GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

September 28th, 2020

The Graduate Council met virtually on Monday, September 28, 2020 at 2:00 P.M.

Graduate Council members present: Dr. Jim Mensch, Chair; Drs. Suzanne Adlof, Ron Benner, Matt Boylan, Joanna Casey, Robin DiPietro, Shanna Harrington, Elise Ince, Hippokratis Kiaris, Carmen Maye, Srihari Nelakuditi, Spencer Platt, Stephen Shapiro, Sherl Wiskur, Nikki Wooten, and Sudipta Saha, GSA Representative.

Graduate Council members absent: Drs. Nate Bell, Todd Shaw, and Songhua Xu.

Graduate School Representatives: Dr. Cheryl Addy, Dr. Murray Mitchell (Secretary), Dale Moore, and Wanda Barr

Provost Office Representative: Trena Houp

Guests: Dr. Matthew Brashears (Sociology) and Libby Cross (Graduate School)

NOTE: These minutes will become final on October 26, 2020 if not challenged.

1. **Call to Order and Approval of Agenda** (Jim Mensch, Chair)
   The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m., and the agenda was unanimously approved.

2. **Approval of the [Minutes from August 24, 2020](#)**. Approved actions by Graduate Council become effective 30 days after posting. A copy is available on the Graduate School website at:
   http://app.gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes.asp
   The minutes from August were approved.

3. **Report of the Chair** (Jim Mensch)
   No report.

4. **Report of the Dean of Graduate School** (Cheryl Addy)
   Dr. Addy reported that the New Academic Bulletin has been published under a new vendor – CourseLeaf. Searches can be initiated easily. The bulletins can be found at academicbulletins.sc.edu (the old site bulletin.sc.edu is still live).

   We are entering phase 2 of the CourseLeaf project – recreating what is now the APPS system. Last year Faculty Senate completed a LEAN analysis of the undergraduate course and curriculum process; so, that will be one source of input as we build the needs requirements for the new system. Dr.

Murray Mitchell represents the Graduate School on the implementation team, and Dr. Addy is actively involved in the process as well through the Office of Academic Programs.

Dr. Addy reiterated to the members of the Graduate Council how proud she is of every one of them for supporting graduate education this year and working to increase our graduate enrollment about 5% over last fall. Given the circumstances, this outcome is amazing. Keep up the good work.

Dr. Addy is aware that there has been concern from both graduate students and faculty about the short-term decision not to hire a second associate dean. She wants to assure everyone that Wright Culpepper, Director of Recruitment and Diversity Officer, has stepped up with support for our general professional development activities. Our scholarly initiatives have strong faculty leadership, and our commitment is still unwavering. It will just look a little different this year. Dr. Jean Ellis will follow up with us about the new eligibility requirements for Presidential Fellows.

Dr. Addy continues to work with the Graduate Student Association (GSA), primarily through the GSA president, Maggie Carson. Dr. Addy met with the full GSA Friday evening during their bi-weekly meetings. The leadership is very active, and she commended Maggie and vice-president Christopher Eddy for their involvement in the Future Planning Group (FPG) process all summer.

Dr. Addy is currently working with the Graduate School staff on our next Blueprint document. This will support our continued commitment to quality student services and ways we can enhance the graduate student experience.

The General Faculty sent the graduate faculty proposal back to the Faculty Advisory Committee because of Education's request to allow staff to chair Ed.D. committees. There have already been some conversations about this; so, we will get the issue resolved for resubmission before the spring General Faculty meeting.

The revised Policy ACAF 4.00 is currently on Provost Tate's desk for signature. As soon as he signs it, the next step will be to seek President Caslen's approval. Dr. Addy hopes to get both of those taken care of this week. The changes in this policy basically match the changes made in Human Resources (HR). HR created a new student employment policy and totally recreated their process. We are strongly recommending additional content to the letter of appointment. We initially proposed a separate contract work agreement, but because the HR letter of appointment is required, we could only recommend the additional content such as details of work schedule, work responsibilities, etc. We also added that a student with an assistantship who needs to be out for an extended period of time could request an unpaid leave of absence and protect their position (to include parental leave) without pay to protect the GA benefits. We cannot offer leave with pay because graduate assistants are a special category of temporary employees. If a GA is out due to an illness, the last thing to be concerned with is the loss of health insurance or having to the pay the additional premium that was partially paid for by the stipend. We wish we could do more, but this is a step in the right direction of providing support for our graduate students.

