Minutes- Graduate Committee Meeting
3/14/06
Recorded by J. Weisinger

Attendees: Rick Adkission (Chair), Bobbie Green, Kathy Brook, Michelle Jasso, Cindy Seipel, Judy Weisinger

Meeting was called to order at 10:40 am.

Approval of minutes (via email prior to this meeting).

I. Liz Ellis’ proposal for a permanent catalog change for BLAW 502 substitution:

Currently, all MBA students are required to take BLAW 502. This course is taught as a legal environment overview since some students will not have had any prior law course. As a result, students who have an undergraduate degree in business or who took a legal environment of business course as undergraduates often encounter a good deal of redundancy in their MBA legal environment course. To minimize this redundancy, we suggest allowing those MBA students who have taken an undergraduate Business Law or Legal Environment of Business course to substitute any other 500 level BLAW course for BLAW 502. Currently, their options would include BLAW 518, BLAW 527 and BLAW 540. Students who elected this substitution would need to complete another course for their MBA elective.

To accomplish this, the following language could be added to the Graduate Catalog under “Required Course Work (36 credits) – Paragraph 3 – new subparagraph “c”:

c. Students who have completed an undergraduate business law course or legal environment of business course, with a grade of B or better, may elect to substitute any higher numbered BLAW course for BLAW 502.

Motion (Seipel): To forward Ellis’ proposal for a faculty vote within two-three weeks.
Seconded (Jasso); approved unanimously.
Chair will forward the proposal to the faculty via email for their review in preparation for either a vote at the next faculty meeting, or an online vote if no time on the faculty meeting agenda.

Other departments having similar proposals should forward these to the committee chair.

II. WSMR Class Sizes

There are currently 40 students in the summer classes at WSMR, but there could be more once enrollments are completed. The issue of large class sizes will be an ongoing issue especially as new WSMR cohorts comes on board. At this point, the larger class sizes are mostly a summer issue.
There is not much the committee can do per se to address large MBA class sizes, other than make suggestions about how we might deal with the issue, e.g., limit class sizes, vary limits by type of course, etc. College is in need of a long term plan. The committee should come up with a recommendation to put forward to the graduate faculty and other interested faculty, at a meeting to be scheduled in April.

III. Interactive MBA Courses

Discussions between Bobbie Green and Kevin Mc Nelis are underway for him to teach a pilot interactive TV MBA course- ACCT 503. Class size would be about 60. Such a course would be needed if a 2nd cohort comes on at WSMR. Plus, ACCT dept will be short in class coverage due to faculty retirement. Further benefits: single set of resources to provide wider coverage; existing capabilities at DABCC@WSMR and potentially also at LANL for proctoring exams. Bobbie Green has contacted Denise Wells about delivering to LANL.

Motion (Green): To offer a one-time pilot MBA course, ACCT 503, in the interactive TV format, assuming the technical logistics can be arranged. The course would include on-campus students as well as WSMR and LANL students, and exams would be proctored. The course progress and outcomes would be closely monitored to evaluate the long-term viability of the interactive course format.

Seconded (Jasso); approved unanimously.

IV. Online MBA

Currently, two MBA courses are scheduled to be taught online this summer:

SU I- BCIS 502 (Green)
SU II – ECON 503 (Erickson)

Both instructors have agreed to be available for on-campus office hours.

Bobbie Green has polled student interest (those scheduled to take the on-campus section) and they were generally favorable about switching to an online offering.

We had a discussion about whether these courses need faculty approval, as per the bylaws. Rick Adkisson pointed out that any significant change in the curriculum (e.g., instituting an online MBA, would require a faculty vote). However, we could offer these two courses with a one-time approval. Bobbie Green agreed to write up a specific proposal and email to the committee for a vote.

As a result of the committee’s discussion about an online MBA program, class sizes, resource constraints, and quality issues, Kathy Brook suggested that the committee invite the Dean to come talk to us about what he has in mind for distance education and the
future of the MBA program. Committee members agreed that this was a good idea, and a more productive way to proceed relative to having a large, unproductive faculty-wide meeting discussion first.

IV. Outcomes Assessment

Kathy Brook indicated the urgent need for us to proceed on measuring outcomes for the MBA program, most critically for the North Central accreditation, though this would also overlap with AACSB. Bobbie Green is already working with Kevin Boberg on an assessment for BA 502. The subcommittee working on this will need to work within their departments (versus asking for overall faculty input) to come up with some additional potential measures, some of which faculty might already be using. This could be facilitated by first reviewing the syllabi of MBA courses within our respective departments, then following up with graduate faculty for feedback and input. We are on a tight timeline, so this needs to be done asap. A straw proposal could then be developed and circulated for discussion at a proposed MBA faculty meeting sometime after Spring Break. One of the goals is to devise an assessment form that could be widely used to capture the data we need, though we recognize that we will still need to continue to improve the assessment(s) and the process.

Meeting adjourned at 11:47 am.