Deans’ Group Minutes 04/11/01

In attendance: Ahmed Abdelal, Roy Bahl, Ron Colarusso, Reid Christenberry, Tim Crimmins, Janice Griffith, Sid Harris, Charlene Hurt, Susan Kelley, Mike Moore, Ron Henry chaired. Also in attendance: Charles Louis.

I. The minutes of 03/28 as modified were approved.

II. Issues of Graduate Education
Charles Louis discussed plans to advance GSU PhD programs into the top quartile of NRC rankings for our peer groups. He discussed the indicators used to measure the various programs as well as the most distinct predictors of successful programs. For discussion he also suggested focusing on obtaining graduate student data, the use of graduate student funding, criteria for evaluating graduate program quality, development of new graduate programs, and training grant support for graduate programs. He also discussed implementing collaborations with other universities, preparing doctoral students as faculty, tracking graduate education nationally, and the appropriate structure for supporting graduate education. He suggested five issues which should be addressed including: an agreed upon minimum stipend, centralized collection of data, control of tuition waivers, institutional resources for GAs, tuition stipends written into grants, and materials available describing problems graduate students encounter.

Ahmed Abdelal suggested that national rankings might be influenced by overall institutional reputations. Roy Bahl agreed with many of the comments made by Charles Louis and suggested that with limited resources many of these issues are very important. He also described that contract money may be driven away from graduate students toward the use of full time staff. He also suggested graduate teaching assignments may be increasingly necessary in the current budget climate. Charles Louis suggested that the national norm is to write student support into the grant.

Ron Henry stated the BOR has presented GSU with the identity of graduate programs that are under enrolled. In addition, BOR proposals for the graduate student insurance include an assumption that granting institutions will provide this support. Charlene Hurt indicated the lack of a central structure has hampered the library’s ability to provide assistantships to students although the funding is available as well as the implementation of electronic dissertations.

Sid Harris indicated from past experience that PhD programs are more effective if built from strong masters program. Charles Louis stated the size of a program is critical to student interactions. Ahmed Abdelal pointed out size alone may not be an appropriate measure, other characteristics such as overall goals need to be examined and further discussion is needed. Tim Crimmins expressed concern that NRC indicators may not focus on developing future teachers in the professorate. Ron Henry indicated the “Preparing Future Teachers” program supported by the Pew Foundation promotes this idea. Ahmed Abdelal stressed the importance of limiting teaching assignments to graduate students under the current budgetary limitations. Roy Bahl asked if the university should capture the best parts of small programs and break down the fragmentation of programs. Ron Henry suggested we should examine combining programs and faculties. Ahmed Abdelal repeated his suggestion to pool graduate student groups, but has found it difficult to accomplish this. Mike Moore agreed that data regarding graduate student measures need to be collected and also indicated that it will be difficult to aggregate programs especially concerning their institution resources.

Susan Kelley asked how the university could centralize graduate student programs. Charles Louis suggested data need to be available across colleges. Mike Moore indicated much of the information is not available across the university. Ron Henry emphasized that these input data are difficult to obtain, making the measuring output of the university problematic. Roy Bahl suggested a centralized collection procedure. Ron Colarusso reminded that group these issues were previously discussed at a retreat and need to be revisited.

Ron Henry then asked the group to consider requirements for graduate assistance and the BOR proposal concerning insurance for graduate students receiving a tuition waiver at one of the state’s research institution (the cost to the university would be approximately $475,000.) Tuition waivers currently cost the university approximately $5.33 M this year. The BOR suggested the university increase the cost of the stipends to cover the student’s portion of the coverage. Ahmed Abdelal also suggested the potential of a graduated waiver. Roy Bahl emphasized examining the benefits to university.

Janice Griffith asked if special consideration will be given to the COL. Susan Kelley indicated that in CHHS increasing the minimum required hours for GAs may make large changes in the number of students who can participate as GAs. Ahmed Abdelal proposed the minimum requirements for GAs at $2000 per term and 9 hours of course work, and encouraged the development of research courses. Tim Crimmins suggested many Masters students are working part or full time in addition to attending graduate school, and these individuals may not be able to be GAs under these requirements, reducing the number of these assistantships.
Roy Bahl suggested that different colleges and schools have different requirements of their GAs. He encouraged continued discussion concerning considerations of the needs of the units and that accountability of the colleges should be emphasized. Charles Louis suggested changes should be considered once appropriate data are collected concerning the strength of graduate programs. Ron Henry summarized the discussion thus far to include the suggestion that GAs be granted at the $2000 per term level for spring and fall and $1000 for the summer.

Submitted by Lisa Beck 04/12/01