5. **Report of the Secretary of the Graduate Council** (Murray Mitchell)
    Dr. Mitchell reminded the members of the Graduate Council that there have been several prompts to respond to mental health and well-being surveys. He, too, would like to echo and reinforce that request for your participation. Mental health for self, students, and colleagues is one of those silent

kinds of concerns that warrants our attention. Working remotely is 'business as usual' for many, but it results in some 'hidden' kinds of impact that may be unpredictable and barely perceptible. So, please attend to and check in on your own mental health and for that of your colleagues. He is going to do his best to listen to his own encouragement on this topic—he is a poster child for ignoring and downplaying any potential signs in this regard.

He continues to work on staffing all committees and thinks he has now completed the task. We will continue to work at getting Graduate School business completed in a timely fashion.

He received a request to ensure that communications we send out to graduate students in our various formats of listservs, social media, and our website also be sent to graduate directors, and to the associate and assistant deans council. Students have questions for their graduate directors about communications only students have received, but the graduate directors are unaware of the information. The ongoing challenge is to make sure that everyone receives the same information.

The response to the "test optional" decision has been a popular choice among departments. This is a one-year option. Departments must take the responsibility to update their materials for the short-term communication. To qualify for the permanent change to apply, departments must go through APPS (or its replacement when that system is fully operational). In a related way, we continue to work on providing a better template for what programs should include on their webpages so that we all have consistent information on what should be described for each program entry. Navigation through webpages has been difficult for many graduate students and for their faculty advisors. We can do a better job of providing some continuity of program entry information.

The other two key pieces in this chain of program admission requirements, are that program coordinators in the Graduate School, and program faculty. Both groups need to know what the application requirements are because they are the ones who identify when the checklist of materials is complete.

Communication is critical across all levels including within programs. Some individuals are adamant to suggest that they need the GRE score to determine if a student can be successful and others are equally adamant that the GRE score is totally irrelevant in their decision about whether an applicant can be successful. Communication is the key.

6. **Report on Professional Development** (TBA)
   No report.

7. **Report of the Graduate Student Association Representative** (Sudipta Saha)
   GSA Annual Report for 2019-2020

   https://garnetgate.sa.sc.edu/organization/gsa/documents/view/1806995

   The following items are highlights from the report:

   a. GSA officers and selected cabinet members played an active role in the selection of Provost William Tate, the first Black provost in the history of UofSC. They also played an active role in the selection process for the then newly created Vice President for Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion.
   b. Throughout the collective effort by GSA and university offices, graduate student stipends have been revisited. This has led to an 8% increase in the minimum wage for graduate student assistantships

c. GSA advocated for an increase in the GSA budget to enable them to fund more graduate organizations and events. Over $20,000 was allocated to graduate student organizations. COVID-19 reduced this number as scheduled future events were canceled.

d. Our relationship with the Dean of Libraries, Dean Tom McNally, deepened and this ultimately led to a revamp of the graduate student lounge in the library, including new furniture, art, and technology.

GSA is now done with two bi-weekly general body meetings. At the last meeting Dean Addy attended as a guest speaker. Going virtual due to COVID-19 seems like a 'silver lining' on the attendance in the meeting. We are getting more traction and response in terms of attendance and giving voice to concerns.

As he reported last month, President Caslen has shown an interest in attending at least one Graduate Council meeting per semester. GSA officers have been invited to dine with him at his home on Tuesday, October 20th. Sudipta will consult with Jim Mensch, Chair of the Graduate Council, on the easiest way to facilitate the process of initiating the dialogue with President Caslen's office and sharing the schedule of the remaining meetings for Graduate Council this semester.

GSA is initiating an effort on promoting academic professional development among the graduate students. The main goal is to promote academic and research awareness as many of the students are not cognizant about standard research ethics, standard practices of handling the research data, how to manage conflict between collaborators/mentors, or what to do if they feel that they have been abused academically. They are not receiving the acknowledgement they deserve on the work they have done. Many graduate students do not know that they have an Ombudsman from whom they can seek advice. Ideally, one hopes that graduate students do not need to pursue this resource. But if a situation occurs, they need to know that there is support available and how to access that support.

The UofSC requires students to complete the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training to comply with NSF, NIH and others, if their work is funded by these agencies. However, graduate students, especially PhD students, should be aware of some of the aspects of this requirement. Our primary goal is to partner with the Office of the Vice President for Research to promote this endeavor university-wide. He welcomes your feedback on this topic.

8. **Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee** (Nikki Wooten)
No report.

