



# The Graduate School

## UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

### Graduate Council Minutes February 22, 2016

The Graduate Council met on Monday, February 22, 2016 at 2:03 P.M. in room 311 of the Byrnes Building.

**Graduate Council members present:** Dr. Julia Lopez-Robertson, Chair; Drs. Jennifer Arns, Nancy Brown, Bobby Brame, Jr., Matt Brown, Dirk den Ouden, Lorne Hofseth, Caryn Outten, and Scott White

**Graduate Council members absent:** Drs. Swann Adams, Kay Edwards, Drucilla Barker, Jerry Hilbish, Christian Jensen, David Tedeschi, and Susan Yeargin

**Graduate School Representatives:** Dr. Jessica Elfenbein, Dr. Murray Mitchell, Dale Moore, and Wanda Barr

**Provost Office Representative:** Dr. Kristia Finnigan

**Guests:** Drs. Eric Drasgow, David Virtue, and Mr. Rob Dedmon.

**NOTE:** *These minutes will become final on March 28, 2016 if not challenged.*

- 1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda** (Julia Lopez-Robertson, Chair)  
Dr. Lopez-Robertson called the meeting to order at 2:03 P.M. and received Council approval of the agenda.
- 2. Approval of [Minutes for the meeting on January 25, 2016](#).**  
The minutes were reviewed electronically and approved by the Council.  
Minutes are on file at The Graduate School website at:  
<http://app.gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes.asp>
- 3. Report of the Chair** (Julia Lopez-Robertson)  
Dr. Lopez-Robertson welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 4. Report of the Dean of The Graduate School** (Jessica Elfenbein for Lacy Ford)  
Dr. Elfenbein reported on an upcoming visit from external deans who are coming as part of the Provost Blue Ribbon Committee on Graduate Student Life. They will be on campus on Monday and Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup>. Our guests are Maureen Grasso, who is currently the Graduate Dean at N.C. State but formerly Graduate Dean of University of Georgia and John Kiss who is the Graduate Dean at the University of Mississippi and currently President of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools.

We are hoping to find time in the schedule for a 60 minute drop-in. We would like for you to find time to come talk with them since they are trying to help us with the “soup to nuts” on how we might improve the graduate student life experience. Your input is important. Many of you had the opportunity to participate in the focus group that we held in January, but you may have other insights that you’d like to share. I will be following up on this in the next week or so regarding scheduling.

The Graduate School is going to be hiring a half-time Associate Dean to work on Professional Development. This is related, as well, to the early findings of the Provost Blue Ribbon Committee on Graduate Student Life. The one thing that all five subcommittees were very clear on is that we are not doing enough to help our graduate students at all levels to insure that they have the skills that they need for a range of kinds of careers. We just received the approval to hire. This will be a half-time faculty position to include a two course buyout and a summer supplement. If you know anyone who might be interested in this position, please pass this information along. This will be posted on the Graduate School’s website and shortly, we hope, on the Provost Office’s website as well.

5. **Report of the Associate Dean / Secretary of the Graduate Council** (Murray Mitchell)  
Dr. Mitchell reported that a number of people attended the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools conference this past weekend in Charlotte, NC. More information will follow under New Business.
6. **Report of the Graduate Student Association Representative** (Brittany Walter)  
Brittany Walter stated Andrew Fogner had to step down from the Graduate Student Association due to academic responsibilities. They are working on moving things around and working on finalizing Graduate Student Week. Upon completion, the information will be share with Graduate Council.

Dr. Elfenbein added that Graduate Student Day is at the end of Graduate Student Week, scheduled for April 8<sup>th</sup>. As an FYI, she informed the Graduate Council that the format for Graduate Student Day is being changed for 2017. There will be a university-wide Research Day--which is going to encompass Discovery Day and Graduate Student Day.

Many members of the Graduate Council asked why the change in format and expressed concerns, as well as, disappointment in the change of the Graduate Student Day format.

Dr. Elfenbein explained that she didn’t know why the change came about but was informed that the change had happened. There will be a meeting on March 6, and she will know more after the meeting. She doesn’t think that this change is open for discussion or debate. The decision has already been made for 2017. It is her understanding that the Vice President for Research Office will be organizing it going forward. She’s heard that it will take place at the Convention Center, and she doesn’t know what motivated the change. The Graduate School was not consulted in this change of format.

Dr. Elfenbein stated that any member of the Graduate Council is welcome to accompany The Graduate School to the meeting on March 6. Her guess is that there won’t be much room for discussion for 2017, but she could be mistaken. They have put together an executive summary of what Graduate Student Day currently entails. This summary will be included in the minutes.

The summary may prove to be helpful since we filled all 180 presentation slots. If our space becomes confined, that will create another set of pressures on us. There are certain groups that have a built-in requirement to present at Graduate Student Day. These groups include all the SPARC recipients and starting this year, the Civic Scholars. There are people who are required as part of their program to present at Graduate Student Day. She is not sure about the space provisions but hopes everyone can be accommodated. They learned about the format change from Dr. Ford and will follow up for more details.

