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GPSC 5699 07F

Proposed Revision
Policy for Graduate Certificate Programs

Because of the increased interest in establishing graduate programs at levels that are lower than the doctorate, we have seen an increase in the number of certificate programs suggested. In addition, the THECB and SACS are asking for data on all types of certificate programs. In the past, only transcribed graduate certificate programs were reviewed by GPSC. We are now requesting that all certificate programs, whether transcribed or not, be reviewed by council.

Attached is a copy of the current policy on review of certificate programs. Please review and make suggestions to bring this current policy in line with the new realities.

Proposal for a Policy for Certificate Programs

GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Final
GPSC 4548 01S

2001, August

Explanation:

As a result of University needs and faculty response to the use of certificate programs in graduate education, this proposal has been created to establish a policy regarding certificate programs. The intent is not to exclude the good ideas of an academic unit. Therefore, the definitions and guidelines herein are not all-inclusive and revisions may be necessary as certificate programs develop across the institution. Instead, the hope of this proposal is to offer guidelines and encouragement to faculty interested in proposing new programs, and to keep administrators informed of programs campus-wide. Finally, it is expected that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will eventually take an active role in monitoring some types of certificate programs.

Definition of Certificate Programs:

Certificate programs can be used in graduate education for various purposes. The overriding purpose of all certificates is to offer a vehicle by which academic work (less substantial than that required for a degree) can be formally recognized. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Interdisciplinary work completed in a set of predefined areas and across academic units in conjunction with or in addition to the graduate degree.
2. Direct entry for students with no intention of earning a graduate degree but who seek some graduate level work to enhance their knowledge and skills in a particular area.
3. Specialization of a particular area within a degree program.

Approval Procedure:Required Approvals

1. Interdisciplinary certificates are those that require cooperation among academic units. Because this is the case, these certificates would bear the name of the University. In this case, the certificate must be approved by the Deans of the units offering the certificate, as well as by Graduate and Professional Studies Council (GPSC), the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies, the Provost and the President.
2. Direct entry certificate programs usually require additional resources. For this reason, the certificate must also be approved by the Dean of the unit offering the certificate, as well as GPSC, the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies, the Provost and the President.
3. Certificates that show specialization within a particular area of a degree program do not need approval beyond the Dean of the college offering the certificate. Nevertheless, a report of the program should be given to the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies so his or her office is informed of graduate education opportunities on campus.

Approval Procedure

For examples one and two, interdisciplinary and direct entry certificate programs, the following materials must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies for consideration by GPSC, et. al.:

1. An abstract summarizing the proposal (including type of certificate program)
2. A statement demonstrating the need for the program including the presence and/or success of similar programs at other institutions
3. An overview of the programs including:
 - a. The academic unit administering the program
 - b. The proposed timeframe for initiation of the program
 - c. The intended student body (academic background, and expected number of students participating)
 - d. Titles of those administering the program
 - e. Number of faculty (including number of tenured, tenure-track, adjunct and visiting faculty)
 - f. Other committed resources
4. Admission requirements
5. Curriculum
6. Program location (on-campus; off-campus, i.e. study abroad or distance education, etc.)
7. Whether accreditation is to be obtained by outside body (including name of the accreditation body)
8. Whether transcription of the certificate to student records (transcripts) is requested
9. Any other relevant information

Note: Certificates requiring approvals beyond the college level should require a minimum of 9 semester credit hours for completion.

For example number three, certificates of specialization, a memorandum signed by the Dean of the college showing approval of the certificate program, as well as attached information as defined in items number 1, 3, 5, and 7 above, must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies for informational purposes only.

Annual Reporting

All graduate and/or professional certificate program directors or administrators should provide an annual report to the dean(s) of the college(s) involved which is then forwarded to the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies. This report can be a copy of a form already submitted annually to other entities such as the dean of the college or an outside accreditation body. If no other reporting is generally required, then the report should include the following information for the previous academic year:

1. Department and college administering the program
2. Type of certificate program
3. Location of program
4. Number of students participating
5. Number of students completing the program
6. Number and type of faculty participating in the program
7. Areas of concern
8. Areas of improvement from previous years
9. Other relevant information

Signature denotes approval:

Senior Vice-President and Provost

Date