2017-2018 GCC Members:

Bafna, Sonit (CoD-Arch)

Balch, Tucker (CoC-IC)

Ballantyne, David (Physics)

Breedveld, Victor (CHBE - GCC Vice Chair)

Ceccagnoli, Marco (CoB)

Chow, Edmond (CoC-CSE)

Coleman, Maribeth (Faculty Exec Board Liaison)

Davenport, Mark (ECE)

Dovrolis, Konstantions (CoC-CS)

Erera, Alan (ISYE)

Ferri, Bonnie (Vice-Provost for Grad Educ)

Hays, James (CoC-IC)

Henderson, Clifford (ChBE)

Jagoda, Jeff (AE)

Johnson, Henderson (GCC Student Rep)

Macrakis, Kristie (HTS)

Peponis, John (CoD-Arch)

Pikowsky, Reta (Registrar)

Ranjan, Devesh (ME)

Ries, Christine (ECON)

Schmidt-Krey, Ingeborg (BIOL)

Sluss, David (CoB – GCC Chair)

Smith, Marilyn (AE)

Vigoda, Eric (CoC-CS)
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Dept/School</th>
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<td>Amy Hodges</td>
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<td>Dr. Smith</td>
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<td>Dr. Phillips, OAE</td>
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Institute Graduate Curriculum Committee
Minutes
Thursday September 7, 2017

Present: Sluss (CoB - IGCC Chair), Breedveld (ChBE – IGCC Vice Chair), Pikowsky (Registrar/Secretary), Bafna (CoD-Arch), Ballantyne (Physics), Davenport (ECE), Ferri (Vice Provost, Grad Edu.), Jagoda (AE), Ranjan (ME), Schmidt-Krey (BIOS), Smith (AE) Vigoda (CoC-CS)

Visitors: Hodges (Registrar), Hogarth-Smith (Registrar), Phillips (Academic Effectiveness)

Note: All action items in these minutes require approval by the Academic Senate. In some instances, items may require further approval by the Board of Regents or the University System of Georgia. If the Regents’ approval is required, the change is not official until notification is received from the Board to that effect. Academic units should take no action on these items until USG and/or BOR approval is secured. In some cases, approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-CoC may also be required; in others, notification by the Institute will suffice. In addition, units should take no action on any of the items below until these minutes have been approved by the Academic Senate or the Executive Board.

Note: All votes are unanimous unless noted otherwise.

There was not a quorum at this meeting. In the absence of a quorum, the full committee will vote via email on the Minutes as recommendations of those that were present and then they will vote to approve the Minutes.

Administrative Matters

1. The Registrar’s Office was notified of some discrepancies in the MS in Cybersecurity program. Courses in the original proposal were listed as Special Topics, but were already approved with permanent numbers. There was also one correction to a Special Topics title. The changes have been reflected in the 2017-2018 Institute catalog.

Catalog corrections – ACKNOWLEDGED

Corrected Special Topics title:

Two courses were listed as Special Topics, but already were offered as permanent course listings.
ECE 6320 – Power Systems Control and Operations (effective date 199908 in BANNER)
ECE 6323 – Power System Protection (effective date 199908 in BANNER)

**Academic Matters**

1. A motion was made to approve a request from the Office of Graduate Studies to endorse language to be posted on the Graduate Studies website (under the New & Current Students Tab and Faculty Tab) outlining best practices for programs, faculty, and students in regards to Ph.D. Qualifying/Comprehensive Exams. The motion was seconded and approved.

Since this is a statement of best practices, rather than guidelines, the Committee deemed it appropriate for placement on the Graduate Studies website.

For programs:

- Make detailed information regarding exam formats, rules, and scope (e.g. course syllabi on which exams are based) available and easily accessible to promote timely preparation.
- Archive written and oral exam questions with solutions (where possible) and make accessible to all students sitting for exams.
- Schedule exams for students, and offer more than one opportunity each year for them to complete comprehensive exams. “Opportunities” can be interpreted broadly and could include re-takes to demonstrate proficiency scheduled on a case-by-case basis shortly after a failed attempt, for flexibility and to avoid unnecessary delays in exam completion.
- Maintain historical records of student performance.
- Seek feedback from students who take exams, for review by program faculty, as well as feedback from all students regarding exam reforms.
- Develop and promote exam preparation support programs in partnership with students (see Item 1, for students below).
- Communicate information regarding stress management and mental health resources available for students regularly, and include with exam support and preparation materials.

For faculty:

- Provide appropriate latitude in work schedules to allow for exam preparation by students whom faculty advise/supervise. (See the Policy Library on schedule flexibility under assistantships.)
- Participate in a collaborative, collective exam formulation and evaluation process that reinforces shared understanding of core knowledge requirements for the exam area.
- Multiple graders should grade an exam and reflect a common understanding among faculty of core material. No one faculty member should have sole control of a student’s exam result.
Note: The Committee requested that this item be updated to read, “Grade exams with multiple faculty to reflect a common understanding of core material so as to avoid one faculty member having sole control over a student’s exam result.”

