

Graduate Council 2023-2024
September 7, 2023

Members present: Robin Warne, Nwamaka Anaza, Khaled Ahmed, Scott Collins, Kimberly Parr, Kelly Benden, Heidi Bacon, Lisa Brooten, Hale Yilmaz, Benjamin Richardson, Ed O'Donnell, Iraklis Anagnostopoulos, Juliane Wallace, Andrew C Wilber, Liliana Lefticariu, Tomas Velasco, Matthew Young, Myla Burton, Rhonda Kowalchuk

Executive-Officio: Karen Jones

Guests: Elaine Jurkowski, Jennifer Horton, M Cecil Smith, Michelle Kibby

Meeting started at 8:00 AM

Consideration of the minutes of the previous meeting:

- During the meeting, the consideration of the minutes of the previous meeting took place:
- Collins informed the attendees that he had sent out an updated agenda for the meeting.
- Collins pointed out two suggested edits to the meeting minutes of May:
- The date on the minutes needed to be corrected from May fifth to May fourth.
- Additionally, there was an error indicating Collins was present at the meeting, which was not the case.
- Collins requested that attendees use the chat to vote. They were asked to type "yes" if they approved, "no" if they declined, and "abstain" if they wished to abstain from voting.
- Most attendees voted "yes" to approve the minutes with the mentioned modifications.

Minutes approved (MAJORITY_VOTE-0-0)

Remarks from the Chancellor: Austin Lane

- Absent

**Remarks from Associate Provost: Julianne Wallace on behalf of Provost:
Sheryl A. Tucker**

- Provost: Sheryl A. Tucker is absent
- There is an increase in graduate assistant stipends and strong support for graduate students.
- There was an issue where some graduate students were not paid in August due to late contracts, mostly affecting international students.
- Units on campus are working to provide emergency loans to affected students, and efforts will be made to prevent such issues in the future.
- Dr. Julie Dunston has been named the interim associate provost for academic programs.
- Wallace thanked everyone for their work in increasing enrollment.

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

- Absent.

Remarks from Associate Dean and director of the Graduate School Karen Jones

Enrollment Numbers:

- Enrollment numbers for graduate and professional students are up from the previous year.
- Graduate student enrollment including the masters and doctoral students increased by 21 students, totaling to 2564 students.
- Law school enrollment increased by 23, totaling 276 students.
- Med. school saw a rise of 13 students, totaling 324 students.

Appreciation and Upcoming Discussions:

- Success in enrollment was attributed to a joint effort. Gratitude was expressed to everyone on campus who contributed.
- Plans to discuss and potentially make permanent some emergency measures from the previous year.
- Upcoming discussions on various topics related to graduate students and faculty.

Additional Graduate School Updates:

- Two successful meetings with students held.
- August Orientation highlighted campus services for graduate students.
- Meet and Greet event had more graduate students than faculty due to short notification to faculty; plan to rectify this next year.
- New communication system (D2L page) for graduate students aimed at improving notification timeliness.
- Workshops held for graduate students on thesis writing and administrative orientations for graduate assistants.
- Upcoming events include a virtual faculty panel on writing tips, and a workshop on external fellowships.

Engagement with Directors of Graduate Studies:

- Monthly in-person meetings with directors of graduate studies initiated.
- An open forum for directors of graduate studies to provide feedback and discuss important topics with the Dean.
- A workshop with Directors of Graduate Studies on navigating through slate, addressing the needs of directors of graduate studies.

Conclusion:

- A busy schedule of events and workshops planned for the coming months.

Remarks from Associate Dean of Library Jennifer Horton on behalf of the Dean of Library, John Pollitz

Upcoming Art Exhibition at University Museums:

- A new art show is scheduled featuring the Crosby papers from the library's special collection.
- The event kickoff is on Saturday at 4:30 PM, inclusive of an art display, an enlightening talk, and refreshments.

Library-hosted Graduate Student Workshops:

- A series of graduate student workshops will commence next week, covering critical topics like research for literature reviews, the journal submission process, and utilizing Endnote desktop.
- The workshops are accessible to both faculty and graduate students, facilitated via Zoom.

