Present: Boosalis, Brostrand, Gonzales, Goodwin, Hembree, Ross, Heredia, Perez, Pan, Berta-Avila

Minutes from 2/19/15 approved

New Business
1) Scholarship Review
   We have over 650 applications and at least 3 faculty must review each application. Requested Assoc Dean request COE scholarship review committee be assembled. We will distribute a sign-up sheet at the upcoming COE monthly meeting. Hembree will solicit additional COE faculty participation for scholarship committee. Our April SSOAR meeting will consist of on-line scholarship review.

2) Graduation with distinction policy
   Background – Grad studies recognizes excellence @ grad level with notation on transcript. We can implement existing policy in COE. The committee engaged in discussion regarding the procedure for approval and what would qualify as the academic unit. Usually, the thesis/project committee would nominate. Nominating group or committee would need to be identified in some cases (i.e., exam). SSOAR Chair and others will work on a draft policy which SSOAR will discuss and finalize in the Fall with hope for implementation by Spring 2016.

3) Amber Gonzalez is spearheading the PERSIST program based on link between faculty engagement and graduation. Each College has “critical faculty” for undergraduate retention rates; they are instituting an on-line retention tool for faculty to use when advising. A call will be made for the development of a COE Action Team to review data on retention and recruitment.

Old Business
4) COE Recruitment TABLED

Next meeting: April 16, 1:15PM for scholarship reviews
Addendum - 4/16/15

1. SSOAR used its last committee meeting of the semester (4/16/15) to complete Scholarship Reviews. Since this is the first time we have completed these reviews as a scholarship committee, it may be useful for the committee to evaluate the process to make recommendations for next year’s reviews and formation of scholarship committee.

2. Terms are ending for several SSOAR committee members, and there will be several vacancies on the committee beginning in Fall, 2015. Please see term and vacancy information below. Bolded names indicate terms ending Spring 2015.

Terms and Vacancies for SSOAR Committee – Spring, 2015

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<tr>
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<td>Margarita Berta-Avila</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:bamargie@csus.edu">bamargie@csus.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>vacant</td>
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<td>Francisco Reveles</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:revelesf@csus.edu">revelesf@csus.edu</a></td>
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<td>Heather Brostrand</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:brostrand@csus.edu">brostrand@csus.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheri Hembree</td>
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<td>Ravin Pan</td>
<td>Student Support</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:panr@saclink.csus.edu">panr@saclink.csus.edu</a></td>
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<td>Harold Murai</td>
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<td>Kathe Goodwin/Ashley Ciraulo-Stuart (alt)</td>
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<td>Kimberly Ross</td>
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<td>Ashley Petrini</td>
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**There are additional positions for students and community partners that remain vacant

3. The committee was not able to meet to decide priorities for the next academic year, but have discussed:
   • developing activities, structures, and policies for college-wide recruitment
   • submitting graduation with distinction policy to Grad branch and DAC (Attached is a draft of a graduation with distinction policy to consider in 2015-2016 academic year)
DRAFT 4/2015  
College of Education  
Graduation with Distinction Policy

Note: Existing University Policy is listed. College of Education draft policy/procedure additions in green

For the purposes of awarding degrees with distinction at the graduate level, the overall performance of degree candidates in each department or equivalent academic program will be judged in relationship to the performance of degree-seeking students in that unit, not in relation to other university graduate students. Two criteria will be used in evaluating students to determine if they merit a notation of distinction: grade point average and the quality of the work produced by the student for the culminating experience.

To graduate “with distinction,” a graduate student must

1. have a cumulative grade point average of 3.8 or higher at the time the student’s degree is posted,
2. have completed at least 18 units in residency, and
3. be nominated for distinction by a unanimous vote of his or her dissertation/thesis/project/examination committee or equivalent academic program committee.

Each department or equivalent academic program may establish a graduation with distinction policy, but is not required to establish such a policy. The University recognizes that each discipline has its own mechanisms and standards for evaluating student work. Departments or equivalent academic programs desiring to nominate students to graduate with distinction must specify the standards and procedures that will be used to judge or measure distinction in the culminating experience, including but not limited to originality of the work, mastery of knowledge of the discipline, and/or broader significance as a contribution to learning.

Although there can be no rigorous quota on the number of graduate students awarded distinction, the standard of merit should be such that no more than ten percent of graduating students in each department or equivalent academic program will be selected to receive the designation of distinction. Departments or equivalent academic programs may elect not to nominate any candidates for this designation in a given semester.

Procedures: In determining whether a student should be awarded a degree “with distinction,” the following guidelines should be followed.

1. In accordance with department or equivalent academic program-level policies and procedures, and upon completing the culminating requirement, a student may be
nominated for distinction by a unanimous vote of his or her dissertation/thesis/project/examination committee or academic program.

Each semester (October for Fall, March for Fall), SSOAR shall send a call to COE faculty for graduation with distinction nominations. Criteria for nomination include:

(a) Minimum 3.8 GPA and 18 units in residence

(b) Meritorious culminating thesis, exam or project. The culminating experience should demonstrate:
   - originality
   - scholarly rigor
   - mastery of knowledge of the discipline, and/or
   - significant contribution to academic discipline or broader community

Students may be nominated by any faculty member participating in culminating experience with a graduating College of Education Masters or Doctoral level student. Nomination includes the completion of a cover sheet that indicates (a) certification of minimum GPA (3.8), (b) a description of culminating experience (with attached abstract), (c) description of basis for nomination, and (d) signatures from all members of the thesis/project/exam committee. Nominations are due to the respective graduate program/grad coordinator by April 1 for Spring and November 1 for Fall graduation.

2. If so nominated, the committee chair or academic program designee shall draft a letter outlining the qualities of the student’s dissertation/thesis/project/examination that merit the award of distinction, including but not limited to originality of the work, mastery of knowledge of the discipline, and/or broader significance as a contribution to learning.

Nomination packets are reviewed by the respective graduate program chair or grad coordinator. If approved, the program (or GSPE grad) coordinator attaches a letter supporting the nomination and outlining qualities of culminating experience that merit distinction.

3. The letter of nomination shall be forwarded to the Graduate or Program Coordinator, who in consultation with the designated Department, Program, or Graduate Committee Chair shall make the determination as to whether the student’s
record meets the department or equivalent academic program standards for distinction

4. If in agreement with the nominating committee, the designated Coordinator or Chair shall send formal written notification and documentation to the Dean of Graduate Studies of the nomination.

   Based on nominations and supporting documentation, the GPSE chair makes a determination and forwards the nomination(s) to the Graduate Dean with short cover letter indicating approval at College (Graduate branch) level.

5. Prior to the posting of the degree, the Graduate Dean will review the nomination and ascertain whether the student’s final GPA meets the 3.8 threshold and, if so, register the notation. The student’s permanent transcript will state whether the student completed a dissertation, thesis, project, or examination and note the completion of the culminating experience was “with distinction.”

   College of Education Graduation with Distinction award recipients would be recognized at COE graduation ceremony.