary Frandsen, John LoSecco, John Renaud, Julie Turner, John Welle

**Graduate School representatives present:** Laura Carlson, Brian Flaherty, Ed Maginn, Nyrée McDonald, Barb Turpin

**Members excused:** Ani Aprahamian, Bob Bernhard, Andrew Bramsen, Victoria Froude, Scott Maxwell

**Invited Guests:** Profs. Don Crafton and Peter Holland (Film, Television and Theatre); Profs. Elizabeth Mazurek and Brian Krostenko (Classics)

**Reporter:** Mary Hendriksen

Prof. Sterling opened the meeting of the Graduate Council at 3:30 p.m. After a moment of silence to remember Graduate Council member Dr. Larry Lamm, recently deceased, he took up agenda items as follows:

**1. Minutes of the meeting of October 6, 2009:** With Prof. Sterling noting no corrections or clarifications, the minutes of the Graduate Council meeting of October 6, 2009, were approved as presented. [Minutes of Graduate Council meetings are posted on the Graduate School website at: <https://graduateschool.nd.edu/about-the-graduate-school/graduate-council>]

**2. New professional development initiatives in the Graduate School:** In keeping with the Graduate School's commitment to providing students with a holistic education, Associate Dean Laura Carlson outlined several new professional development initiatives in the Graduate School.

First, to identify and raise the visibility of professional development programming and opportunities for graduate students, Prof. Carlson's said that her team worked to create a specific professional development logo—with variants that indicate whether an event is geared to research, ethics, teaching, or career. She encourages all organizers of events geared toward graduate students to use the logo and promote the event on the Professional Development calendar.

Second, the team has organized professional development opportunities in new ways. The Graduate School website now has expanded professional development pages: [https://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional\\_development](https://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional_development). Prof. Carlson noted in particular the newly designed "research" pages. They gather external fellowship and grantwriting opportunities and specify resources available to help students apply for these

external funds. The team is currently working on updating the fellowship database and integrating that into the website.

Third, the team created a specific professional development calendar (also color coded to identify the specific professional development component), and, very importantly, students are being asked to “synch” their personal Google calendars to this calendar. Students can synchronize their calendars independently by following simple instructions posted on the Graduate School’s website at [https://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional\\_development/pdcalendar](https://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional_development/pdcalendar), or they may do so with the help of Graduate School employees and experienced students at designated synching events.

Prof. Kilpatrick asked about synching to Google calendars, as the University’s official calendaring system is Outlook. Prof. Carlson explained that the selection of Google calendars was motivated by the fact that students use Gmail for their email accounts and have ready access to Google calendars. Instructions and assistance are available for synching to other personal calendars. Prof. Kilpatrick said that this divergence in calendaring options is a good subject for the new chief information officer to address.

Prof. Welle asked about students identifying funding opportunities administered by the Graduate Student Union. Prof. Carlson first noted that while the GSU administers the Gordon Conference Presentation Grants, half of the funds are supplied directly by the Graduate School. She noted that procedures for obtaining Gordon grants are on the “research” site of the professional development pages:

[https://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional\\_development/research](https://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional_development/research)

There was further discussion about greater organization and integration of external fellowship opportunities for students. In particular, Prof. Kilpatrick asked about integration with the College of Engineering’s fellowship databases and the post-baccalaureate office (which Notre Dame undergraduates use to apply for competitive graduate study fellowships). Prof. Carlson said that she will coordinate with these offices to share information and avoid duplication of resources. Prof. Sterling noted that the Graduate School had considered three alternatives for search grant search engines. It first considered reworking its own data base and did clean it up; however, it was too incomplete. It next explored purchasing the software for a search engine, e.g., Elsevier’s SciVal. In the end, it decided to use COS. It elected to do so because it is already supported by the Office of Research, is a comprehensive search engine (including fellowship and grant opportunities for graduate students), and will offer students training in a system that they might use later when they are members of a faculty.

