



# **Davis Division Academic Senate**

## **Request for Consultation Responses**

### **Graduate Tracking System (PPM 200-45 Review)**

**November 16, 2010**

Campus Policy and Procedure 200-45 mandates a review of proposals to create new systems with a broad impact. The College of Biological Sciences is engaged in developing a system to track information for graduate groups. The Davis Division has been asked to review and offer feedback. The request includes a web link to obtain detailed information concerning the proposal. Please note, if committee members or chairs wish to comment as individuals, the request includes a smart site address for comments by individuals.

# Administrative Partners (DANN TRASK)

November 29, 2010 5:14 PM

Dear Professor Powell,

The L&S Executive Committee has discussed the proposal for making available to the campus the Graduate Tracking System developed by the College of Biological Sciences. The committee members had a variety of questions and comments, including:

- Though the system is in an early stage of development, it appears to provide important increased functionality to departments. Several graduate advisers have commented that they are happy with the trial version, although the system will need to be modified for individual departmental/program use.
- Why must departments pay to use a valuable application developed by a UC Davis unit? If the system is ultimately considered to be sufficiently useful to warrant campus availability, it would seem more appropriate to offer it as a central service without charge.
- An annual \$250 fee per user is cited, with a maximum of 60 users. Does the term "user" refer to an individual or to a department/program? What does this fee pay for and how was it determined?
- Who will bear the cost of adapting the application to the needs of different colleges and departments? How will each unit be able to determine its adoption costs? What customization options will be allowed and by whom will these options be implemented?
- Is CBS hosting the system for departments or giving the software to departments? If the former, why would departments rely on CBS to maintain their data? Does the plan assume that CBS will maintain private data from the other participating departments/programs?

Sincerely,

Patricia C. Boeshaar, Chair  
Executive Committee  
College of Letters and Science

# **Courses of Instruction**

**December 1, 2010 8:50 AM**

*No response at this time.*

# **Elections, Rules & Jurisdiction**

**January 3, 2011 12:29 PM**

*No response at this time.*

# Graduate Council

**November 15, 2010 9:37 AM**

Graduate Council discussed the Graduate Tracking System developed by CBS, and while generally Council expressed an appreciation for the entrepreneurial innovation of the system's developers and for the fact that they are sharing it with other units, Council has concerns.

Council focused its review on the following priorities for any graduate tracking system: security, access and data input by users other than staff (i.e., students and faculty), and on the added efficiency of a system that draws its data on the fly from other existing databases rather than storing the data itself. When programs consider adopting the CBS system, we advise that they consider the following:

- a) The design of the system should be such that it allows implementing standard cybersafety measures to assure confidentiality of personal data;
- b) It is recommended to work out agreements (maybe even in form of MOUs) to allow the parties involved to estimate the expected manpower necessary to use/maintain this system. Such an agreement could address how to handle future inquiries about updates, bug-fixing, training etc. for a specified period of time; and provide all the necessary background information on operating systems, databases etc. that system administrators need to be aware of for implementing and running the system; and
- c) It is also recommended that developers share plans to develop software systems for administrative support. Communication seems important in this context and it is valuable to have a centralized perspective with a better view of all of the needs of graduate education. Developers and administrators should be aware of the efforts under way to develop software systems for administrative support. This would help avoid duplication of labor or "reinventing the wheels".

Council affirms that the CBS module is filling a need, albeit in a somewhat limited manner; Council believes that a more comprehensive system will better serve the needs of all graduate programs. Dean Gibeling reported on a similar system being developed by Graduate Studies with related goals but different design principles in mind. Council sought a commitment from Dean Gibeling on the implementation date. Dean Gibeling has now confirmed that the first version of the system will be deployed in Fall 2011 (see Appendix A). Therefore, Council recommends that any graduate programs considering implementing the CBS system wait to do so until the Graduate Studies system is available and a comparison of the systems is feasible.

cc. Jeff Gibeling, Dean of Graduate Studies.

