

Graduate Council 2023-2024

Nov 2, 2023

Members present: Robin Warne, Nwamaka Anaza, Khaled Ahmed, Scott Collins, Kelly Benden, Heidi Bacon, Lisa Brooten, Hale Yilmaz, Benjamin Richardson, Iraklis Anagnostopoulos, Andrew C Wilber, Liliana Lefticariu, Tomas Velasco, Myla Burton, Liliana Lefticariu, Jennifer Spreng, Ahmad Fakhoury, Ayodeji (Ayo) Oyekunle, Benjamin Richardson, Chris Wienke, Courtney Simpkins, Hale Yilmaz, Courtney Simpkins, Mandeep Redhu, Matthew Young, Rhonda Kowalchuk, Rolando Gonzalez, M Cecil Smith, Karen Jones, John Pollitz

Executive-Officio: Costas Tsatsoulis, Julianne Wallace, Julie Dunston

Guests: Elaine Jurkowski, Jennifer Horton, Michelle Kibby

Meeting started at 8:00 AM

Consideration of the minutes of the previous meetings:

The minutes of Sep 27, 2023, meeting Vote:

- Minutes approved (MAJORITY_VOTE-0-0)

The minutes of Oct 5, 2023, meeting Vote:

- Minutes approved (MAJORITY_VOTE-0-0)

First done Remarks from the Chancellor: Austin Lane

- Absent

Remarks from Provost: Sheryl A. Tucker:

- Absent

Remarks from Vice-Chancellor for Research/Dean of the Graduate School: Costas Tsatsoulis

Graduate Admissions Update

- Displayed current application statistics, highlighting a substantial increase in admissions.
- Attributed the increase to the Graduate Council's approval of changes in the admission process.

Analysis of Admissions

- Noted that while spring semester numbers are high, summer applications have declined, yet there's an increase in admitted students.
- Emphasized the importance of the speed of response to applicants for improving graduate enrollments.
- Showed a positive trend in applications over the past four years, from 300 to 1,200.
- Highlighted the swift admission process as a key to improving graduate enrollments.

Research Discovery Workshop Recap

- Reported on the success of the recent Research Discovery Workshop, with 21 presentations and 16 posters on climate and the environment.
- Indicated that the workshop facilitated new collaborations and increased awareness of research activities across the university.

Announcement of New Programs and Awards

- Announced the 'Proposal Development Support' program—a competition for seed funds with a deadline on January 20, 2024, targeting large grants.
- Mentioned an upcoming foundation award reserved for research in arts and humanities.
- Plans to encourage teams to pursue large grants exceeding \$1,000,000.

Graduate Student Research Initiatives

- Thanked the Graduate Professional Student Council for supporting a graduate student research workshop, noting the participation of nearly 40 students.
- Selected 5 graduate student posters focused on climate and environment to be used in the research retreat.

First done Remarks from Associate Dean and director of the Graduate School

Karen Jones

Acknowledgement of Fellowship Reception

- Celebrated the fellowship winners from the previous year with a reception where certificates were presented, and families attended.
- Thanked the Chancellor for attending and expressed gratitude to the council members who participated.

Admissions Processing Update

- Encouraged units to submit their admission recommendations promptly, assuring that the Graduate School has the capacity to process these recommendations quickly.

Thesis and Dissertation Submissions

- Reminded the council that this is the time of year for thesis and dissertation defenses, asking to have these announced on the Graduate School website.
- Advised of upcoming deadlines: initial submissions by November 10th and final submissions by November 17th.

New Student Orientation

- Announced new student orientations on January 16th for students starting their first semester in the spring or those who missed the fall orientation.

International Student Funding Requirements

- Informed that the required proof of funding for international students has increased bringing the total to be \$37,740 for the I-20 process.

Three Minute Thesis Competition

- Announced this year's competition, with college or unit competitions to be completed in time for the university-wide event on February 2nd.
- Noted that each college can recommend three contestants by January 26th and shared the announcement in the chat for the council.