**3. Moving nomination periods for the Graduate School’s Distinguished Alumnus and James A. Burns, C.S.C. Awards to the fall term:** No members objected to Prof. Sterling’s proposal to move the nomination periods for the Graduate School’s Distinguished Alumnus and James A. Burns, C.S.C. (faculty) awards to the fall term, while keeping the Shaheen and CRC Awards, both student awards, in the spring. In addition to spreading out the work on nominations, such a move will allow the Graduate School more time to work with the winner of the Distinguished Alumnus Award to attend Commencement events.

**4. Proposal to establish a graduate minor in Screen Cultures through the Department of Film, Television, and Theatre:** Prof. Don Crafton, chair of Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT), and Prof. Peter Holland, Associate Dean of the Arts in the College of Arts and Letters and the McMeel Family Professor in Shakespeare Studies, attended the meeting to present FTT's proposal to establish a graduate minor in Screen Cultures. [Guidelines for establishing graduate minors were developed at Graduate Council meetings in November 2007 and February 2008, see <https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/4051/minutes.gradcouncil.111407.pdf> and <https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/4884/minutes.gradcouncil.020608.pdf>, then further honed at the meeting of April 21, 2009: <https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/16640/minutes.gradcouncil.042109.pdf> The Graduate School has created a template for proposals at: <https://graduateschool.nd.edu/resources-for-facultystaff>. Currently, graduate minors are offered in gender studies and quantitative psychology.]

Prof. Crafton explained that the minor is the department's response to widespread interest in media studies by current and potential Ph.D. candidates at Notre Dame. In any given year, six to ten students are completing a Ph.D. either partially or fully in an area of film or television studies. Their motives include the importance of these studies in the humanities as well as career advancement—for media studies is a highly sought-after area in MLA faculty listings. The proposed minor will provide students with interdisciplinary knowledge and tools to integrate film and media studies into their own discipline—whether English, psychology, literature, or language.

[Requirements of the proposed minor are:

- A gateway course: *Methods and Issues in Screen Cultures* (3 credits);
- Two elective graduate courses in Film and Media (6 credits);
- *Mandatory Practicum in Teaching Screen Cultures* during a student's first year of teaching (1 credit);
- An examination question in an area of film and media related to the student's home discipline, to be incorporated into the normal departmental candidacy exam structure;
- A substantial portion of a dissertation in film and media written under the supervision of a faculty member with competence in that area and/or a substantial research paper in a film or media topic intended for publication in a scholarly journal.]

Prof. Crafton further explained that the minor does not introduce a wholly new course of study; rather, it capitalizes on classes currently offered. The department is creating only one new gateway course. In response to a question from Prof. Maziar, he

confirmed that stipends for the program are not new but already allocated by the College of Arts and Letters.

Prof. Maziar asked how the minor would be reviewed. Profs. Sterling and Crafton explained that it would receive an *ad hoc* review three years after implementation. Thereafter, review of the minor would be incorporated into the department's regular review.

In response to a question from Prof. Kilpatrick, Profs. Crafton, Holland, and Welle explained that the minor is open to doctoral students in any field and in any college at the University. Realistically, though, the majority of the students will be drawn from English, Literature, or language studies. Prof. Holland further explained that the crucial point of the minor is that it is a widely recognized credential in the marketplace that demonstrates actual training in film studies—one that puts a student in a better position than merely professing that he/she “likes films and likes talking about them.” Thus, the department expects that the minor will be a strong draw in attracting to the University very good doctoral students in a variety of fields.

Prof. McDowell asked if teaching is required for the minor. Prof. Crafton answered that it is. If a student working towards the minor receives a graduate stipend, compensation for teaching is already part of his/her stipend. In the unlikely event that the student is developing or teaching a second course, current Arts and Letters policy would govern the student's stipend amount.

Ms. Dannelly noted that the Library's collection is growing rapidly in all areas of film studies and has considerable depth at this point.

Prof. Maziar commented that in an increasingly difficult job market, it is imperative that we offer our doctoral students every advantage possible. The proposal that FTT puts forward is one way that a set of our students can compete more effectively for jobs.

Prof. Sterling called for a vote on the minor, which was approved unanimously by Graduate Council members.

**5. Proposal to establish a master's program in Classics focusing on Greek and Roman studies:** Profs. Elizabeth Mazurek and Brian Krostenko of the Department of Classics attended the meeting to outline their proposal for a proposed master's program in Classics focusing on Greek and Roman studies—in brief, the language, literature, history, and culture of the Greco-Roman world.

Prof. Mazurek explained that development of such a program was recommended by the external review committee that visited Notre Dame in Fall 2008. Notre Dame has a strong Classics program as well as many strong humanities Ph.D. programs. All would benefit from a richer curriculum of Classics graduate courses. The proposed master's program would prepare students for doctoral study in Classics or related areas. The

proposal calls for four new graduate courses to be added to the current Classics curriculum, which already offers several graduate-level courses each year. No new faculty appointments or library materials are required to launch the program. The department would expect to admit two to three students a year. The students' tuition and stipends would be jointly supported by the College of Arts and Letters and the Graduate School.

Prof. Maziar asked whether the department would expect that the proposed master's program might reduce its budget for adjunct faculty—as the graduate students would serve as teaching assistants in some introductory language courses. Prof. Mazurek said that it will depend on the proficiency of individual students. Not all first-year master's students are ready to T.A. a course. Prof. Sterling added that this had been the basis of his appeal to Dean McGreevy to provide two of the stipends. At a minimum, the College should recover the costs of four courses, although the number of courses could well be higher.

Prof. Kilpatrick asked for current undergraduate enrollment in Classics. Profs. Mazurek and Krostenko replied that it was approximately 100 students. They would expect to have a total of four graduate students in the master's program at any one time. Prof. Mazurek explained that these students would not take courses alone; rather, advanced students in other departments enroll in Classics courses, and the Classics master's students would take electives in a variety of disciplines—e.g., languages, Philosophy, Theology, Medieval Studies.

Prof. Kilpatrick focused on the support the students would receive: Full tuition and stipends of \$12,500. Prof. Maziar clarified that the tuition is a “wash” because it is an accounting transfer for programs such as this. Prof. Sterling noted that the program would be free to distribute the \$12,500 stipends in a variety of ways: they could award them wholly to a student or could divide them into two or three smaller stipends.

Prof. McDowell asked who pays health insurance costs for the students. Prof. Sterling said that all fully funded students—and that would include Classics master's students with a \$12,500 stipend—receive a subsidy for their health insurance costs. This would be an additional cost of more than three thousand dollars if four students received full stipends [Currently, the Graduate School pays \$867 of a fully funded student's \$1239 premium cost.]

Referring to Dean John McGreevy's letter of support for the proposed program, Prof. Hilkert asked if there was any conflict, existing or potential, between the proposed master's in Classics and the existing Early Christian Studies program. Prof. Mazurek said there was not. The Early Christian Studies master's degree and the one proposed by Classics are quite distinct but can support one another and benefit from each other. Prof. Maginn pointed out that the proposal has been approved by the College Council in Arts and Letters. Presumably, any conflicts between departments were worked out in that forum.

Prof. Welle asked if Classics or the Medieval Institute offers courses in reading Latin for graduate student qualification. Prof. Krostenko explained that students from other programs, such as Theology and Medieval Studies, take Latin or Greek courses in the Classics Department in order to qualify in those languages. In order to make sure that all on the Council understood the discussion, Prof. Sterling explained that Classics does not offer a reading course for graduate students in the traditional sense that Romance Languages does since all of the courses are for reading knowledge (with the exception of composition courses that still have reading knowledge as their goal). Typically, other programs select the level of reading knowledge essential for their program and require the appropriate number of semesters.

Prof. Kilpatrick made two observations. First, he said, the University has very different funding models for master's programs in different colleges. These different models have the potential to create tension among graduate students. Second, the stipends for the master's program proposed by Classics are not newly created by the Graduate School; rather, they will be re-assigned from an existing program. [Of the four stipends necessary to launch the program, the Graduate School has agreed to supply two and the College of Arts and Letters the other two.] Council members do not, however, know the identity of that program.

Prof. Sterling responded that the stipends in question are being re-allocated for other reasons—the decision is one of re-apportioning resources.

Prof. Kilpatrick said that he fears that the first programs to have their master's programs approved will receive all the Graduate School's resources. Programs two or three years away from a launch date may not have the same access to funds.

Prof. Sterling said such a scenario is not necessarily true. In this one case, stipends are being re-allocated. Future decisions will depend on the budget and circumstances that hold true at that time. He continued that while funding models for programs in different colleges may be different, levels of support are different as well, i.e., some programs have higher stipend levels.

Prof. LoSecco asked for clarification on what kind of students would enroll in the program. Profs. Mazurek and Krostenko explained that its target students are those who expect to enroll in a very good Ph.D. program but who need further training—in a language, in particular. Thus, the M.A. is a pre-doctoral credential. Only a very few students can gain the language training necessary for doctoral study in undergraduate courses.

Dr. Turpin pointed out that the current proposal gives students an *option* to complete a thesis. Under Graduate School rules, master's students must complete a thesis or take an exam. Additional coursework is not a sufficient capstone experience. Prof. Mazurek agreed to incorporate an appropriate exam structure.

In response to a question from Prof. Kilpatrick, Prof. Mazurek clarified that they expect potential students to enter the program both from Notre Dame and from other colleges or universities.

Prof. Welle asked if Prof. Sterling supported the program. Prof. Sterling said that he did. The Classics faculty is strong. Moreover, he thinks that the proposed program will strengthen our existing Ph.D. programs. A good number of other disciplines depend on offerings in Classics—primarily in the humanities but also in the social sciences.

Prof. Sterling called for a vote on the proposed master's program. It was 14 in favor, with no "nays" and one abstention. Prof. Sterling said that the proposal will now be forwarded to the Academic Council—first, its advanced studies subcommittee.

#### **6. Report of the joint Graduate Council/DGS committee on attrition/completion:**

Prof. Sunny Boyd (Biology), chair of a joint Graduate Council/DGS committee appointed by Dean Sterling last year to explore the topic of doctoral students' attrition and completion at Notre Dame, summarized the committee's findings and recommendations for Graduate Council members. [Other members of the joint committee are: Matt Ashley (Theology), Bill Carbonaro (Sociology), Umesh Garg (Physics), Sharon Hu (Computer Science and Engineering), Mark McCready (Bioengineering), Rebecca McCumbers (GSU), and Barbara Turpin (Associate Dean, the Graduate School).]

Prof. Boyd explained that the committee used three cohorts: A 1992-1995 Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) cohort, a 1992-1995 Notre Dame cohort, and a more recent Notre Dame cohort of 1998-2001. She prefaced the report by explaining that the term Ph.D. "attrition" includes students who enter doctoral programs and do not obtain doctoral degrees, even if they do succeed in earning master's degrees. Master's students were not considered by the committee, whether they earned their degrees or not.