9. **Report of the 500/600 Level Courses, Distributed Learning and Special Topics Courses** (Murray Mitchell)

This report is presented to Council for informational purposes only; no action is necessary.

500/600 Courses for September 2020 Grad Council
None at this time.

Distributed Learning Proposals
None at this time.

Special Topics Course Proposals

These proposals will now go directly to the Registrar for scheduling.

10. **Associate Graduate Faculty Nomination** (Murray Mitchell)
    None at this time. Two nominations from last month were held for further comments from the programs making these nominations. There has been no further communication to report at this time.

11. **Fellowships and Scholarships Committee** (TBA)
    Dr. Jean Ellis followed up on the email sent by Dr. Addy on September 8, since there have been several questions regarding the selection criteria for the Presidential Fellows and the potential role of the GRE. The following information serves to clarify. If there are additional questions, please reach out to her at jellis@seoe.sc.edu, Program Director of the Presidential Fellows.

    She will provide the Graduate Council's Fellowships and Scholarships Committee the following guidance for selecting the next cohort of the Presidential Fellows. As a point of reference, as the Presidential Fellows Program Director, she is a non-voting member of the Committee. Successful Presidential Fellows demonstrate the following (in no particular order):

    — linkages between themselves and their potential advisor and other entities on campus
    — potential contribution to the mission of the university / college / program
    — unique qualities that make them an outstanding addition to the Presidential Fellowship cohort
    — a track record of significant accomplishments and special interests
    — exceptional creativity
    — commitment to improving the lives of others, and capacity for leadership.

    The Presidential Fellows are also selected to represent diversity and inclusion and a range of disciplines on the UofSC campus. There is a high volume of applicants and limited funding. In years past, the Committee has worked diligently to reach a consensus when selecting the Presidential Fellows cohort. Moving forward, the GREs will not be a core-criterion for the decision making and/or consensus formation. However, she is unable to control individual biases and preferences. Presidential Fellowship packages that are reviewed by the committee include the entire package submitted by applicants (including transcripts and GRE scores, the latter if submitted). The committee will be advised to prioritize the qualitative criteria listed above.

12. **Report of Science, Math, and Related Professional Programs Committee** (Hippokratis Kiaris)
    None at this time.

13. **Report of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs Committee** (Robin DiPietro)

    Below is a list of proposals reviewed by the Committee. Each curricular action can be viewed at this Public Agenda review site:

    https://www.sc.edu/programproposal/agenda/?id=89&code=GCO

    At this Public Agenda link, the individual proposals are not live-linked, but agenda items are listed in alphabetical order. To view the full proposals, GC members and Committee Chairs still need to go to the Committee Review site, and filter for "Committees", then for the "Committee" called "Added to Grad Council agenda."

    - **EDST Major / Degree Program**, Learning Design and Technologies, M.Ed. (Joint degree with USC Aiken), Education, Change to Existing Program: Fall 2021
    - **LANG Concentration**, Languages, Literatures and Cultures, MA (French Concentration), Arts and Sciences, New Program: Fall 2021

- **LANG Concentration**, Languages, Literatures and Cultures, MA (German Concentration), Arts and Sciences, New Program: Fall 2021
- **LANG Concentration**, Languages, Literatures and Cultures, MA (Spanish Concentration), Arts and Sciences, New Program: Fall 2021
- **LANG Concentration**, Languages, Literatures and Cultures, MA (Comparative Literature Concentration), Arts and Sciences, New Program: Fall 2021
- **MKTG 720** (3) Sales: Process, People and Performance, Business, NCP: Spring 2021
- **ZZBA Major / Degree Program**, Accelerated Master of Business Administration, Business, Change to Existing Program: Fall 2021

These proposals were unanimously approved by Graduate Council.

14. **Report of the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee** (Carmen Maye)
    No report.

15. **Other Committee Reports**
    None.

16. **Old Business**
    None.

17. **New Business**
    None.

18. **Good of the Order**
    Please ask your program and college colleagues if there are any problems, issues or questions that would be appropriate for this body to address. Perhaps we can offer solutions, consider alternative policy options, or become aware of promising new initiatives.

19. **Adjournment**
    The meeting was adjourned at 2:50p.m.

Murray Mitchell, Secretary

CC: Bob Caslen, President
       William Tate, Provost
       Cheryl Addy, Vice Provost & Dean of the Graduate School
       Deans
       Department Chairs
       Graduate Directors
       Aaron Marterer, University Registrar
       Elaine Belesky, Office of the Registrar
       Malia Kiehl, Office of the Registrar
       Tara George, Office of the Registrar