



## GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

August 23rd, 2021

The Graduate Council met virtually on Monday, August 23rd, 2021 at 2:00 P.M.

Graduate Council members present: Dr. Nikki Wooten, Chair; Drs. Matt Boylan, Subra Bulusu, Jean Ellis, Shana Harrington, Elise Ince, Hippokratis Kiaris, William Matchin, Jim Mensch, Srihari Nelakuditi, David Reisman, Stephen Shapiro, Neal Woods, and Maggie Carson (GSA).

Graduate Council members absent: Drs. Demetrius Abshire, Marketa Kubickova, Sheryl Wiskur, Songhua Xu, and Christina Yao.

Graduate School Representatives: Dr. Tracey Weldon, Dr. Toby Jenkins, Dr. Murray Mitchell (Secretary), Dale Moore, Wright Culpepper, Libby Cross, and Wanda Barr

Provost Office Representative: Trena Houp

Guests: Dr. Michael Bizimis (SEOE), Dr. Sheryl Mitchell (Nursing), Dr. Rebecca Janzen (LLC), Dr. Christi Metcalfe, (Criminology), Dr. Michael Dedas (School of Visual Art and Design), Dr. Sheri Silfies (Exercise Science), and Sowmya Raghu (GSA)

**NOTE: These minutes will become final on September 27, 2021 if not challenged.**

- 1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda** (Nikki Wooten, Chair)  
The meeting was called to order at 2:02p.m.
- 2. Approval of the Minutes from May 10, 2021.** Approved actions by Graduate Council become effective 30 days after [posting](http://app.gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes.asp). A copy is available on the Graduate School website at: <http://app.gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes.asp>  
The minutes from May were unanimously approved.
- 3. Report of the Chair** (Nikki Wooten)  
Dr. Wooten welcomed all to the first Graduate Council meeting of the Academic Year for 2021 and 2022. She stated that as we begin this semester, we are facing both a national and international crisis. The national crisis is the rise in Covid cases, and we would like to encourage our students to get tested regularly and get the negative numbers to increase. We are also facing an international crisis of the government and the takeover by the Taliban. We are a veteran friendly institution, and we will have several service members, veterans and family members and caregivers who are a part of our student body. Let's encourage them to stay connected. Reach out as there are a wealth of resources that we can offer them as well. She would like for everyone to stay encouraged and be attentive to

our national and international crisis which will probably be ongoing and enduring not only through the fall semester, but perhaps even for the spring semester as well.

#### **4. Report of the Interim Dean of the Graduate School (Tracey Weldon)**

Dr. Weldon introduced herself to the new Council members that she hadn't had the opportunity to meet yet. She talked about some of the following transitions that took place in the Graduate School:

- Ed Lilly, Program Coordinator, who handled the Darla Moore School of Business and the College of Information and Communications, retired in May and we welcomed Ally (McHale) Tully as his replacement.
- Angelina Sylvain, Data Analyst, is serving as the Special Assistant to the Provost and Vice Dean of the Graduate School. She is now located in Close-Hipp on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor. She has been working very diligently to create some dashboards that we can use to sort and track our progress with regard to the strategic plan. She is thinking about ways in which she might be able to work with the individual colleges and departments in some instances to collect some data that might be useful for recruiting purposes. She is also thinking about ways in which her office might be able to support the kind of information that we gather to track how we're doing with regard to campus climate. We are excited to have her on board.
- Toby Jenkins, Interim Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will hold this position until January 2022 and possibly beyond. She has had an opportunity to become acclimated to the position and has lots of exciting plans for the coming year that she will share with you.
- Kesha Clavon, Senior Diversity Recruiter, comes with years of experience in the area of diversity recruiting and is our newest addition to the Graduate School. She is in the process of becoming acclimated to the position. You or someone in your college will be hearing from her very soon. She will be working very closely with Toby Jenkins and Wright Culpepper, who will continue to function as a recruiter for the Graduate School.

Dr. Weldon continued with a bit of information about student support and student services. We are now able to offer full health insurance subsidies for all PhD full time students and graduate assistants effective this fall. We have had a few bumps in the road here and there with students or graduate directors who had questions about the process. We are taking those on a case-by-case basis--with the exception of one or two additional wrinkles. We are in a good place now and excited to be able to offer that benefit. Thanks to the support of Central administration and some strategic funds that were sent our way as the support of the academic units who will take on a larger portion of that subsidy starting next year.

We were able to pull off a virtual fall orientation. Wright Culpepper took the lead on that effort. The Graduate Student Association requested it, and we were able to pull that orientation together in a short amount of time. Dr. Weldon thought that it went well and was well received. There were approximately 180 participants on a three hour call on August 20<sup>th</sup>.