Appointment of New Social Sciences Librarian:

- Mora Fiscus has recently joined as a social sciences librarian, marking the first appointment in this role in about three years.
- Mora is ready to assist graduate students, faculty, and undergraduates with a variety of academic needs including class support, personalized consultations, and subject-specific aid.
- An introduction to the community from Mora is anticipated soon, as she plans on reaching out to familiarize herself and offer her expertise.

Remarks from council chair Scott Collins

Appreciation and Committee Engagement:

- Collins expressed gratitude for the efforts already made since the semester began. Special thanks were given to committee chairs for taking lead and engaging with their respective committees on various items.
- Collins emphasized the importance of being responsive when committee chairs reach out, to ensure actions or activities are addressed timely for resolution preparation and agenda setting.

Upcoming Meeting Schedules:

- Meeting dates for the upcoming year were shared, scheduled for the first Thursday of every month at 8 AM via Zoom. The same Zoom link will be used for all these meetings throughout the year.

Committee Membership Update:

- Collins urged checking the updated committee membership table on the agenda, with a recent update reflecting student memberships to respective committees based on member feedback.

D2L Page and Graduate Council Meeting Organization:

- Mentioned a D2L page managed which will serve as an organizational tool to keep track of Graduate Council meetings' items.
- Members will be added to this page by the end of the week or early next week to view ongoing actions and discussions.

Vice Chair Nomination and Election:

- Noted that Thomas Velasco is serving as the acting vice chair, a position that needs a formal vote by the full council.
- No other nominations were made, and a vote was called in support of Thomas Velasco as the vice

Resolution approved (22-0-0)

Remarks from GPSC: Mila Burton

GPSC's Initial Meeting and Election Process:

- GPSC (Graduate and Professional Student Council) had its inaugural meeting for the academic year on the past Tuesday.

- The election process to fill the final graduate council representative seat has commenced, with the position expected to be filled shortly.

Engagement with University Administration:

- A collaborative engagement has been initiated with the provost, Dean Jones, and other administrators to address specific issues faced by graduate students, as highlighted by Wallace.
- The rapid pace at which these issues are being addressed is appreciated, fostering a positive outlook for the academic year concerning the resolution of graduate student-related challenges.

Collaboration with Graduate Assistants United Union:

- A partnership has been formed with the Graduate Assistants United Union.
- A joint hosting of the CIA International Coffee Hour is slated for the upcoming Friday afternoon, enhancing cross-collaboration and community building.

Remarks from Council Vice-Chair: Tomas Velasco

Academic Grievance Update:

- An ongoing academic grievance was disclosed, which is temporarily on hold as both parties involved are endeavoring to resolve the matter amicably.

Committee Representation Solicitation:

- A call for volunteers was made to fill representation spots for the Graduate Council in several university committees.
- Volunteer commitments were acknowledged from Kelly Bender for the Honorary Degree and Distinguished Service Award Committee, and Dr. Ahmad Fakhri for the University Joint Benefits Committee.
- A vacancy was noted for the Financial Conflict of Interest Committee, with a request for interested individuals to notify the vice chair.

Discussion Regarding Committee Representation:

- Lefticariu enquired about her current committee position, expressing uncertainty about her representational capacity in the Graduate Council.
- A brief dialogue ensued regarding the nature of her initial committee involvement, which was on a volunteer basis without specific representation.
- The vice chair acknowledged Lefticariu's willingness to now represent the Graduate Council in her current committee position.

Remarks from the Dean's Council Cecil Smith

Transition to New Technology and Infrastructure:

- Highlighted a recent presentation by Wil Clark concerning plans from the IT department, primarily the transition to Microsoft Teams for phone service in response to a significant phone outage on the west side of campus.

Discussion on Advisor Qualifications:

- Discussed reconsiderations concerning the qualifications for advisor positions within various departments, addressing the present requirement of a master's degree as potentially excessive.

- Mentioned a proposal to accept a bachelor's degree coupled with a few years of post-degree work experience as sufficient qualification, aiming to ease the hiring process for these roles.

Upcoming Saluki Leadership Training:

- Noted an upcoming Saluki Leadership training scheduled for the 20th of the current month, targeting deans and directors, with Julianne Wallace leading the session as a continuation of a previous workshop held last spring.

Enthusiasm Towards Working with Provost Tucker:

- Expressed collective enthusiasm among the deans towards working with Provost Tucker, who joined earlier in the year, appreciating her contributions, and looking forward to collaborative endeavors.

Remarks from Faculty Senate and Senator Elaine Jurkowski

SIU Systems Collaboration Award Announcement:

- Noted the introduction of the first-ever SIU Systems Collaboration Award by President Bethany Raider, alongside the SUE president.
- Mentioned the aim of fostering collaboration across SIU systems including SIUC, SAUE, and the medical school.
- Recognized the collaborative effort between the computer science departments of SIUE and SIUC as the inaugural recipients, with a reward of a plaque and \$1,000 to be shared among collaborators.

Ad Hoc US Worldviews Report Committee Formation and Progress:

- Discussed the formation of an ad hoc committee to improve the university's ranking in the US News World Report system.
- Acknowledged the inclusion of graduate and undergraduate student representation and administrative support from Provost Tucker.
- Identified three sub-committees focusing on student success, faculty, and campus services, all with participation from faculty, students, and administration.

Faculty Equity Study and Subsequent Actions:

- Recalled a faculty equity study conducted by the budget committee in the previous year, aiming to address salary compression issues.
- Noted Chancellor Lane's collaboration with the union president and the faculty senate president to draft an RFP for external analysis to further the study.
- Expressed the continued effort to explore how peer institutions have handled salary compression to provide actionable recommendations to the administration.

Initiative on ADEI Activities Incorporation:

- Mentioned the faculty welfare committee's resolution to explore the inclusion of ADEI (Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) activities within faculty roles in teaching, research, and service.
- Stressed that the recommendations are not mandatory but encouraged as part of the wider ADEI initiative on campus, aiming to infuse an ADEI perspective across campus activities.

Remarks from the standing committee reports and our committee information:

Remarks from new programs committee Heidi Bacon

Accelerated Masters Program in Biomedical Engineering:

- A new resolution for an accelerated Master of Science and Master of Engineering in Biomedical Engineering was presented for students from SIUC with a minimum GPA of 3.
- Admission to be based on GPA, faculty recommendations, and approval by school director.
- Program structured such that 9 credit hours count for both undergraduate and master's degrees; additional 21 graduate credit hours required.
- Total credit hours for both degrees are 147 with an option for a thesis or non-thesis track.
- Program aims to enable graduation in 5 years with promising salary prospects ranging from \$70,000 (early career) to \$129,000 (mid-career).
- The program received strong faculty support with a vote of 13-0-0 and unanimous approval from relevant committees and the dean.
- The vote to pass the Resolution was called:

Resolution approved (20-0-0)

Accelerated Bachelors Program in Econometrics and Quantitative Economics:

- A second resolution for an accelerated Bachelor of Science in Econometrics and Quantitative Economics towards a Master of Arts in Economics was introduced.
- The program aims to save students one to two semesters of tuition and fees, allowing completion of the master's program in one year.
- Specific course requirements were outlined including specific economics and math courses.
- No anticipated budgetary effects or impacts on faculty, staff, students, or facilities were mentioned.
- The School of Analytics, Finance, and Economics, and the College of Business and Analytics provided strong support with votes of 11-0-0 and 14-0-0 respectively.
- The vote to pass the Resolution was called:

Resolution approved (23-0-0)

Upcoming Resolutions:

- Heidi Bacon mentioned two additional RMEs (Resolution Memorandum of Understanding) to be discussed in the following week, with updates to be provided to the executive council.

Remarks from Educational Policies Committee: Andy Wilber

- The committee reviewed and approved six resolutions by majority:

GPA Calculations and Financial Eligibility Evaluation Suspension for International Graduate Students Pre-admission:

- Originated from the graduate school, this resolution aims to make permanent the suspension of GPA calculations and financial eligibility evaluations for international graduate students prior to admission, a practice initially set to extend until January 16, 2023.
- Although GPA calculations are now department or division-level tasks, the Graduate School continues collecting vital records and evaluating student grades at the time of admission.
- An update was disseminated to all graduate programs on October 10, 2022, regarding this change, which has since streamlined and expedited the admissions process, leading to an uptick in graduate student numbers.
- The vote to pass the Resolution was called:

Resolution approved (20-0-0)

Change in Registration Requirement for Course 601:

- The proposed change moves the automatic enrollment in course 601 (a designation for continuing enrollment) from the fifth to the first day of the semester, encouraging early registration and enabling accurate enrollment data provision.
- This change aims to ease the graduate school's task in providing timely and accurate enrollment data and help students make early semester decisions.
- The transition was smoothly implemented, with noticeable proactiveness from graduate students in registration. Communication channels like the D2L system and faculty announcements were instrumental in spreading the word.
- The vote to amend this change in the catalogue was called:

Resolution approved (23-0-0)

English Testing Requirement:

- Wilber chaired the session discussing potential modifications to the English testing requirements for international graduate student admissions.