Dr. Mitchell offered that this is part of the identity of what the Graduate Council has been to this point in time. Graduate Council has been a passive reactionary body as opposed to a group that has been involved with and a voice in these kinds of policies; so, he thinks that this is a good opportunity to at least express that position. That said, the Graduate Council is an advisory group. The final decision does not rest with this Council. Graduate Council offers advice to the Dean of Graduate Studies. However, he feels that a response is warranted if the Council deems appropriate.

The key point is that the Graduate School received this information and did not initiate nor participate in the development of this perspective. It has not been represented as being taken away but rather increasing the size of and scope of what's going to happen. It was added to as opposed to taken away. At least that is the perspective that has been presented. The resources of the Office of Vice President of Research might be able to do things like rent out the Convention Center which has not been done previously. They might, in fact, be able to bring a Nobel Laureate to speak and elevate the profile for everyone is another perspective. This change has not been presented or thought of as "doing something to graduate students," rather, this may be an opportunity to "do something for graduate students."

<http://gradschool.sc.edu/facstaff/gradcouncil/2015/Graduate Student Day Summary.pdf>

**7. Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee (Matt Brown)**

Dr. Matt Brown updated the Graduate Council on the policy change regarding Enrollment in Courses for Audit. The Committee has agreed that a course taken for audit cannot be used on a program of study to satisfy degree requirements unless it has been retaken for credit. In addition, no credit may be earned for an audited course by examination.

The proposal was unanimously supported by vote of the Graduate Council.

<http://gradschool.sc.edu/facstaff/gradcouncil/2015/Enrollment for Courses for Audit.pdf>

**8. Report of the Committee on 500/600 Level Courses, Distance Education and Special Courses (Murray Mitchell)**

**500/600 Level Courses**

- **LING 542** (3) Research on Language Conflict and Language Rights (New Course Proposal: Fall 2016)

**Distance Education Delivery**

- **HPEB 502** (3) Applied Aspects of Human Nutrition

### Special Topics Courses

- **ENHS 793** (3) Environmental Nanoscience (Fall 2016)
- **ENVR 800** (3) Earth Resource Management (Fall 2016)
- **PUBH 791** (3) History of Public Health, Medicine, and Nursing (Fall 2016)

### Two Issues for Consideration:

- Should a copy of the syllabus be required for a special topics course?
- Should a graduate level special topics course be approved at the Graduate School prior to being added to the schedule by the Registrar?

**Graduate Council unanimously approved both of these issues for consideration regarding Special Topics Courses.**

### 9. **Associate Graduate Faculty Nominations** (Murray Mitchell)

None.

### 10. **Fellowships and Scholarships Committee** (Heather Brandt)

Dr. Heather Brandt was absent but Dr. Elfenbein reported that the Fellowship and Scholarships Committee would be meeting to consider the second round of Presidential Fellowship nominees on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. This is a banner year as they have now exceeded 80 nominees in the first two rounds. The third round closes on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

The Southern Regional Education Board doctoral scholarships and dissertation fellowships nomination period is open right now. Students can self-nominate. All applications go through the SREB's office in Atlanta, GA. They then send The Graduate School all of the completed applications. The Graduate School will vet them to make sure that the programs are able and want to provide the support required as a match.

### 11. **Report of Science, Math, and Related Professional Programs Committee** (David Tedeschi)

Dr. David Tedeschi was absent but Dr. Mitchell reported on his behalf that this committee has gone two months in a row with no proposal submissions.

### 12. **Report of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs Committee** (Drucilla Barker)

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/gradagenda/?id=11>.

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."

Dr. Drucilla Barker was absent but Dr. Mitchell presented for her:

- **EDET 899** (1-12) Dissertation Preparation (New Course Proposal: Fall 2016)
- **EDTE 776** (3) Educating African-American Students (Course Change: Distance and grading scale: Fall 2017)
- **MUED 793** (3) Topics in Music Education (New Course Proposal: Summer 2016)

**These three proposals were unanimously approved by Graduate Council.**

- **Curriculum and Instruction Ed.D. Degree Program**

**This proposal will be returned for a minor revision/edit (remove the dissertation piece) and should be re-submitted for approval with no further discussion required.**

**13. Report of the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee (Nancy Brown)**

No report.

**14. Other Committee Reports**

No report.

**15. Old Business**

No report.

**16. New Business**

Dr. Elfenbein reported on the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools. Eleven people from the University of South Carolina attended the conference in Charlotte, NC. USC was the largest cohort there because The Graduate School invited all six of the Provost Blue Ribbon sub-committee co-chairs to attend as their guests. The only way to begin to affect changes in graduate education and the culture for graduate students on this campus is by allowing more of us to sing from the same sheet of music and hear some of the same current issues that affect graduate education across the country.