Looking ahead with student services, we have secured some space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Close-Hipp to house various student service representatives starting with Matt Klopfenstein who has been hired in the Fellowships office and the new Career Services graduate student representative should be hired by the end of the month or early September. We have reached out to a couple of other student service offices to see if they might be interested in placing a representative in that space. The idea is to make

graduate student services more visible, accessible, and give them a gathering space to access those kinds of services more readily. We are excited to have this space in Room 204, Close-Hipp. We will probably have a soft launch this fall and then hope to be fully operational in the spring. Wright will share more information with you about the partnership with Founders Credit Union that will offer financial literacy workshops for all graduate students, and faculty, and staff.

Thanks to the support of some additional strategic funds, we were able to increase the size of the Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program students' cohort to include 30 students and increase their stipends to \$10,000. This amount now makes them comparable to the Presidential Fellows. We will be able to use some of the financial resources to enhance their experiences and offer them a stronger cohort experience.

There should be an announcement coming soon about a partnership with the local historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs)--in particular: Claflin University, South Carolina State University, and Benedict College. She has been in contact with the officials about offering full financial support in the 4 + 1 programs to those students who graduate from those institutions and enroll in our graduate programs. This is going to be a strong recruiting incentive for Kesha Clavon to use in her recruitment efforts.

As mentioned in the Spring, we will be officially announcing sometime this Fall that we are working with EOP and the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on requiring a graduate student diversity module that is now required of all undergraduate students. We will extend that to graduate students starting in Spring 2022. The requirement won't kick in until next Fall to give them a year to get socialized around that.

Dr. Weldon is still working with Dr. Mitchell in making sure that the Graduate Director's Handbook is updated with current policies and procedures. We hope to get that into the graduate director's hands sometime soon. We are also looking at the possibility of creating a graduate student handbook that would supplement whatever is happening or whatever they are being provided in their academic units. She hopes this will help them to be familiar with the various policies and procedures that they will have to navigate to successfully matriculate through the graduate programs.

##### **5. Report of the Secretary of the Graduate Council (Murray Mitchell)**

Dr. Mitchell welcomed everyone back to Academic Year 2021-2022.

He reminded everyone that the meeting was being recorded and their continued participation implied consent to be included for that recording. He also reminded everyone to please mute their microphone unless they were commenting or had a question.

Dr. Mitchell provided three business items for the Council's consideration:

- We have a nomination for vice chair—Dr. Stephen Shapiro. The floor is open for any additional nominations. [There were no further nominations] A vote is required to affirm this nomination. This nomination was unanimously approved.
- Dr. Carmen Maye has had to step away from her role on Graduate Council. Dr. Demetrius Abshire from Nursing has been nominated to finish that term. A vote is required to affirm this nomination. This nomination was unanimously approved.

- There are committees in need of chairs (must be Graduate Council Members) and membership (may be graduate faculty; not necessarily on Graduate Council). Any interested parties, please contact him. Most pressing:
  - Science, Math and Related Professional Programs
  - Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs.
- We are also in need of membership for:
  - Academic Policy and Practices
  - Fellowships and Scholarships
  - Grievances, Appeals, and Petitions.

**6. Report of the Interim Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Associate Director, Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program (Toby Jenkins)**

Dr. Jenkins gave highlights on the following programs that will be focus on three DEI Priorities: Inclusion and Belonging in Graduate Life, Inclusive Excellence and Diversity Recruiting. Some of the new initiatives that they're unrolling this year is under student engagement initiatives.

- A program called Campus Conversations will be an afternoon tea with the Dean will take place in the Fall and Spring. This will provide an opportunity for student leaders in graduate affinity groups and GSA to engage with the Dean on both kinds of cultural education experience and a community conversation discussing graduate life here at the UofSC and giving us some insight and ongoing understanding of good news and good things that are happening for graduate students and their ongoing needs and their ideas for improving the graduate experience here. We will have those conversations and encouraging students to get involved with graduate affinity groups to participate in that conversation. Basically, we are playing double duty in supporting our graduate student organizations and trying to get more students involved. We will continue with the Graduate Student Appreciation Week in the Spring. There will be a week of activities for the graduate students as usual. The only thing different this year is that she will try to convene a planning team or planning committee to include graduate students in the shaping of that week.
- Under diversity education programs, she will continue the Faculty Lounge at the UofSC that she started originally in the College of Education but will be moving it to the Graduate School. This was a part of her courses from last year. This year this program focuses on racism in higher education. Last year, we focused on anti-blackness in education where we looked at the Asian, Asian American Pacific Islander communities and issues of racism as in a phobia directed towards this community. In the fall, they will have as their guest Dr. Sam Museus. He is a professor at the University of San Diego and the Director of the National Institute for Transformation and Equity. He is going to be talking about Humanizing Scholarly Resistance: Solidarity in Social Justice Advocacy. Following in the Spring, we will have Dr. Erika Lee. She is a professor at the University of Minnesota and the Director of the Immigration History Research Center. Her talk will be on the New Xenophobia and the Role of the Public Scholar Today.
- The Faculty Lounge Conversations are Zoom webinars, but they are focused on a research article by the guests. I will circulate this research article. It is for graduate students, faculty, staff, and anyone else interested in wrestling with these topics.