Fellowship Deadlines

Brought attention to several upcoming fellowship deadlines:

- Graduate Deans Fellowship: January 19th
- Doctoral Fellowship: April 15th
- Master's Fellowship: January 19th
- Morris Fellowship: January 12th
- Prompt Assistantship: January 19th
- Dissertation Research Fellowship: March 15th

Additional Remarks by Vice-Chancellor Tsatsoulis

- Tsatsoulis Emphasized the need for departments to submit their admission recommendations to utilize the Graduate School's capacity to admit more students.

Remarks from Dean of Library, John Pollitz

Safety Concerns with Library Shelving

- Reported an issue with the basement's compact shelving not stopping correctly, which poses a safety risk.
- Announced the closure of the affected shelving area to prevent accidents. However, the basement will remain open for studying and access to the Dewey Center.
- Books from the closed shelves will be retrieved for users upon request, similar to the procedure for offsite storage.

Repair and Capital Expenditure

- Discussed ongoing negotiations and planning for repair, with the physical plant department taking over the process.
- Indicated that it will be a significant capital expense and does not foresee a change in the situation within the next year.

New Humanities Librarian

- Announced the hiring of a new Humanities Librarian, starting January 2nd, who brings a strong background in musicology from the University of Kansas.

Acknowledgment of Benefaction

- Celebrated the naming of the Sharp Museum following a \$1,000,000 gift from Professor Franklin J. Franklin Sharp.
- Encouraged visiting the museum to see two significant exhibitions featuring previously unexhibited pieces from notable artists.

Exhibitions of Note

- Highlighted exhibitions, including works by Romare Bearden, Matisse, Modigliani, Dali, and Dorothea Tanning, emphasizing their historical and cultural importance.
- Discussed the importance of Romare Bearden's early works and their connection to his later signature collage style.
- Mentioned another exhibition, "Trajectory," highlighting the works of two alumni important to the gay art movement of the '80s and '90s, drawing parallels with artists like Basquiat.

Remarks from council chair Scott Collins

Acknowledgement of Committee Work

- Expressed gratitude to all committee members and chairs for their ongoing efforts despite the volume of tasks.
- Appreciates the collaboration of the committees in sharing the workload to facilitate smoother operations.

R1 Exploratory Committee Meeting

- Mentioned participation in the R1 Exploratory Committee meeting and thanked Vice-Chancellor Tsatsoulis for the opportunity to be involved. Updates will be provided as developments unfold.

Chancellor's Budget and Planning Committee

- Informed the council of his upcoming attendance at the Chancellor's Budget and Planning Committee on behalf of the Graduate Council and promised to report back on the proceedings. insights and outcomes from the meeting can be shared in the next times.

Engagement with Faculty Senate

- Reported regularly attending Faculty Senate meetings in coordination with Dr. Jakowski's attendance at the Graduate Council meetings.

Remarks from GPSC: Myla Burton

Graduate Research Forum Participation

- Shared enthusiasm about the successful Graduate Research Forum, which provided a platform for graduate students to present their work and develop important professional skills.

Future Forum Engagement

- Expressed anticipation for the General Research Forum in the spring, with hopes for increased graduate student participation.

Collaboration with International Student Council

- Discussed ongoing efforts to amplify international graduate student representation in conjunction with the International Student Council and its President, Rosalba.

Constitutional Amendments for Inclusion

- Mentioned constitutional changes made by GPSC to create elected positions for international student representatives, aiming to ensure permanent spots for them.

Focus on International Student Involvement

- Emphasized the priority given to international student involvement in GPSC activities due to historical underrepresentation.

Goals for International Student Representation

- Expressed hopes that the new permanent seats would foster sustained involvement and better address international students' concerns.

Remarks from Council Vice-Chair: Tomas Velasco

Academic Grievance Appeal

- Informed the council about an academic grievance appeal that was filed with the Graduate School.

Student Appeal Committee Involvement

- A Student Appeal Committee has been convened and has agreed to grant a hearing to the appellant.

Procedural Adherence

- The committee is following the grievance procedures as outlined in the graduate catalog.

Scheduling of Hearing

- A Student Grievance Committee has been established, and there are plans to schedule a hearing within the next two to three weeks.

Remarks from the Dean's Council Cecil Smith

- Smith shared items that have mentioned from Dean's Council, Provost Tucker:

Budget Training Announcement

- Informed that business office managers and staff will undergo budget training to better understand the university's budget, an initiative led by Vice Chancellor Tsatsoulis.
- Details on the timing of the budget training sessions are yet to be determined but are expected soon.

Contract Submission Enforcement

- Provost Tucker has emphasized the importance of submitting contracts for graduate assistants on time to ensure timely payment, with a directive to avoid late submissions.

Scholarship Processing

- Deans were urged to expedite the processing of scholarships for the upcoming fall semester.
- The urgency was stressed to ensure that the scholarship procedures are completed promptly.

Remarks from Faculty Senate and Senator Elaine Jurkowski

Operating Papers Review

- The Faculty Senate is considering its role in assisting with the finalization and approval of operating papers that are pending.

Article 9 and Article 5 Processes

- Discussion is ongoing regarding the Article 9 process, with a focus also on exploring the Article 5 process by committee members. More detailed deliberations are expected in the upcoming weeks.

US World News Report Committee Activities

- The US World News Report Committee continues its meetings and is currently developing a survey to identify strategies for achieving certain goals. The aim is to gather faculty input to inform the administration, including Provost Tucker.

Remarks from the standing committee reports and our committee information:

Remarks from program review committee, chair Iraklis Anagnostopoulos

TAA Funds Proposal Document Finalization

- Iraklis presented the committee's progress on the document concerning the request for proposals for TA funds.
- Iterative revisions have refined the language and structure of the proposal.
- Key modifications include specifying the fund's use for educational research rather than direct course-related expenses.

Focus on Proposal Specifics

- The committee introduces examples from various fields to illustrate the intended use of TA funds across diverse university disciplines.
- Emphasis is placed on creating a feedback loop from the research to the students within the educational process.

Course Duration and Fund Utilization

- Discussion revolves around whether to support courses taught throughout the academic year or for one semester only.
- It is established that while the default assumption is for full academic year courses, proposals for single-semester courses are also considered, provided effective TA utilization is demonstrated.

Application and Review Process:

- Specific components of the proposal, review criteria, and the selection process are outlined.
- Initial plans involve the Program Committee taking on the review task, starting with the current committee members.

Document Use Vote/Resolution:

- Resolution approved (18-0-0)

Remarks from new programs committee Heidi Bacon

Resolution to Expand Accelerated master's Programs:

- Bacon started her presentation discussing the New Programs Committee's extensive review of Accelerated master's Programs (4+1 programs).
- The proposal to expand Accelerated master's programs is attributed to Dr. Tsatsoulis and the graduate school, aiming to streamline processes and reduce administrative burden.
- The New Programs Committee was tasked with reviewing and voting on the proposal, and Heidi Bacon announces a unanimous vote in favor of approval.

Resolution Details:

- Bacon elaborated on the resolution, emphasizing that existing institutional requirements for Accelerated 4+1 programs are already present in the graduate catalog.
- Detailed information was provided on the process, including the initiation of intent, communication between stakeholders, and the necessity of approval for any changes in course listings.
- Bacon underscored the benefits of the blanket approach, noting that it reduces administrative approvals and facilitates the participation of programs in Accelerated 4+1 without individual approval from the Graduate Council.

Discussion and Questions:

- Forms for Accelerated Programs: Ahmed suggested creating a form for program directors to fill out for each student instead of writing individual memos. Tsatsoulis confirmed the existence of forms and mentioned that they might need customization for specific students and programs.
- Ahmed inquired about the possibility of simplifying the application process for undergraduate students transitioning to the graduate program. Tsatsoulis explained the need for an application to ensure the student's intent to join the graduate program.
- Julie expressed the need for clarification on internal processes and approvals for the Accelerated Programs. Jones clarified that the resolution aimed to exempt existing graduate programs from seeking full graduate council approval for the accelerated portion.

Accelerated Programs Resolution/Vote:

- Resolution approved (18-0-0)

Educational Policies Committee Report by Andy Wilber:

Duolingo English testing minimum requirements:

- Wilber provided an overview of two items under consideration by the Educational Policies Committee.
- The first item involves revisiting the resolution to update the Duolingo English testing minimum requirements for applicants. The proposed change is to increase the Duolingo score from 105 to 115, aligning it more closely with the TOEFL score of 80 and the IELTS score.
- The second aspect of the resolution is to add the Pearson PTE Academic test for graduate admissions, which is already used for undergraduate admissions.

- Wilber mentioned that the impact of the proposed changes on admitted students was marginal, and there was a general comfort level with the resolution during the previous discussion.

Duolingo Resolution/Vote:

- Resolution approved (17-0-0)

Emeritus Faculty Status Review:

- Wilber introduced the second item on the agenda, related to the existing policy for units or departments to grant emeritus faculty status.
- Mentioned that this policy was reviewed in 2015 or 2016 by the graduate council and is now being looked at by the Faculty Senate.
- The Educational Policies Committee reviewed the resolution submitted by the graduate council and found it unnecessary to make changes.
- The question arose during the committee discussions about whether there should be specific criteria applied across the university for emeritus faculty status.

Committee Consensus on Criteria:

- Wilber reported that the committee reached a consensus that the decision to grant emeritus faculty status should be left at the discretion of individual academic units.
- There was a discussion about whether there should be specific criteria applied universally or if it should remain a decision made by each academic unit based on the perceived benefit to the faculty member.
- Mentioned concerns that, without criteria, challenges to the policy could lack a basis for judgment.

Input from Executive Council and Faculty Senate:

- Collins explained that concerns about the lack of criteria were raised in the Executive Council and by senior administration.
- Elaine Jurkowski from the Faculty Senate shared that the Faculty Status and Welfare Committee reviewed the policy and expected to provide feedback soon.

Discussions:

- Collins raised the question of whether criteria should be added to the policy and sought input on this matter.
- Some members expressed concern about potential challenges and the lack of criteria for making judgments in case of disputes.
- Jurkowski noted that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee would discuss the policy further, indicating ongoing consideration.
- Jones highlighted a sentence in the operating papers mentioning that emeritus faculty may serve on committees.
- Burton suggested considering a generalized clause that factors in formal processes initiated before retirement, providing a signal for both positive and negative cases.
- Smith raised a concern about situations where faculty members retired due to findings of wrongdoing and questioned whether they should be considered for emeritus status.

- Wilber emphasized that such decisions should be made at the unit level based on the perceived benefit to the department.
- Burton added a final comment suggesting that if the policy remains general, a clause for both positive and negative cases could be considered.

Next Steps:

- Collins mentioned that they would take the input under advisement to further explore the need for changes.

Remarks from research committee and chair Liliana Lefticariu.

Sharing Workload Between Committees:

- Lefticariu explains that, as her committee has less work, an agreement was made with Wilber to take on some of his committee's workload.
- The Research Committee will be involved in the development of standard operating procedures for the grievance process.

Report:

- Lefticariu mentions that her committee will begin working on the development of standard operating procedures for the grievance process.
- Expresses hope to have more to report in the next meeting.

Appreciation for Committee's Cooperation:

- Collins and Wilber thank Liliana and her committee for taking on additional responsibilities.