The committee's findings are:

- Notre Dame's 10-year cumulative doctoral completion rate of 58.4% is virtually identical to the national average published by CGS (and consistent with a national attrition rate of 60% as far back as the 1960s). Given that, the committee suggests using a figure of 60% completion as a baseline to measure improvement.
- Within broad disciplines, Notre Dame also parallels the national CGS figures. The STEM fields (Engineering, Life Sciences, Mathematics and Physical Sciences) have the highest completion rates, followed by the social sciences and humanities.
- At the Notre Dame departmental level, completion rates may vary significantly from the national averages. The range of cumulative completion rates is from 41% to 83% for the most recent (1998-01) cohort.
- The mean time to completion at Notre Dame is 6.3 years—the same as the national average for the same cohort (1992-95). The mean time to attrition for the most recent cohort at Notre Dame is 3.16 years, showing a steady downward

trend in most departments. There is more late attrition in the social sciences and humanities than in the STEM fields.

- There is a difference in completion rates between genders at Notre Dame of 10%, with men completing degrees at higher rates both here and nationally. Paradoxically, the time to completion at Notre Dame for women is shorter than it is for men by approximately six months.
- Nationally, international students complete degrees at a rate that is about 10% higher than domestic students. In the most recent Notre Dame cohort, this difference is 7%. Nationally, white students also complete degrees at a slightly higher rate (4%) than do minority students. At Notre Dame, the completion rate for minority students has fallen by 6% with the most recent cohort.
- Academic factors related to progress-to-degree and a “bad fit” account for 65% of attrition at the University (as reported by DGSs). Another 25.4% of attrition is related to personal issues, including finances, social issues, and health problems. About 7.3% of students leave because their mentors move to other institutions.

Prof. Woo asked how student maturity impacts attrition rates. Both she and Prof. Boyd said that this information needs to be teased out of the data. Prof. Sterling said that a continual puzzle is how to predict whether a student who excels at coursework can also excel as an independent researcher.

A member asked how gender affected the “social/personal” attrition factor. Again, Prof. Boyd said, this needs to be explored further; yet, at Notre Dame, there was no difference in responses between men and women on whether issues considered “family issues” were drivers of attrition. Generally, Dr. Turpin said, male graduate students complete more quickly when they have a family; the opposite is true of women. Prof. Sterling said that he has asked Dr. Turpin and Prof. Kathie Newman are heading up a committee that will analyze Notre Dame’s Graduate School policies in the gender area.

Prof. McDowell asked about a study on attrition that Dr. Peter Diffley completed for the Graduate School. Prof. Sterling said he is not familiar with this study but will make inquiries about it. He may ask social scientists on the Council to help with further study of the data we do have.

Returning to the gender issue, Prof. Woo said she wondered if women who leave doctoral programs might be concerned more about whether a Ph.D. will help them achieve a desirable career than with stipend amounts or health insurance.

In response to a question from Prof. Kilpatrick, Prof. Sterling said that he will share the full Committee report, which includes data on each department, with the deans. (The report will not be made public.) Release of the data to the deans will help them to identify exemplary departments and those that may need additional help.

Prof. Boyd then outlined the committee’s six main recommendations:



- (1) Expand the on-line application system to include questions for recommenders that address student motivation, maturity, work ethic, and understanding of the field.
- (2) Require an annual assessment of student progress to degree. The assessment should include input from other faculty, in addition to the advisor, and in-depth feedback to the student.
- (3) Examine the climate for women and minority graduate students, at the departmental level, to identify and remove barriers to their success.
- (4) Provide students and faculty with information about resources for solving personal problems. Develop mechanisms to ensure the confidentiality of students who seek such help. (For example, Prof. Boyd pointed out that graduate students may not seek help from the University Counseling Center because they might cross paths with their own undergraduate students there.)
- (5) Guarantee a 6th year of support and move aggressively to develop mechanisms to provide summer support.
- (6) Develop a process to acquire information on completion and attrition that includes annual verification of data and use of exit surveys with *students*. (All the information in the report was gathered from DGSs, and students might very well report their reasons for leaving the University differently than DGSs.)

Prof. Sterling thanked Prof. Boyd for her report. Given the lateness of the hour, he will defer the last agenda item, his response to the Grantwriting Committee's report, to the Council's April meeting. He will respond to the Completion/Attrition Committee report at the same time. He then adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m.