MINUTES
April 19, 1995
The Graduate Council

Graduate School Tyler Conference Room

Members Present: Peter Bergquist, David Boush, Scott DeLancey, Andy Dungan (doctoral student representative), Judith Grosenick, Roger Haydock, James Lemert, Robert O'Brien, Catherine Roach (masters student representative), Richard Sundt, Steadman Upham (ex officio), Virpi Zuck

Members Absent: Louis Osternig, Glenn May, David Schuman (ex officio)

Staff in Attendance: Toby Deemer and Maggie Morris

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by Peter Bergquist. Invited guests, Curt Lind (Director, UO Continuation Center) and Al Stavitsky (Assistant Professor, Journalism and Communication), were introduced.

The minutes of the March 15, 1995 meeting were approved as distributed

Announcements and Reports

• Dean Upham announced the impending retirement of Robert Mazo (Professor of Chemistry) who has served as faculty liaison for the program review process for the past several years. Dan Kimble (Professor of Psychology) has agreed to assume this responsibility for the coming year, beginning with this spring's site visits.

• It was noted that Graduate Student Research Awards have now been decided. Award letters will go out within the next few days. Awards average between $300 and $500 each for travel to conferences or for dissertation/thesis research expenses. The Graduate School and Research Office made nearly $10,000 in awards.

• Dean Upham announced that the planning for a joint campus program in environmental science and policy appears to be back on track. The University is collaborating with OSU to establish a new doctoral program which will be offered both as a stand-alone degree from the UO and a joint-campus program with OSU.

• The Graduate Council went into executive session to discuss the current collective bargaining talks with the GTFF. Andy Dungan (doctoral student representative), who is presently a GTF, was excused for these brief discussions. Dean Upham presented a summary of the issues that will likely form the focus of collective bargaining for the 1995-97 contract.

Distance Education

As background to discussion with the invited guests, it was noted that copies of the third draft of the OSSHE distance education policy recommendations had been distributed with meeting packets. In addition it was noted that the Graduate Council's subcommittee report (which was provided to the guests) reflects UO's traditional concern with the issues of residency and credits counted toward degrees.
Curt Lind suggested that there is a significant distinction between two kinds of non-traditional education: 1) off campus instruction (traditional delivery mechanism provided by commuter faculty) and 2) distance education which he defined as telecommunication delivery by Ed-Net or 2-way audio/video. He suggests that UO has considerable experience with the former, but much less with the latter.

Professor Stavitsky provided a summary of his experiences with distance education supported by a State System academic productivity grant which is currently in progress. Three 200-level journalism courses are broadcast using Ed-Net 1-way video and 2-way audio hookups to three distance sites (Bend, Portland, and LaGrande). Because the UO now maintains the State's only journalism program, the courses were intended to enhance background preparation for students intending to transfer to the UO as journalism majors, or to augment limited offerings in support of other majors available at the remote sites.

Issues that have arisen during the course of this experience have included registration questions, tuition, library access, and technology access. Decisions about credit attribution were not always easily decided between institutions. And the remote site institutions made individual decisions whether to show the courses on their transcript or on a UO transcript.

Professor Stavitsky reported that there was no significant difference in GPA among students in the experimental courses, either differentially between sites or in comparison to the past several times the courses have been offered. Students willing to participate at the remote sites proved to be highly motivated (a fact which has been noted in previous research on distance education). It was suggested that the current experiment is actually a blend of distance education and off-campus instruction; the instructors did make several trips to hold office hours and special workshops at the remote sites.

Discussion turned to the changes in teaching and preparation style necessitated by the use of interactive video and audio technologies. The changes have implications for the training of future distance education instructors:

- use of more visual materials and outlines in place of straight lectures
- attention to quality of video and graphic materials
- copyright issues involving use of video material
- inclusion of frequent guests to maintain student interest and attention
- necessity to pre-test all new technical elements
- consolidation from 3 50-minute classes per week to 2 80-minute classes

All of the preparations were found to be very time consuming, at least during the pilot experience.

It was noted that the funding for most experiments to date has been from grants or other soft money; the enrollments do not yet provide for self-support in the face of high technical overhead and time-consuming preparation. Estimates suggest that, at current enrollment levels, distance education courses of the type produced for journalism range from $10,000-14,000 per course or $3,000-4,000 per student credit hour. State-wide interest in distance education is not followed up with funds in most cases, so extension and outreach activities currently depend on individual and institutional initiatives. OSU is more active because it has a centrally funded technical support service and a tradition of extension service activities.

Curt Lind was asked to provide an update on continuing education activities at the Capitol Center in suburban Portland. The center consists of a building to be opened in August 1995 under joint operation by OSSHE, PSU, Oregon Joint Graduate Schools of Business, OIT, and several other institutions, including UO. It began as an initiative of Chancellor Bartlett and is being developed very quickly to provide a base for distance education and Portland-based programs.
With the thanks of Council, the visitors departed. Council members noted that the information they had provided made it clear that the line between off-campus instruction and distance education is not a clear one. It was noted that any proposed new policy should address:

- in-load vs out-of-load teaching
- intellectual property rights for courseware
- transcripting

It was also stressed that at the present level of technical sophistication, it would be extremely difficult to make graduate level courses cost-effective using video delivery methods, since graduate courses typically have small enrollments. Access to library resources would remain a problem in any case.

It was pointed out that if the only way to serve a student population is by distance education, then these other questions will have to be addressed. In this context, it may become important to identify distinctions between master's and doctoral level programs or between professional and academic graduate degrees.

Dean Upham suggested that the next step should be the preparation of a draft policy that will provide a basis for specific feedback and comment. He will prepare a discussion draft for the next meeting.

The balance of the agenda was deferred until the next meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Richard Sundt, Secretary

xc: President
   Vice Presidents
   Vice Provosts
   Academic Deans