



Graduate Council Meeting
September 25, 2017
3:30 – 5:00
Frost Commons

Present: Linda Carrier (facilitator), Meg Peterson (scribe), Christie Sweeney, Chris Benedetti (rep. Ann Berry), Cindy Waltman, Clarissa Uttley, Jamie Hannon, Eric Hoffman, Heather Doherty, Irene Cucina, Jason Swift, Julie Bernier, June Hammond Rowan, Marcel Lebrun, Mardie Burckes-Miller, Osama Ta'ani, Pam Harland, Robin Hausher, Cheryl Coker (rep. Sean Collins), Shari Colby, Stacy Curdie, Susan Shapiro, Trish Lindberg, Gail Mears

Guests: Lori Armstrong, Ann McClellan, Donald Birx

Meeting Call to Order 3:30

1. August 27th meeting minutes were approved.

II. Old Business

We accepted the Draft By-Laws without amendment.

President Birx visited to speak to the council about the Concord site and about graduate programs in general.

Concord Update—We spend \$380,000 in rent plus \$100,000 in operations cost, which runs to a half a million dollars. Is this the best way to handle the funds? We are in the middle of a lease. We can walk away from that lease or negotiate a settlement. President Birx is open to keeping the Center running if there is a plan to grow the Center down there. The future depends on the vision we have for the Concord facility. How could we use the \$500,000? Could it be better used here? There is a point to be made for the Concord facility.

President Birx was asked if this was a done deal. He replied that we were at a crossroads. He noted that a doctor's office wanted to rent the two rooms in the back of the facility. He wondered if we wanted to keep it if we lost those two rooms. We would have to pay to get out of the lease. So we either have to make it work or walk away. It depends on what we want to do down there. We have three years left on the lease. He said there were about 5-7 classes that truly had participation down there, but other classes were just drawing students from Plymouth. The classes were mainly running on nights and weekends. We have been able to lease the space sometimes during the day but not enough to cover costs. Asked about options at the Granite State facility, he noted that they did have availability



at night and that there was a lot of open time because their programs mainly run on line. They do let other groups use their facilities at night. They also have a conference space. Some council members questioned if we were competitors, but President Birx was not concerned about this. He asked us to talk about this and come up with a proposal. As October 6th is the deadline for scheduling in the spring semester, Linda Carrier would like to know what courses need to be held in Concord, the course number and the times ASAP. Linda will compile this information for the President.

President's vision for graduate education: Graduate programs are very important to the future of Plymouth. He would like to see graduate programs become more integrated. The more we can make it an integrated picture the better. We want to start moving to majors and grad programs that are follow-ons to the clusters. This would have an opportunity for students who had not attended PSU to have a chance to experience a cluster-based approach. He sees a lot of market demand for this as well as for 4+1 programs. He would like to see at least 20% of undergraduates in 4+1 programs. This would create critical mass in the graduate programs. This critical mass in graduate programs can lead to more summer programs. We are already offering free housing in the summer. As we get summer conferences going this will provide more summer employment for students. Income and employability go up for students involved in graduate programs. He hopes to see grad and undergrad integrated in the leadership teams of the cluster and focus on 4+1 and a capstone type of graduate degree in a cluster environment. He sees this as critical to our future. Asked about PhD programs, he noted that they add stature to the university. We have to look at the data and build up the masters programs. We could look at PhD programs if we selected them carefully and looked at the marketplace, particularly professionally-oriented graduate programs. We are in a good location, because people either have to do them on line or come here to do them.

Questions were raised about double-counting credits in 4+1 programs. Currently, we have a rule about double-counting 6 credits. Julie Bernier clarified that the 6-credit policy was our own and that NEASC allows many more, as long as the students complete 30 credits at the graduate level. Questions were raised about whether they would pay graduate or undergraduate tuition for these credits. It was clarified that they can do 6 credits of a 30-credit masters degree by double-counting.

URSA: We are going to start the URSA-2 process. Some programs we are known for, such as meteorology, are not meeting their costs, yet they are one of the things for which Plymouth is known. The President has an eye on that. It is going to be very important to the future of Plymouth.

He noted that the administration would be making decisions based on new data. We are interested in whether this is a program that is contributing to the university financially or not. How can we sustain the major and also create broader appeal?



Deans will do a preliminary pass at all the data we have and bring in a subset of the URSA group to look at it with us. We will have a preliminary report by the end of the month.

Questions were raised about how soon that data would be available to all of us. Concerns were raised about inaccuracies in past data and how we would be assured that this data was accurate. Dean Mears suggested that the data could be available very soon. They would need to put it in a more user-friendly format.

Asked about how data was counted at the graduate level, President Birx replied that at the graduate level we look at the number of matriculated students and registrations. There was some discussion of how to analyze the data. President Birx noted that we would not be going through the full URSA process again. The focus would be on trying to figure out how to put together programs that can be strengthened and repackaged. We are thinking about putting together programs that broaden the appeal of the university and strengthen the majors.