Removal of TOEFL Paper-Based Test Reference:

- Proposed to eliminate reference to the TOEFL paper-based test from the graduate catalog since it has been discontinued since 2021.

Adjustment of Duolingo Score Requirement:

- Proposed increase of the minimum score from 105 to 115 to better align it with scores from TOEFL and IELTS exams.
- Discussions surfaced around the potential impact on enrollment, especially from India. Some members suggested a score of 110 might be more reasonable, fearing a higher score requirement might deter potential enrollees.

Inclusion of Pearson PTE Academic Exam:

- Proposed to add the Pearson PTE Academic exam to the list of approved English proficiency tests for graduate admissions, aligning with its existing acceptance in undergraduate admissions.
- Collection and Analysis of Historical Duolingo Score Data:

- Agreement on the need to review past Duolingo scores, particularly in critical programs like Computer Science and Computer Engineering to understand the potential impact on enrollment.

Committee Deliberation:

- The majority of the discussion focused on the adjustment of the Duolingo score and its potential impact on enrollment. Members voiced concerns, and Ahmed, a graduate program director, emphasized the need for statistics on past Duolingo scores to make an informed decision.
- The lack of clarity surrounding scoring metrics for the Pearson exam was noted, with members suggesting a deeper look before integration.
- Yilmaz and Anagnostopoulos supported the idea of a lower adjustment to Duolingo score, suggesting a score of 110 as a more reasonable and equivalent measure to other test scores.

Vote to refer Duolingo resolution back to committee for further discussion:

- Due to concerns and the need for more data, the resolution was voted to be referred back to the committee for further discussion and analysis.
- The vote for deferring the resolution back to committee was called, with a result of 22-0-0, indicating a collective agreement on the necessity for further evaluation before making a well-informed decision.

Resolution approved (22-0-0)

GPA Exemption Resolution:

- Wilber introduces a resolution concerning the exemption from undergraduate GPA requirement for Master's degree admission.
- Clarification of existing requirements:
 - Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
 - Must meet graduate school admission requirements approved by the concerned department.
 - Undergraduate GPA of 2.7 or better on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 semester hours of graduate work is required.

GPA Exemption Clause:

- A GPA exemption can be made for applicants who have:
 - Completed 9 or more semester hours of graded graduate work at an accredited US educational institution.
 - Achieved a GPA of 3.0 or better on all graduate coursework.
- The language in the graduate catalog regarding exemption is unclear and necessitates revision.

Proposed Revision:

- Replacement of the word "May" with "will" in the graduate catalog to clarify the exemption criteria.
- With the revised language, any applicant meeting the specified conditions will be exempted from the 2.7 undergraduate GPA requirement.

Further Resolutions:

- It's proposed that the graduate school encourages programs offering graduate degrees to amend any documents referring to this requirement.
- Lefticariu supports the resolution citing examples of students facing health or family issues, affecting their GPAs, yet displaying exceptional academic capabilities.
- The vote to pass GPA Exemption Resolution was called:

Resolution approved (19-0-0)

SIUC Academic Catalog Language on Pursuit of Second Master's Degree

- The resolution in question pertains to the language used within SIU's academic catalog to describe the option available to students for earning a second master's degree at the university.

Current Language in Academic Catalog

- According to the current catalog language, a student "may" earn a second master's degree if the program for the second degree is offered by a different academic unit or department than the one where they earned their first master's degree.

Proposed Language Modification

- The proposed change seeks to modify this language by replacing "may" with "will." In addition, it clarifies that a student who has successfully earned a master's degree from SIUC (Southern Illinois University Carbondale) may earn a second SIUC master's degree as long as the second degree program differs from the first.
- The primary objective of this resolution is to eliminate any ambiguity in the catalog's language regarding the possibility of earning multiple master's degrees.