- Give constructive feedback to students on exam performance within a reasonable timeframe. For example, feedback on written exams might be notes on a student’s responses or an explanation of point deductions on problem sets. Feedback on oral exams might be a rubric with scores and comments that can promote standardized evaluation and feedback across sub-groups of the faculty.
- Acknowledge the stress exams create for students, watch for warning signs, and be prepared to provide information on where students can go for help in dealing with it.

For students:

- Develop and promote peer-led exam preparation support programs (e.g. mock oral exams, one-on-one exam mentoring, study groups).
- Provide constructive feedback to programs regarding the comprehensive exam experience when solicited.
- Keep an eye out for fellow students having difficulty managing stress and encourage them to seek stress-management resources (academic advisors, counseling center, etc.

2. A motion was made to approve a request from the Office of Graduate Studies for language to be amended in the Catalog relating to doctoral Comprehensive Exams. The motion was seconded and approved.

Since this policy falls under the Rules and Regulations section of the Catalog, it will be sent forward to the Student Regulations Committee for official action.

Current Catalog language:

Found at:
http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/academics/graduate/doctoral-degree-info/#otherrequirements

Comprehensive Exams

The comprehensive examination assesses both general knowledge of the degree area and specialized knowledge of the student’s chosen research field. Each school is responsible for scheduling comprehensive examinations at least once a year, in the fall or spring, and for informing students of their scope. A guidance committee appointed by the chair of the school will advise each student in planning a program of study and preparing for the examination, partly through
an initial evaluation of the student's background and interests, and partly through periodic consultation to evaluate and aid the student's progress.

**Proposed Changes:**

**Comprehensive Exams**
The comprehensive examination assesses both general knowledge of the degree area and specialized knowledge of the student’s chosen research field. Each program is responsible for scheduling comprehensive examinations at least once a year and for providing students information regarding exam formats, rules, and scope. Exam retakes are to occur no later than the end of the second normal term in the standard Academic Calendar following the failed attempt.

**Discussion Items**

1. The Registrar tasked the Committee for more input on when credit can be double counted for graduate degrees. The BS/MS programs have a clear policy statement related to this, but questions have arisen about double counting credit when students are doing two MS degrees at Tech. There is a transfer credit policy that addresses credit coming in from other institutions and not be allowed for us if it applied to a previous degree. The Registrar’s Office seeks some clarity on the larger issue of when double counting can or cannot be permitted.

   The issue really arises when two MS degrees are involved. The Committee concluded that sharing credit between an MS degree and a PhD degree is not a concern. That is an acceptable practice for which we have no concerns.

   The Committee did make comments in favor of double counting credit when the programs were structured with higher numbers of credits to complete the program. For example, the MBA program requires a total of 54 credits. The Committee appeared comfortable with students “sharing” 15 hours of electives with outside coursework since the student would still need to complete 39 hours of MBA coursework that is beyond the 30-hour minimum for a Master’s level degree.

   The Committee might wish to consider a residency requirement such as that required of undergraduate students pursuing two undergraduate degrees at Tech. In this case, the student must complete 36-hours of coursework beyond the credits required for the first degree to meet the residency requirement for the second degree. This is to ensure that enough hours are completed for both undergraduate degrees to ensure that they meet GT standards. At the MS level, except for the transfer credit policy, there is no such rule.

   There was a discussion of the existing Internal Dual MS degrees at Tech and it was pointed out that sharing of credits is allowed in this case because it was approved as part of the original proposal. The nature of a “dual degree” is that there is some “transfer of credit.” Therefore, approved dual degrees would not be of concern in this matter.
It was also noted that a possible way to draft better possible language for the Catalog would be to put limits on double counting, not disallow it completely. The Committee seemed open to this as a possibility as well.

The Registrar will rephrase the policy suggestions discussed at this meeting and send first to the Graduate Coordinators for input. Once we have the input of the Graduate Coordinators, the Committee can determine if it wishes to take a vote to amend the Catalog language.

Two different options will be offered to the Graduate Coordinators. The first would be to disallow double counting for MS degrees and the second would be to allow it, but within limitations.

2. There is an additional discussion point regarding the doctoral comprehensive examination. The Catalog currently states that Schools are to have one. The question is what procedure needs to be followed if a program decides that it does not wish to include a comprehensive examination. The additional question is whether the comprehensive examination can be defined in different ways by the academic units. There is one unit that discontinued its doctoral comprehensive examination. Some follow up will be done with the Committee to document the change properly and to examine the larger issues identified during the discussion.

Adjourned,

Reta Pikowsky,
Secretary