- A new series set that we are starting this semester in partnership with the Center for Innovation in Higher Education is a podcast series called The Grad Cohort. Those will be conversations about justice, equity, and inclusion. These conversations are developed and hosted by graduate students. Each semester a graduate course will take on the podcast and the students in that course will record a series of episodes related to their course theme or course topic. All episodes will be graduate students in conversation with each other about relevant issues of justice, equity, and inclusion. This semester, the theme and focus is the woke educator looking at anti-blackness in higher education and the students will be students from one of my courses from last year in the Higher Education Program, Diversity in Higher Education course. The Master's students in the program will be featured in a podcast series this year. This fall semester and the spring semester will have a new course and a new theme. She is excited to launch this as an audio series.
- In the Spring, we will be at creating a Graduate Inclusive Leadership Symposium. It is unlike a research symposium, our University Research Day, or the Disciplinary Conferences that students will participate in throughout the year in their disciplines. These will all be focused on broad leadership issues. We are hoping to have this as a face-to-face event in the Spring. Under Inclusive Excellence, we will have a series of Graduate Faculty initiatives. These programs are really directed towards the faculty who teach in the Graduate School and continued professional development for our faculty. We will start a program called DEI Talks in February, and that will be a video meeting or webinar series that will engage our graduate faculty and wrestle with broader concepts that we do have some urgency to change. This one will look at graduate admissions and rethinking longstanding practices and cultural norms around graduate admissions. Dr. Julie Posselt will lead the conversation. She is an Associate Professor at the University of Southern California.
- We are working on developing our website to make that into a space that has resources available for graduate faculty who are interested in transforming their practices and looking for resources. We will try to offer links to resources in addition to what our Center for Teaching Excellence might provide. Please be on the look out for a note when the Graduate School's website is updated. We will co-sponsor the Carter G. Woodson Distinguished Lecture Series. We are going to hopefully do a few co-sponsorships with colleges across campus and try to partner with the colleges where our students are housed. This initiative is part of an Equity and Justice Symposium that the College of Education is hosting. We will specifically partner under the Carter G. Woodson Distinguished Lecture Series that will happen as a keynote in that symposium. More to come from the College of Education on that initiative. We will also have some inclusive excellence initiatives for graduate students. The Carter D. Woodson Distinguished Lecture Series will serve both students and faculty.
- The final priority is diversity recruiting. As Dean Weldon mentioned, we are very excited to add Kesha Clavon, Senior Diversity Recruiter, as we expand our traditional recruiting efforts. We are now able to cover more ground now with the traditional fairs and HBCU partnerships that was shared earlier. University visit days and summer research experiences and changing how we present at leadership conferences and recruiting conferences. We are trying to go beyond hosting tables and the traditional recruiting by doing some presentations about graduate school and preparing for graduate school that can engage students in different ways. We will be looking for a variety of new things with educative recruiting focused on diversity recruitment.

## **7. Report on Professional Development (Wright Culpepper)**

Wright thanked everyone who played a role in the graduate student orientation that took place on Friday, August 20<sup>th</sup>. It was very successful, and they expect that it is going to have a much bigger reach. It was recorded and will be ready for distribution very soon to all graduate students, to the graduate director listserv, and to the program administrator list serv as well. It will be time stamped for various topics; so, students can locate topics that pertain to them.

We have partnered with Founders Federal Credit Union. Every first Friday of each month, Founders will send a certified financial counselor to campus to speak to our graduate students about topics relative to financial literacy. This Friday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, they will come and talk about financial basics, banking, saving, checking, etc. In later sessions throughout the semester and the academic year, they will also talk about investing, preparing for retirement, and benefits. They will spend a session talking about taxes, credit, and identity theft, different things that all of us need to know about but not traditional to the Graduate School experience, and some things that graduate students don't necessarily get educated on while they are in Graduate School. As of right now, all opportunities are planned to be held in person in the Russell House but can pivot to a virtual format if necessary. We will monitor how things go on campus in terms of the pandemic. He will be sending out registration links this week to get students on board.