Discussion Points Raised During Committee Deliberation

- During the discussion of this resolution, several points were raised by committee members, including:
 - Lefticariu voiced support for the resolution, emphasizing that it could assist students facing exceptional circumstances, such as health or family problems, that led to a lower GPA.
 - Velasco questioned why there should be impediments to students pursuing a second master's degree in a similar field if they wish to do so, emphasizing individual choice and flexibility.
 - Brooten sought clarification about whether this resolution would hinder students who wish to change master's degree programs within the same field.
 - There was also discussion about the potential complexities associated with retaking the same courses for sequential master's degrees and concerns about how transcripts would be coded in such cases.
 - The need for clearer language and additional policy suggestions was highlighted, and it was suggested that Rose provide language suggestions for further consideration.

Vote to refer the topic to committee for further discussion

- Ultimately, the resolution was deferred back to the committee for more in-depth discussion and refinement of the language to address the concerns and questions raised during the meeting.

Resolution approved (17-0-0)

Adjustment of Application Deadline for Morris Doctoral Fellowship

- The primary purpose of the Morris Doctoral Fellowship is to recruit and support new doctoral students who are U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or immigrants.

Existing Deadline Dilemma

- The current deadline for submission of fellowship materials is January 12th, and it is annually applicable. However, application deadlines for some graduate programs are as early as February 15th. As a result, admission decisions for the Morris Fellowship are made after the deadline for submission of materials has passed.

- Additionally, the application materials for the Morris Fellowship include standardized test scores, which are no longer required for domestic applicants in many programs.

Proposed Deadline Adjustment

- The resolution proposes changing the deadline for submission of application materials from mid-January (January 12th) to mid-April (April 15th). This change would require adjustments to the dates for announcing fellowship offers and the deadline for accepting those offers.

Discussion and Concerns over New Deadline

- During the discussion, committee members raised concerns about the proposed April 15th deadline, considering it too late for attracting the best applicants. Some suggested an earlier deadline, with a preference for March 1st or even February 15th. The discussion also considered the timing of decision-making processes and the need for evidence-based decisions.

Voting

- The amendment to change the deadline to March 1st was passed.

Resolution approved (9-8-0)

Remarks from research committee and chair Liliana will.

- no updates

Remarks from program review committee, chair Iraklis Anagnostopoulos

- Chair Iraklis Anagnostopoulos reported on the planned actions and upcoming activities of the Program Review Committee:
 - **Creation of Request for Proposal (RFP):** The committee is currently working on creating an RFP, along with review recommendations. This is based on the work of an ad hoc committee that was formed during the previous semester, specifically regarding teaching allocation awards. Iraklis will be sending this information to committee members soon.
 - **Program Reviews:** The committee is scheduled to conduct program reviews for several master's programs, including Master of Science in Geography, Environmental Resources Science, Cybersecurity and Cyber Systems, and Radiological Sciences.

Remarks from information session from SIUC ombudsman, Michelle Kibby

- Michelle Kibby, the University Ombudsman, introduced herself and her role during a meeting:

Role Introduction:

- Michelle Kibby is the University Ombudsman at SIU. She has been at SIU for nearly 20 years as a faculty member and has been serving as the Ombudsman for a year.

Scope of Service:

- She serves both tenure, tenure-track faculty, non-tenure-track faculty, graduate assistants, and faculty broadly defined. Her role is confidential, impartial, and independent.

Services Offered:

- Provides a listening ear for individuals seeking assistance.
- Offers guidance and helps find appropriate resources or individuals to address problems.
- Assists in troubleshooting problems.
- Aids in informal conflict resolution.
- Addresses problems related to the collective bargaining agreement and those outside its scope.

Differences from Faculty Union:

Kibby's role differs from the faculty union in that she can address a broader range of issues, not limited to collective bargaining agreement matters. However, she cannot engage in formal processes or serve as an advocate in disciplinary cases.

Advocacy for Systemic Change:

- Kibby can advocate for systemic change if she identifies consistent problems across individuals. She can confidentially approach upper administration to address systemic concerns and recommend policy changes.

Annual Reporting:

- She reports annually to the Chancellor, providing de-identified information about trends and issues she observes. She can make recommendations based on her findings.

Confidentiality:

- Kibby emphasizes the confidentiality of her role. She does not put anything on record and can only help and guidance.