Graduate Studies Continuous Assessment Committee

Minutes – January 10, 2003

C. Hulick (Facilitator), graduate faculty, M. Jacobs, graduate faculty, R. Campoy, graduate faculty, J. Willis, graduate faculty, B. Koenecke, graduate faculty, D. Wasson, graduate faculty, C. Thresher, faculty, S. Massie, faculty, J. Navan (Scribe), graduate faculty

The committee decided that program improvement for the elementary, middle, and secondary graduate programs will include plans for the existing programs and might include the development of a plan for exploring new programs.

Significant discussion occurred related to program improvement efforts using the current Masters Degree configuration for 2002-2003 academic year:

- How can the articulation be improved between instructors of the same course and between the readers of the same comprehensive examination question?
- Is there a way of improving the criteria for a passing score on the comprehensive examination?
- Would using portfolio assessment be a way to improve the current Masters Degree?
- What kind of faculty training opportunities should be provided to improve the advisement process and program delivery (including assessment approaches)?
- Should each team of readers debrief after scoring exams to discuss student results in relation to the next exam, course content, and future curriculum?

The Committee agreed that with Chuck Hulick stepping down, the new Graduate Coordinator must be a faculty member. This will ensure the continuity and understanding necessary to continually assess and improve graduate programs. As a part of the discussion about the new Masters Degree, the roles and responsibilities for the Coordinators position should be discussed and possibly revised to better reflect the new organizational structure of the College.

The following essential issues were proposed to be considered when assessing and modifying the Masters Degree program for future change and improvement:

- What are the goals of the graduate program?
- What are the objectives of the program?
- How do we assess student learning and development upon completion of the program?
- What needs to be added and/or modified to improve the process?
- How will we gather data that will allow us to continually assess the program?
- How do we resolve the “professional development” vs. “academic rigor” debate?

In addition to the essential issues, the committee also wanted to examine the configuration of programs in Graduate Studies (for example, the separate Ed.S. programs in Elementary, Middle and Secondary), and corresponding CIP codes. Do we need to reconfigure these programs in order to maintain the programs under CPE guidelines?

The Committee discussed and considered reviewing the content of the two research courses in the Masters program. The Committee discussed a program change that would require an educational inquiry course to be taken during the first 9 hrs. of a student’s program. The course
would provide the fundamentals of action research, preparing students for graduate inquiry, and assisting them in focusing and planning their course of study. This would also provide students a better sense of the program, of making connections within their program, of advising, and direction toward the final assessment – thesis, comps, or portfolio.

The Committee would like to consider exploring a variety of assessment formats as part of student continuous assessment documentation in the MA programs. These might include comprehensive exam, thesis, action research, and/or portfolios. Also, should the Rank 1 and Rank II programs have a terminal assessment (e.g., portfolio)?