Minutes
Graduate Academic Affairs Committee
November 13th, 2020 – via zoom

Call to Order: R. Wood called the meeting to order at 9:00am via zoom.

New Business:

Update on Academic Portfolio Review and Ongoing Role of the Academic Affairs Committees in the Portfolio Review Process – Provost Lewis:

Provost Lewis requested that the GAAC discuss participation options in the Portfolio Review Process.   The same topic was discussed by Provost Lewis at the UAAC meeting that took place on 11/5/20.

Rob stated a recommendation was made at the UAAC meeting that together to further explore the options since both groups are being asked to participate. A question to consider: Are we the appropriate groups to do this?

- *Provost Lewis brought up a second issue related to racial diversity and inclusion on campus. Dr. Jonathon Smith and Provost Lewis were asked by students to include them on university-wide committees and initiatives. The students also asked that this topic be covered in the courses being offered and taught.*

Revised Proposal for a Joint PhD in Bioethics & Philosophy – April Trees:

The Master of Science (MS) in Biostatistics and Health Analytics is designed for students with strong quantitative abilities and a desire to apply statistics, computer programming and data analysis to health-related issues. We live in the era of big data, where every day we create 2.5 quintillion bytes of data, 30% of which comes from the health care industry. This program prepares students to become biostatisticians or data scientists who can handle this data.

Need:
The student demand for master's degrees in biostatistics is high; the number of students in the US who have received master's degrees in biostatistics has increased by a factor of seven since 2000. "Data scientist" has been named by glassdoor.com as the number one job with a median base salary of $108K and a job satisfaction rating of 4.3/5. US News and World Report lists "statistician" as the number two job, with a median base salary of $84K and an unemployment rate of 0.9%. The proposed program is more focused on biostatistics and data science than the currently offered MPH with an emphasis in biostatistics, which is a broadly-based professional degree.

The plan is to target both traditional students who could finish the program in two years and students who are employed full-time (and often have tuition benefits with their employer) and want to complete the program part-time. Courses will be offered in the afternoon and evenings to accommodate these students.

- *Recommendation Decision: Unanimously recommended.*

FYI – Only – A description of the ridge program without a computer science program enter-into our MS Programs in Computer Science – April Trees

FYI – This will not be in the catalog. A computer science program put together a set of courses designed for students, for example who have done their undergraduate in Philosophy and they want to shift to computer science, but they do not have some of the basic course work they need to be prepared for the Master's program, they will take this set of course work that will prepare them for the Master's coursework. The idea of this if they successfully complete these courses and do well in them, they will be admitted into the Master's program (if they choose to do so). This is designed as a preparatory program for students who want to get a degree in Computer Science that do not have the undergraduate background that they need.

- *FYI Only*

Geospatial Health Data Analytics Concentration – Steve Rigdon:

A substantial program change report was submitted by Geospatial Health Data Analytics Concentration that The Master of Science in Biostatistics and Health Analytics is planning on adding a Geospatial Health Data Analytics Concentration to the degree.

- *Recommendation Decision: More discussion on this topic to follow.*
- *Summarize the changes the committee would like to have on this proposal and send to Rob. Rob will talk to Steven regarding the changes the committee would like to see on this proposal. This will be discussed at the December meeting.*

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM and the next meeting will take place on Friday, December 11th, 2020 @ 9 AM via zoom.

October 9th 2020 minutes were unanimously approved.

Link will be sent out prior to the meeting.