

Graduate Council 2024-2025 **September 5, 2024**

Members present: Khaled R. Ahmed, Iraklis Anagnostopoulos, Kelly S. Bender, Sheraya Bernard, Min Carter, Scott Collins, Scott Comparato, Jane Dougherty, Ahmad Fakhoury, Rolando Gonzalez, Lance Griswold, Dong Han, Rhonda Kowalchuk, Liliana Lefticariu, Jie Shi Liew, Cheng-Yao Lin, Kayla Malone, Kim Parr, Mark Pease, Mark A. Peterson, Ben Richardson, Jennifer Spreng, Michael Timm, Tomas Velasco, Andy Wilber, Hale Yilmaz, Matthew Young,

Executive-Officio: Karen L. Jones, Amber Pond, Constantinos Tsatsoulis, Sheryl A. Tucker

Guest: Michelle Kibby, University Ombudsperson

Meeting started at 8:00 AM

Consideration of the minutes of the previous meetings:

The minutes of May 2nd 2024, meeting Vote:

Approved (Majority-0-0)

Remarks from the Chancellor: Austin Lane

- Absent

Remarks from Provost: Sheryl A. Tucker:

- Dr. Tucker covered key points, including the 10th-day enrollment numbers. Efforts to improve both enrollment and retention have been successful, with a strong emphasis on retaining current students to reduce the need for new student recruitment.
- Dr. Tucker Gerke will join as the Associate Provost for Student Success, focusing on improving undergraduate retention and student support. There is also ongoing work to enhance retention strategies across campus.
- The Higher Learning Commission's mid-cycle review is focusing on student learning outcomes, particularly distinguishing between undergraduate and graduate levels in cross-level courses. Faculty will undergo training to assess programs and prepare for the 2026 in-person review, with support from the Center for Teaching Excellence.
- SIU has partnered with INTO, a global recruiting firm that helps international students with applications, visa processes, and family engagement. INTO has a proven track record, including \$500 million in economic impact at Oregon State University over 10 years. They are expected to bring over 150 new students to SIU starting next fall, with some potentially arriving in spring.

- INTO will receive 25% of net tuition for the first year and 10% in subsequent years for the students they recruit. The partnership focuses on international undergraduate and master's students (excluding PhDs and online students). SIU ensured that international students receive the same treatment regarding scholarships and waivers as domestic students.

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

Costas Tsatsoulis

- Graduate enrollments are up 4.1% (3.3% by internal records). Success attributed to the work of schools, units, and colleges in recruitment and admissions.
- Graduate School offers a program to bring top PhD or terminal degree students to campus for visits. Aimed at continuing to recruit the best students and maintain robust PhD student enrollment. Dr. Tsatsoulis urged continued efforts to recruit, advise, and graduate students to maintain R1 ranking and ensure research success.
- Enrollment of new PhD students has decreased (90 this year vs. 107 last year). Dr. Tsatsoulis stressed the importance of reversing the decline for maintaining research quality and student success.
- The new contract sets minimum stipends for graduate students: \$1,600 for master's students, \$1,750 for doctoral students (50% appointment).
- New process for late enrollment after two weeks: requires a new form, with justification from the director of graduate studies. Old forms were still being submitted; members were reminded to inform their programs of the change.
- Increasing number of accelerated master's programs (4+1 programs) and new course-only master's degrees available. Graduate Council has approved new course-only master's options in several programs.
- Dr. Pond inquired about the new form, and Dr. Jones clarified that it is available on the Graduate School website and has been sent to directors or coordinators of graduate studies.
- Dr. Ahmed raised concerns about outdated high-performance computing and the lack of resources for PhD students (e.g., library access and infrastructure). Dr. Tsatsoulis responded that high-performance computing resources need to be addressed with IT, while some resources are available for research. Open access publication costs are a challenge for the university, but researchers can include these costs in grant proposals.
- Dr. Ahmed requested more administrative support for the library and infrastructure, especially as the university aims for R1 status. Dr. Tsatsoulis agreed more support is beneficial, but emphasized internal efforts (like including publication costs in grants) may be necessary. The high-performance computing issue requires further discussion with IT.
- Dr. Tsatsoulis encouraged faculty to continue supporting research and infrastructure through grants and internal efforts.

Remarks from Associate Dean and director of the Graduate School Karen

Jones

- Dr. Jones acknowledged the significant effort put into increasing graduate student enrollment, highlighting the positive impact on campus.
- Provided updates on graduate student contracts, specifically noting historical issues with timely payments. Dr. Jones reported improvements in this cycle, indicating that submissions to the

Graduate School had been processed and sent to HR without backlog. Efforts to transition to electronic processing are ongoing but not yet ready for implementation.

- Announced staffing changes at the Graduate School: Crystal Harris has accepted a new position elsewhere, and for contract-related inquiries, members should now contact Dana Weiss or Dr. Jones. She also noted the retirement of Cecilia Porter, with Elizabeth Benson stepping in as her replacement to assist with administrative tasks.
- Discussed recruitment strategies for SIU undergraduate students, mentioning that past recruitment fairs received mediocre responses. Following a survey of participants, the Graduate School will adopt a more dynamic approach this year, including spontaneous recruitment events around campus. Dr. Jones encouraged faculty to invite them to set up tables or speak to classes about graduate school opportunities.
- Announced a meet-and-greet event for graduate students scheduled for today from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM at Campus Lake, featuring activities like paddle boating and canoeing. She emphasized the importance of faculty presence and encouraged them to promote attendance among students, noting that over 100 students had already signed up.
- Mentioned a workshop on formatting theses and final papers taking place on September 10, from noon to 1 PM in the Student Services Building, Room 307, aimed at assisting students nearing the completion of their dissertations.
- Highlighted a Slate training workshop for directors of graduate studies on September 12, from 9:00 to 10:00 AM in Morris Library, Room 139, led by Doug Truly, the Slate guru.
- Reminded everyone that September 13 is the deadline for students to apply for December 2024 graduation without incurring a late fee. She encouraged members to remind their students of this important date.
- Announced that Dr. Tsatsoulis will be presenting on the Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) offered by NSF, which awards significant funding (\$36,000-\$37,000 per year) plus tuition for three out of five years. The program is prestigious and portable, allowing students to transfer their funding to different institutions. Materials have been prepared, and Dr. Tsatsoulis, a former reviewer for the program, will share tips and insights with students.
- Concluded with information about the "Meeting of the Minds" for directors of graduate studies on September 18, from 9:00 to 10:00 AM in the Student Services Building, Room 150, which will provide a platform for discussing relevant issues.

Remarks from (Guest) University Faculty Ombudsperson, Michelle Kibby

- Michelle Kibby began her presentation by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to speak. She introduced herself as the University Faculty Ombudsperson and shared that she has a split appointment, having been at the university for 20 years. She noted that this is her third year in the ombudsperson role, which was reopened two years ago.
- Kibby explained the function of an ombudsperson, emphasizing that they work confidentially, impartially, independently, and informally to assist faculty in resolving problems or conflicts. She highlighted her role in actively listening to faculty concerns and providing referrals to the appropriate individuals or resources when needed. Sometimes, faculty may simply require assistance troubleshooting specific situations that may not involve conflict.

- She addressed common questions about how her role differs from that of a union representative. Kibby clarified that her services are not limited by the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and can assist faculty with a wide range of issues, regardless of whether those issues fall under the CBA or if the faculty member is represented by a union. Her primary focus is on serving faculty members, including both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty, as well as graduate assistants.
- Kibby further explained that, due to the informal nature of her office, she cannot engage in formal procedures, such as grievances or disciplinary matters. Instead, she works impartially, without advocating for any one individual. However, she can advocate for systemic issues if she observes patterns in the problems being reported. In such cases, she can bring these concerns to the attention of administration and suggest potential changes.
- She mentioned that her contact information is available on the slide she presented and noted that she would be sending out further information, including her brochure, to all faculty and graduate assistants within the next couple of weeks.

Remarks from Graduate Council Chair, Mark Peterson

- Acknowledged faculty members who agreed to serve on various ad hoc committees: Professor Lin on the University Naming Committee, and Professors Collins and Velasco on the Chancellor's Program and Budget Committee. Additionally, he mentioned the newly formed ad hoc Faculty Emeritus Criteria Committee, which includes Andy Wilber, Professor Dougherty, and Professor Han.
- Reminded everyone about the D2L shell created by Professor Collins last year, which contains materials of interest to the Graduate Council. Although the course name is incorrect and cannot be changed, all members should have access. Peterson will also ensure that relevant documents are emailed to members for broader accessibility.
- Peterson opened the floor for questions, but there were none.

Remarks from GPSC: Michael Timm

- Michael Timm presented the report from the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC). He mentioned that he was present in person and introduced the graduate representatives of the Graduate Council for the year.
- Graduate representatives introduced included:
 - **Sheraya Bernard**, a PhD candidate in law.
 - **Caleb Alone**, an MS student in the English department.
 - **Lance Griswold**, an MS Physics.
 - **Jie Shi Liew**, a PhD student in Education.
 - **Michael Timm** himself, a PhD candidate in Philosophy.
- Timm also noted that Jie Shi serves on the Educational Policies Committee, Sheraya on New Programs, Caleb on Program Review, and Lance on the Research Committee.

Remarks from Council Vice-Chair: Andy Wilber

- Dr. Wilber mentioned the ad hoc committee for Faculty Emeritus Criteria, noting that they had held one meeting. The committee includes Dr. Jane Dougherty and Dr. Han, who will engage with Faculty Senate colleagues to resolve lingering questions from the previous year.
- Dr. Wilber highlighted a key concern: some faculty believe they have emeritus status despite the lack of a formal policy. He emphasized the need to address how these faculty members will be treated moving forward, including whether they can reapply for emeritus status or discuss their concerns with their departments.
- Dr. Tucker interjected to clarify that there is an existing emeritus status for graduate faculty, which has caused some confusion. She mentioned recent retirements and indicated that those retiring could proceed once the new policies are established.
- Dr. Wilber acknowledged the distinction between general emeritus status and graduate faculty emeritus, noting that he was unaware of the latter until recently. He also raised a question about whether the emeritus criteria would apply only to tenure-track faculty.
- Dr. Tucker responded that this is an important question for the ad hoc committee to consider, emphasizing the value of non-tenure track faculty and the need for parity.
- Dr. Wilber concluded by stating that they would add the question about non-tenure track faculty to their discussion points and expressed hope for a prompt meeting with Faculty Senate representatives to expedite the process.

Remarks from Amber Pond

- Dr. Pond introduced herself as the Faculty Senate representative for the year, holding the position of Vice President of the Faculty Senate, which includes serving as an ad hoc member of the Grad Council. She expressed her enthusiasm for meeting everyone and indicated she would be asking questions.
- Dr. Wilber inquired if Dr. Pond would be willing to work with the Faculty Emeritus committee, to which she responded affirmatively, noting that her role as Vice President included such duties.
- Dr. Pond mentioned that there is ongoing confusion about the emeritus status, including the need for review and cleanup of outdated lists. She also noted the distinction between general emeritus status and graduate faculty emeritus, expressing a need for clarity and review.
- Dr. Wilber agreed and said he would send Dr. Pond an email with a list of questions they are trying to address regarding emeritus status. Dr. Pond agreed and thanked him.

Remarks from Educational Policies Committee: Ahmad Fakhoury

- Dr. Fakhoury provided an update on the committee's recent activities. They have been working on four potential policy changes, one of which is the revision of the posthumous degree policy. Two documents related to this policy were shared with the committee earlier, including a draft resolution and a summary explaining the rationale behind the revisions and the mechanisms involved.
- Dr. Fakhoury explained that the existing posthumous degree policy had not been updated since 1974. An ad hoc committee was formed to address gaps in the policy, specifically the lack of benchmark criteria for conferring posthumous degrees. The absence of clear guidelines had led to confusion and inconsistencies in how posthumous degrees were evaluated and awarded.

- Dr. Tucker added context by noting that awarding posthumous degrees during commencement ceremonies was often uncomfortable for grieving families and made it difficult to maintain the celebratory atmosphere of the event. The revised policy is intended to provide clearer guidance on when a posthumous degree is appropriate, as well as establish alternative procedures for conferring the degree outside of the commencement ceremony. Additionally, there will be a companion event, a "celebration of life," to honor faculty, staff, and students who have passed away, led by Sarah Vanvooren from the events team.

Dr. Fakhoury then read the resolution, which highlighted several key points:

- The SIUC posthumous degree policy had not been updated since 1974.
- The current policy lacked benchmark criteria, leading to confusion and inconsistencies in degree evaluation and conferral.
- Many families of deceased students felt uncomfortable receiving posthumous degrees at commencement ceremonies.
- The administration charged the committee with updating the policy to include benchmarks for nomination and approval, and with providing procedures for conferring degrees outside of commencement.
- The resolution further noted that the revised policy was based on posthumous degree policies from a variety of U.S. universities and colleges. The resolution concluded by recommending the Graduate Council's approval of the revised SIUC policy for awarding posthumous degrees.
- Dr. Fakhoury then opened the floor for questions. Members were shown the resolution on-screen, and after a brief technical adjustment to enlarge the text, the discussion continued. The changes were generally well received, with members recognizing the importance of creating a more respectful and consistent process for awarding posthumous degrees while addressing the sensitivities of grieving families.

Remarks from New Programs Committee: Tomas Velasco

- Dr. Velasco provided a brief update on three items presented to the Graduate Council:
 - A proposal to create a Department of Physician Associate Medicine.
 - A proposal to rename the Physician Assistant Studies program to Physician Associate Studies.
 - A proposal to rename the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory to the Center for Wildlife Sustainability Research.
- Dr. Velasco noted that several committee members had recently joined, so the committee had not yet had time to meet and discuss these items in detail. Resolutions on these proposals are expected to be ready by the next Council meeting.

Report from Program Review Committee: Iraklis Anagnostopoulos

- Dr. Anagnostopoulos provided an update on the work of his committee, specifically regarding the reviews for the Master of Health Administration and the Master of Health Informatics

programs. He mentioned that he, along with Dr. Julie Dunston (APAP), had recently received the CVs of the reviewers for these programs.

- Dr. Anagnostopoulos stated that he would send the CVs to the subcommittee members and initiate the review process within the week. After the subcommittee reviews the materials, they will provide feedback to APAP.

Remarks from Research Committee: Kelly Bender

- Dr. Bender provided an update on the task of reviewing equipment proposals submitted to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR). These proposals aim to fund research on campus by replacing or purchasing new equipment. The first-quarter deadline for proposals was August 31st, and the submissions have been collected.
- Dr. Bender mentioned that the proposals have been sent to the committee, and they plan to meet within the next week to finalize their recommendations. Once completed, she will forward the recommendations to Dr. Tsatsoulis.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 a.m.