We have a robust schedule in place for the rest of the semester. A list of other topics will be sent out very soon. Our topics are not just focusing strictly on professional development but trying to hit on topics that approach our students in a holistic manner as evidenced by our partnership with Founders Federal Credit Union. We are also trying to do things relative to health and wellness communication, career development and we will be working hand in hand with national fellowships and scholar programs in the Career Center as they bring their new hires on board.

For those of you who are newly appointed graduate directors or new to the Graduate Council, we do allow programs to purchase application fee waivers. If you have students or initiatives that you want to employ in terms of recruitment going forward in this next application cycle, please reach out to Libby Cross, Director of Operations, or to him if you are interested in paying those \$50 fee waivers upfront. If you have students that you want to issue them out to, Libby or he can talk with you about strategies that may be helpful and how you can go about purchasing those.

## **8. Report of the Graduate Student Association (Maggie Carson)**

Maggie introduced herself and the other executive officers of GSA for this year:

Sowmya Raghu, President  
Kyle Radtke, Vice President  
Maggie Carson, Graduate Council Representative

GSA also took part in the graduate student orientation that occurred on August 20<sup>th</sup> and presented on the following topics:

- Overview of GSA
- GSA Executive Agenda 2021-2022
- Advocacy Efforts
- Programming Efforts
- 2021-2022 President's Cabinet Openings
- Get Involved

Maggie mentioned that GSA's year end report, which is the summary of the activities of that they did last year, will be coming out within the next few weeks. She will get it to the members of Graduate Council, and she will post it on the GSA website. She is the liaison between GSA and Graduate Council and will be letting the Council know what they are doing and informing them of any concerns that the graduate students may have.

**9. Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee (Stephen Shapiro)**

No report.

**10. Report of the 500/600 Level Courses (Murray Mitchell)**

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

**500/600 Courses for August 23, 2021 Grad Council**

(CCP = Course Change Proposal; NCP=New Course Proposal)

None at this time.

**11. Associate Graduate Faculty Nominations (Murray Mitchell)**

Name: **Robert Dunn** (PhD)  
Program: School of the Earth, Ocean, and Environment  
Term: Summer 2021 – Summer 2027

Name: **Kristen Hogan** (PhD)  
Program: Department of Biological Sciences  
Term: Summer 2021 – Summer 2027

Name: **Eilea Knotts** (PhD)  
Program: Department of Biological Sciences  
Term: Summer 2021 – Summer 2027

Name: **Elina Levina** (PhD)  
Program: Department of Biological Sciences  
Term: Summer 2021 – Summer 2027

Name: **Charles A. Schumpert** (PhD)  
Program: Department of Biological Sciences  
Term: Summer 2021 – Summer 2027

Name: **William Strosnider** (PhD)  
Program: Department of the Earth, Ocean & Environment  
Term: Summer 2021 – Summer 2027

Name: **Amanda P. Zeigler** (PhD)  
Program: Department of Biological Sciences  
Term: Summer 2021 – Summer 2027

***These nominations were unanimously approved by Graduate Council.***

**12. Fellowships and Scholarships Committee (Jean Ellis)**

Dr. Ellis put out a plea for membership to serve on this committee. She asked that the members of Graduate Council let Dr. Mitchell know if they had colleague suggestions to serve on this committee. She has already set meeting dates for this committee for February 11<sup>th</sup> and March 18<sup>th</sup> and asked that you not volunteer if you are not available on these dates as they will be going through applications. Should anyone have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Dr. Mitchell or to her.

**13. Report of Science, Math, and Related Professional Programs Committee (TBA)**

None at this time.

**14. Report of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs Committee (TBA)**

None at this time.

**15. Report of the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee (TBA)**

No report.

**16. Other Committee Reports**

None.

**17. Old Business**

Dr. Mitchell stated that he and Dean Weldon are still in the process of trying to consolidate several policies and procedures in the Graduate Bulletin, as well as, updating the Graduate Director Handbook. A Graduate Student Handbook initiative is underway.

**18. New Business**

None.

**19. Good of the Order**

None.

**20. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58p.m.

Murray Mitchell, Secretary

CC: Harris Pastides, Interim President  
Stephen Cutler, Interim Provost  
Tracey Weldon, Interim 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 Wright, Office of the Registrar