The GSAS Policy and Program’s Committee includes the graduate directors of GSAS programs, including representatives from the graduate only departments, the director of GRAD, a representative from Tisch Library and the Office of Graduate Studies, three student representatives from the Graduate Student Council, the dean of GSAS and her administrative assistant.

In addition to the two GSAS faculty meetings in 2010-11, which our Policy and Program members attend and conduct business, the Programs and Policy Committee met an additional six times. Curricula and programming issues were discussed, courses approved and several votes taken for new programs, concentrations and graduate school policies. Below are the highlights and votes for the key issues.

At our September meeting we introduced several new opportunities for graduate students including a Mental Health Workshop for TAs, library workshops and the expansion of the Spirit Fund. The committee approved new course requirements for the Museum Education program and approved a new certificate in Science Education. The certificate is the first GSAS program whose core curriculum is offered on-line. The new certificate will need NEASC approval for because of its online course delivery. We began a discussion of graduate school guidelines on assessing TA and RA performance.

At our GSAS faculty meeting in October the results of the NRC report on the assessment of US doctoral programs was presented, including an in depth discussion of the data and methodology.

At our November meeting the committee continued the discussion of TA/RA assessment with the goal of providing guidelines for all our programs on assessment and a draft policy was made up based on this discussion. The committee also discussed the recent EPC resolution on “incomplete” grades i.e. that a default grade would be automatically assigned if the incomplete is not changed and its implication for graduate courses. Finally the committee was informed of upcoming changes in the application review process as the Office of Graduate Studies makes the transition from paper to electronic application review.
At the December meeting the dean reported on career tracking for our graduate degree recipients based on a report that she prepared and presented for the annual meetings at the Council of Graduate Schools in Washington. It was announced that after 20 years of service to Tufts, Donna DePrizio would be leaving her position as degree certification administrator. The committee approved the Department of Mathematics request to remove the foreign language requirement for Ph.D. candidates and to change the doctoral degree requirement on oral exams to passing three exams from five topics instead of three exams out of four topics.

Marisel Perez, Associate Dean of Students, addressed the committee informing them that there has been an increase in graduate students seeking assistance for mental health issues and reminded committee members to be sensitive to student needs and to be aware of the medical leave process and the services. Staff from Tisch library were present and announced that they are interested in working with GSAS on thesis and dissertation workshops for masters and doctoral students.

In January we discussed and revised a policy on TA/RA assessment to present to the GSAS faculty meeting in February. Regarding the incomplete grade policy the committee decided to add the following statement to our current policy on academic standing...“two or more incompletes (incompletes existing for more than one semester) may be grounds for dismissal.” This change allows for the policy of permanent incompletes on a student’s record and the implications for academic standing.

At our February GSAS faculty meeting the TA assessment policy was approved. The research assessment policy was tabled for a broader interpretation of assessing research skills. A new interdisciplinary doctoral program in Chemical Physics, joint between Chemistry and Physics, was presented and approved.

In March a proposal for a new interdisciplinary doctoral program in Cognitive Sciences was presented and approved. This program is currently joint with SoE. (The proposal was presented to and approved by the GSAS Faculty at an AS&E meeting on March 30th.) The committee approved Occupational Therapy department’s recommendation to reduce the number of credit requirements for the post-professional masters degree were reduced from 10 to 8.

At our April meeting a consultant for ETS (Educational Testing Services) gave a
presentation about the Personal Potential Index (PPI), a new admission’s tool developed by ETS to help evaluate non-cognitive skills necessary for success. A new course on “Children and Mass Media” in the Department of Child Development was approved at this meeting. The final policy on TA assessment only was presented and will be published in the Graduate Student Handbook. It was announced that in addition to the TA orientation in the fall, a separate orientation will also be held for new RAs. Also at this meeting the restructuring of Student Services and Student Affairs was discussed.

At the end of year meeting announcements were made regarding the hooding ceremony, noting that the largest number of GSAS doctoral degrees –51--were conferred this year. It was also noted that the enrollment in the GIFT program was increased by 25% to 25 GIFT fellows. It was also announced that GSAS would participate with the CITY YEAR program by allowing application fee waiver for CITY YEAR alumni plus a 25% tuition scholarship for accepted CITY YEAR alumni into our programs. The remainder of this meeting focused on the up-coming NEASC accreditation and the steps we hope to take to make the process more productive including developing a GSAS Program Review site.

Respectively submitted by

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