

**Minutes from Meeting**  
**January 9, 2017**  
**1:30-3:00 pm**  
**Rooms 2102 (Bloomington) and 3138B (Indianapolis)**

**Members Present:** John Hitchcock, Kelzie Beebe, Leslie Chrapliwy, Christine Leland (IUPUI), Cristina Santamaria Graff (IUPUI), Chad Christensen

**Ex-Officio Present:** Y. Barry Chung, Brendan Maxcy (IUPUI)

**Members Absent:** Scott Bellini, Marjorie Manifold, Frank Di Silvestro, Jessica Lester

**Ex-Officio Absent:** Ghangis Carter

**Staff:** Matt Boots

- I. Review and Approval of Minutes from November 14, 2016
  - *Brendan Maxcy moved to approve the minutes from November 14, 2016, with the following changes: the date should be more prominently featured and easier to find for the reader; Elizabeth Boling should be moved to ex-officio absent.*
  - *Chad Christensen seconded the motion.*
  - *All in favor.*

II. New Business

A. **Course Change Request: J660**

The first item of new business was a course change request for J660. Mary McMullen noted that the proposed course, J660, is a graduate seminar open to MSED and doctoral students. Outcomes tend to focus on certain professional development goals, for example, how to write a proper research abstract. The course provides a consulting and advising function that many international students do not find enough of outside their formal coursework. It has been taught under other numbers and names for five years. Many international students take the seminar, as well as students who plan to move on to doctoral programs.

The course is currently taught by Mary McMullen and Cary Buzzelli. It stems from a student-led call for more meeting time and a desire for a greater sense of community. The formal request for a course change at this meeting is simply to give the seminar a formal number, so that students can shift independent study credits hours to J660. This course is repeatable for 12 credit hours; however, only six will be counted toward a student's program of study in a given major. Eight to fourteen students typically take the course whenever offered. The format is informal.

- *Christine Leland moved to approve the course change request J660, as presented.*
- *Chad Christensen seconded the motion.*
- *All in favor.*

B. **Graduate Bulletin Language Regarding Dissertation Defenses**

The second item of business regarded Graduate Bulletin language regarding dissertations. The suggested language for the Graduate Bulletin is as follows:

“The student and all members of the research committee are expected to attend the defense synchronously. In the event that exceptional and unforeseen circumstances prevent adherence to the policy, the department chair will determine whether the defense may proceed or must be reconvened. No defense should be scheduled with the expectation that one or more committee members will be unable to attend synchronously.”

The GSC discussed this language but eventually tabled further consideration of this item until more information could be received by the University Graduate School (UGS). But before tabling, several issues were discussed within the committee. What, for example, constituted an “exceptional and unforeseen circumstance?” Does this phrasing cover immediate problems such as a flat tire, or could it perhaps include the inability of a student to arrange for a time during which all committee members could attend a defense? Moreover, once a student insists on a defense in which not all members of the committee are present, where should the power to decide on a course of action reside? Should the committee chair be allowed the flexibility to make a decision based on the uniqueness of a given circumstance, or should the issue move up to the department chair, who would make an assessment based on the language in the Graduate Bulletin? The committee agreed that when the dissertation defense is initially scheduled, all dissertation committee members should be synchronously present for the defense. The Graduate Studies Committee resolved to acquire more information about possible language from the UGS, and to take up the issue at the next meeting.