Classroom Space and Scheduling: The President was asked if there was a chance of getting more classroom space for graduate programs. He responded that he hoped that would be possible if we can map the space and manage the schedule better than we have been doing. Merrill place has two rooms to do different things. When the church property goes through, there will be more space. Our utilization is pretty low for some time slots. We need to create a schedule to maximize use of space. We are going to redo the PE center. That will give us several more classrooms. With all these factors put together, the situation will be better than it is today. How can we reconfigure buildings that we have in order to use them more effectively? But there will be no new buildings, at least not in our lifetimes.

There was talk about scheduling differently on the Holderness side of campus vs. Plymouth side of campus. The President said that in considering the model, we would take all the constraints into consideration. He is considering a different scheduling framework for the university. At Penn State, they had a program which input data from the whole university and mapped out the schedule, giving priority to the requests that were made.

Administrative Issues: Concerns were raised about the programs that rely on GAship funding, and the need for greater predictability and consistency. We have not had that since Julie was provost. We are losing students because we do not know the funding in time and cannot assure them of financial support. The President stated that graduate assistantships would be level-funded for the following year.

It was suggested that guidelines for the administrative issues involved in administering 3+2 programs be developed by the university. The council would appreciate full university support of that. We would appreciate a tool, with information that we could use to create a 3+2 or 4+1 model.



President Birx noted that it would take faculty working with administrators to do that. Great idea.

The Council thanked President Birx for meeting with us.

Academic Affairs and Registrar Updates: No report. Linda had invited new registrar to meet with us, but she has only been here for a short time and is adjusting to her new position. She will be invited to future meetings.

Visit from the Transitional Leadership Team, Ann McClellan and Lori Armstrong of the Transition Leadership Team visited the Council to discuss their work and get input from us. They have been meeting since June, doing some fact-finding, information gathering. Ann and Lori asked us to think about what we would like them to address. What would you like from us? We should communicate what we see about how the programs are going to be integrated into clusters, because we don't yet know how this will work. What does the cluster model mean for our grad students?

The application of credits for GAships was raised as an issue, and the procedure was reviewed. It was pointed out that this is one symptom of a larger issue. Administrative support for graduate programs has shifted significantly with the dissolution of graduate studies. The system is changing and often these changes are not communicated to faculty, which leaves us unable to guide our students, leading to needless stress. The key is to develop better ways of communicating with faculty.

Ann McClellan asked What is the best way to do this? On the website? Email?

We suggested all of the above. This led to a discussion about communication to graduate students. We would appreciate a way to tailor communication to graduate students. Sometimes messages that go to graduate students are inappropriate, such as reminders about excessive partying. We need to be thoughtful about what we communicate to graduate students. We do not see that graduate students have been important in the communication.

How do we make these things happen?

Lori offered to come back next month and follow up with how the messages are being received. She can commit to attend graduate council and serve as a liaison to the Transition Leadership Team.

Could we look at a way to integrate them into the community? Reception for grad students? Could the Center for Transformation have workshops for grad TAs?

We were asked about our involvement with clusters. We don't see it as a huge difference with our graduate students so far. Clusters are mentioned, but not emphasized.

What do we want for grad in terms of clusters?



With the kind of graduate students we have now, and the kinds of programs we have now, we have trouble seeing how graduate programs fit. Most of our students are working professionals, attending school part-time, involved in programs that are very tightly structured because of accreditation constraints.

Ann McClellan brought up the idea of the flipped transcript and suggested that if that becomes a committee, there should be graduate representation on it.

The question was raised about how we could work within accreditation standards and do that.

Ann suggested that it could be integrated into existing programs without changing them, through tagging certain courses with designations such as leadership, diversity, technology, etc. These tags could be within the programs and give students additional value for their degree.

Could there be cluster hallmarks? If we came up with a new version of graduate hallmarks, these could be the tags that would be in the programs. We would have to discuss this ourselves.

The question was raised: What would be the purpose? What would be the point?

This would demonstrate our integration with the clusters, but also show outside audiences the skills students are getting and add value to their degree.

What does it mean to be authentically integrated into clusters? We can go back and say what it means to us that we are here in the cluster. We don't have that language yet and we still need to think about that.

What do clusters look like for non-residential graduate students? This is something we need to discuss further.

Lori agreed to attend Graduate Council regularly and to follow up on these issues and keep us connected to the Transition Leadership Team.

New Business

Graduate Student Representatives ---we need two grad student reps. Esther Wakefield, David Heard were names that were suggested. They will be contacted.

Graduate Commencement – Thursday night was the result of the poll. Dean Mears would like to have recommendations for speakers. She is looking for input on the ceremony. Sooner would be better. Send your suggestions to Gail Mears. We might be in Silver for the ceremony. This will be decided soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00.