## Appendix:

from	Gibeling, Jeffery<jcgibeling@ucdavis.edu>
to	"Andre Knoesen (knoesen@ucdavis.edu)" <knoesen@ucdavis.edu>
cc	"Shintaku, Richard" <rshintaku@ucdavis.edu>, "Wonhof, Adrienne" <aiwonhof@ucdavis.edu>
date	Fri, Nov 12, 2010 at 4:37 PM
subject	Graduate Studies Student Tracking System Development
mailed-by	ucdavis.edu

Dear Andre,

As a follow up to our recent conversation and the discussion at the Graduate Council meeting on November 5<sup>th</sup>, I am writing to provide you with an update on the status of the Graduate Studies Student Tracking System. We envision an initial deployment that provides a broad range of data on individual graduate students in each program, including basic demographic information, academic information related to enrollment, progress, major professor, etc. and financial support information. The system will be designed to draw data from major campus systems of record (e.g. BANNER, DaFIS and the Payroll/Personnel System) and will store virtually no information on our own servers. This strategy is designed to ensure accuracy, security and functionality. The system will be used by graduate program staff and faculty as well as Graduate Studies' staff. Future developments will enable additional functionality, including the ability of students to view data and enter transactions in order to eliminate the majority of Graduate Studies' forms. That is, we expect the second version to assist in work flow management.

The following is the planned project schedule for version 1.0 of the Student Tracking Module in the Graduate System for Management of Admissions, Alumni and Records Tracking (GradSMAART):

Oct-Dec 2010	Continued development (functionality; roles and permissions)
Jan/Feb 2011	Internal demonstration code and initial review
Feb/March 2011	External demonstration code and user feedback
March/April 2011	Continued system development to incorporate user feedback
May-July 2011	Pilot testing by selected internal and external users (Graduate Studies and program staff)
Aug/Sept 2011	Continued development based on pilot test results
October 2011	Deployment of version 1.0

Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions that I can address. I am committed to making this project a reality because I believe strongly that Graduate Studies must provide graduate programs with the tools they all need to be successful in the work of providing graduate education. Given that all programs seek to undertake essentially the same activities, a common campus system is the most sensible approach. At the same time, I want to acknowledge the value of the system developed by the College of Biological Sciences in advancing our understanding of what is needed and in assisting several other programs with a useful tool.

Thanks for your support of this project.

Sincerely,  
Jeff

Jeffery C. Gibelung  
Dean--Graduate Studies

# Information Technology

**November 8, 2010 2:43 PM**

**Re: Response to RFCGraduate Tracking System (PPM 200-45 Review)**

The information Technology Committee discussed Graduate Tracking System (PPM 200-45 Review) and agreed that any computer system that reduces data entry time and requires less maintenance is to be welcomed; however, the members had several questions and concerns about this new system. The need/goal for such a system has not been clearly demonstrated – what is it? There was also an omission from this proposal regarding how much training would be required for new people to learn this system (and how long such training would take). It might also be useful to provide clarification of what would happen if this system was adopted by all graduate groups. Would CBS be prepared to let the system become centralized under campus IT control? The committee also felt that the policy review is taking place too late in the process. It appears that significant resources have already been invested in this project in spite of the fact that important issues (in particular security, secure hosting) have not been resolved.

Other concerns were about the cost (in \$\$ and FTE's) of developing and maintaining the system (in particular ensuring compliance with IT security standards). The committee felt they would like to see better planning as to financial support. Who should actually pay for this? There would have to be a campus-wide assessment of the true cost of operating this system.

The overriding concern of the committee dealt with security. The creation of a new tool requires the establishment of a policy regarding access to information. This policy should clearly identify who has access to what information (including administrative staff, faculty, software developers). We should be especially careful in allowing the assemblage of a single University-wide database of graduate students that includes a variety of personal information. Who will have access to this database? Does the program allow system administrators to peek into student files? What are the rules for running statistical analysis of the data that is gathered? The campus IT security officer has to be directly involved.

We recommend that the project be presented to the Campus Council for Information Technology (CCFIT)

# **Planning & Budget**

**November 1, 2010 11:50 AM**

*No response at this time.*