Dr. Mitchell offered that one place that the University of South Carolina is off the mark is with the 500/600 level classes. There seems to be a general reaction that there should be more than just an additional assignment but there should also be additional learning outcomes. The expectation should be for graduate students to be assigned some sort of additional “work product” and at least one additional learning outcome that would logically be matched up with that additional assignment. We need to find a way to get that information out so all of a sudden it’s not a brick wall to people when all of their 500/600 level classes come back and try to offer some guidance.

An additional question that came up was regarding graduate assistants teaching graduate level classes. He recently received a proposal for a graduate student to teach a 700 level class. While attending the SACS COC, he asked if there was a specific policy or guideline that stated that a graduate assistant could not teach a 700 level class, he was told that there was such a policy (and graduate assistants should not be teaching graduate level classes), but

received no specifics. He is still waiting for some guidance from SACS.

Another issue that arose is regarding an accelerated Bachelor/Master's program. A student can take up to 12 hours of graduate credit that would apply to both an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree. The question arose that if the student stays on at the same place and has 120 hours towards the undergraduate degree and 30 hour Master's degree, some SACS reviewers would look for a total of 150 hours. If the student has shared 12 hours (shared between degrees), he/she may not have 150 hours. The question was posed if that was a problem. The response was that it depends. If the reviewer is harsh, there will be a problem. If the reviewer is flexible, there will be no problem. It just depends. The question was raised why SACS hasn't done something about this. At SACS' last meeting, a proposal was offered and voted on. It received negative feedback and was rescinded. There still currently is no firm guideline.

Dr. Elfenbein added that to be on the safe side, SACS recommends that you have 150 credits, not 138. The Graduate School has received some pressure in the last year to increase the number of credits from 12 to 15 that can be taken by an advanced undergraduate toward the dual degree. She feels that the University must be very mindful of that. That may not be a direction that we want to be going. Dr. Maurice Eftink, the presenter, just retired after 12 years as dean of Ole Miss' graduate school and then as an associate provost who participated in many SACS visitations. He is not a SACS representative, per se, just an experienced SACS reviewer.

Dr. Mitchell discussed DegreeWorks, a popular advising tool already being used with undergraduate students, is now being used for graduate level students in many programs across the southeast. It's a more accessible place to generate reports for courses that are about to expire or for GPA's that have fallen below a 3.0. DegreeWorks can also send automated emails to let students know that there is a problem. It's good for lock-step programs, but, may be less helpful for doctoral programs that are much more flexible. He is exploring these possibilities with the registrar, Aaron Marterer.

Dr. Elfenbein noted that one thing that is likely to happen as part of the Provost Blue Ribbon Committee is that within the five subcommittees is Masters Education. It seems likely that the Program of Study will be put on-line. DegreeWorks might be the way to make that doable. The University has got to start somewhere and that is as good a place as any to begin.

Another issue is continuous enrollment requirements. USC currently does not require continuous enrollment in all graduate degree programs. Thus, our numbers may not be as accurate as to how many students are seeking degrees. Last count, we know that we have around 6500 as of a particular day in the fall semester. There are a lot of people who are not currently enrolled. There could possibly be about a 1000 more student than we know about.

USC could definitely benefit from going with continuous enrollment requirements. We heard about a number of interesting examples of institutions that in the last few years put in place continuous enrollment requirements. Often because they found through the survey of their own doctorates that their time to degree was slower than peers at aspirant peers. We are looking now at our own survey of doctorate students to see where we fall on time to degree. Schools with continuous enrollment requirements require enrollment of two to three credits each semester. If students don't do that and then want to come back to pursue their degrees, the reinstatement fee exceeds what it would have cost them to have been enrolled at whatever level in those two or three credits. We need to change behaviors and encourage students to

finish.

Dr. Matt Brown shared Benchmarking Data as part of the Finance Subcommittee.  
[http://gradschool.sc.edu/facstaff/gradcouncil/2015/Brief Financial Benchmark Data.pdf](http://gradschool.sc.edu/facstaff/gradcouncil/2015/Brief%20Financial%20Benchmark%20Data.pdf)

**17. Good of the Order**

Dr. Kris Finnigan reported that the Provost has decided that before proposals for new programs get put forward, she would like to have proponents of these programs fill out a questionnaire that basically answers the questions that she and the board would need to know anyway prior to receiving and approving the proposal. They will be posting a fillable PDF to the Academic Programs website. Several other institutions have already gone to this format. The questions that would need to be answered are:

- Why this program or unit and why now
- Demand for this program or unit
- Impact on USC's reputation
- Return on investment
- Sustainability

The next Graduate Council meeting will be on Monday, March 28, 2016 at 2:00pm.

**18. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

**Murray Mitchell, Secretary**

cc:

President Harris Pastides

Provost Joan Gabel

Senior Vice Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies Lacy Ford

Deans

Department Chairs

Graduate Directors

Aaron Marterer, University Registrar

Jodie Morris, Office of the Registrar

Andrew Graves, Office of the Registrar

Nancy Floyd, Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance