



GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

August 24th, 2020

The Graduate Council met virtually on Monday, August 24, 2020 at 2:00 P.M.

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

Graduate Council members absent: Drs. Spencer Platt and Todd Shaw.

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

Provost Office Representative: Trena Houp (excused)

Guests: Dr. Matthew Brashears (Sociology), Libby Cross (Graduate School), and Andre Grant (Social Work)

NOTE: These minutes will become final on September 28, 2020 if not challenged.

- 1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda** (Jim Mensch, Chair)
The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m., and the agenda was unanimously approved.
- 2. Approval of the [Minutes from May 11, 2020](http://app.gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes.asp).** 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>

Minutes were unanimously approved.

- 3. Report of the Chair** (Jim Mensch)
No report.
- 4. Report of the Dean of Graduate School** (Cheryl Addy)
Dr. Addy welcomed the members of the Graduate Council to the new academic school year. She thanked everyone for their roles as Graduate Council members and their roles as graduate faculty members in support of graduate education. Over the past several years across the University, our graduate enrollment numbers have been dropping. As of last Friday, graduate numbers were up by 300! The increase on the UofSC campus is totally graduate. Undergraduate numbers and professional programs numbers are down just a bit. We have 336 more students than this time last year and the net increase is 337. We have done outstanding in keeping our graduate students and bringing new graduate students in. She is so unbelievably proud of all that you have done to support this in the last few months.

She hopes things are off to a good start for those teaching this semester and hopes that your students are doing well with the mix of hybrid and online courses. We have been tracking the very carefully (both undergraduate and graduate level) the number of course sections that are offered on campus and hybrid. We have about 35% of our graduate students are 100% online. That seems awfully high, until you compare this percentage to last year and past years 25% online who were in enrolled in strictly online programs. Only 10% more additional students are going totally online. Thank you for your role in making the students feel safe to be on campus and for providing the opportunity to be on campus.

As you are aware, Dr. Heather Brandt, our previous Associate Dean of the Graduate School, left over the summer for a new opportunity. Due to the hiring freeze and some planning activities, we will not be filling her position immediately. Someone very familiar to you all has agreed to take a leadership role for the Presidential Fellows program, and that person is Dr. Jean Ellis. She just completed a term as a member of Graduate Council and chaired the Fellowships and Scholarships Committee. She has agreed to be the faculty director for Presidential Fellows. All of our scholarly initiatives do have faculty leadership. In addition, Wright Culpepper, Director of Recruitment and Diversity Officer, will be taking on some of the in-house responsibilities for logistics and coordination of professional development programs. We have our functionality covered.

Human Resources completed an in-depth study to restructure the student employment process. Previously, Human Resources had never dealt with student employment. The study included a lot of people, including Wanda Barr, who helped to restructure the process and move it online. There have been a few kinks along the way but overall, this has been nice improvement for us. If you have any questions or concerns with how its functioning, please let her know if she needs to get involved in terms of getting to a resolution.

We have started a similar initiative to look at the timing of getting a system like Blackboard access for new faculty members. This problem seems to be more of an issue this semester than it previously was in the past. How do we get the identity management process moving as quickly as possible and get that information to where it needs to be. We have heard your concerns and we are working on this issue.

The vast majority of our graduate student employees are hired as graduate assistants which gives them the benefit of resident tuition and the student health insurance subsidy. We weren't able to get the health insurance subsidy increased, but we maintained at \$1000 for the year--\$420 for Fall and \$580 for Spring/Summer. If your students meet the salary and enrollment requirements, please hire them as a graduate assistant. Hiring them as a SGNA (Graduate Student No Assistantship) and being paid by the hour will cause them to miss out on the benefits.

We finally have the official Academic Affairs policy on Graduate Assistantships in review for final revisions. We are trying to protect our graduate assistants in terms of getting them a process to register complaints. We are also trying to articulate--in writing--what the job responsibilities and job expectations are. The change also reflects the new student hire codes that Human Resources requires departments to use. This policy is up for open comment right now if any of you would like to review and provide any comments. She is the contact person for this ACAF policy.

Dr. Addy also brought up required statewide test requirements for admission. Last year, several programs requested formal changes (Bulletin Changes) to their admission criteria (GRE or other statewide test). Just as many other programs that were able to do this informally as they did not have this listed in their Graduate Bulletin as being required. She would like for the Graduate Council to consider for this year is going "test optional" since we are still having some test taking challenges. This would have to be an "opt-in" program. If your department has a GRE listed in the Graduate Bulletin requirements, you would have to notify your graduate coordinator in the Graduate School

that you would like to go “test optional” without processing the Bulletin change. The programs would have to update their publicity materials accordingly. While she recognizes the challenges of the standardized test, there is value in other pieces of documentation or credentials that could be substituted in lieu of the GRE scores. Departments would still want to make sure that prospective students still have adequate information to assess the student’s qualifications.

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

Dr. Mitchell welcomed the Graduate Council members who were able to find the time and were able to navigate to this meeting. Although somewhat of a novice for hosting these meetings, he hopes that the process will get smoother as time goes by and hopes that his expertise increases.

We have one nomination for the final position on Graduate Council, and this nomination requires a vote by the Council. Dr. Srihari Nelakuditi from Computer Science and Engineering has been nominated.

Graduate Council unanimously supported Dr. Nelakuditi by vote.

Please help by sharing with your faculty colleagues the desired process for submitting an update to grades of Incomplete. Especially in this time of pandemic, there have been more grades of incomplete submitted than under ‘typical’ circumstances. As that work is completed and faculty wish to submit a ‘final’ grade, there is a specific form that does not come through the Graduate School (if the time frame for the incomplete has not expired). That form goes directly to the Registrar for action and is not delayed by another step of coming through the Graduate School.

The form is at the same location as the “change of grade” form and is called “Makeup Grade-Incomplete Form” and is the 8th on the list of forms:

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/toolbox/faculty_staff_forms/index.php

Last, there are five standing committees that need to be staffed. The chair of each committee must be a Graduate Council member, since the chair reports on the business of their committee to the Council. Other members can be Graduate Council or simply be interested Graduate Faculty. The five committees are:

1. Fellowships and Scholarships: Some business in the fall, but, most in the spring.
2. Humanities, Social Sciences, Education and Related Professional Programs Committee: This committee meets (when necessary) on the second Monday of the month and otherwise deals with proposals electronically.
3. Science, Math, and Related Professional Programs Committee: This committee meets (when necessary) on the second Monday of the month and otherwise deals with proposals electronically.
4. Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee: This committee meets irregularly and on an ‘as needed’ basis. There is one pending case for consideration.
5. Academic Policy and Practices: This committee meets irregularly and on an ‘as needed’ basis.

If anyone is interested in either chairing or serving on any of these committees, please communicate directly to Dr. Mitchell via email. He will be happy to share more information that may be helpful as you decide whether or not you have availability to serve on any of these committees.

6. Report on Professional Development (TBA)

No report.

7. Report of the Graduate Student Association Representative (Sudipta Saha)

Sudipta reported on the following:

President Caslen showed an interest in attending at least one Graduate Council meeting each semester.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) has received concerns from several students on the communication gap among graduate assistants, the employing departments, and the Human Resources office. Graduate student employees (i.e., temporary employees) do not receive the same communications that all other employees receive from the university and HR.

GSA Opinions on Graduation regalia: Some of the colleges provide mortarboard square cap (Education, Musical Arts, Nursing Practice, Philosophy, Physical Therapy, Public Health), some provide tam hat (Jurisprudence & Pharmacy). Traditionally, the tam is what really sets the doctorate apart because undergraduates and masters candidates also get the mortarboard cap. Either this could be consistent (tam) throughout the university, or doctoral graduates should get a choice between the two.

The Outstanding dissertation award has not been announced on the website [This announcement has been added].

In discussion regarding the pay lag, Dr. Addy explained that the pay lag is not new this year. The pay lag went into effect last year in April and it affects all new student hires and all new faculty and staff hires as well. This is business standard. Departments should make all new student hires aware of the pay lag so that there are no surprises when a student expects a paycheck after their first two weeks of work and there is not one. Payroll dates are the 15th and the last business day of the month.

8. Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee (TBA)

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 August 2020 Grad Council

(CCP = Course Change Proposal; NCP=New Course Proposal; STC=Special Topics Course)

PSYC 565 (3) Psychology of Physical Activity (CCP: Fall 2021)

RUSS 518 (3) Medieval Russian Culture (NCP: Spring 2021)

RUSS 520 (3) Russian Modernism: Love, Sex and Politics in Revolutionary Russia
(NCP: Spring 2021)

RUSS 530 (3) Homer in Russia (NCP: Spring 2021)

RUSS 540 (3) Writing Russian National Identity (NCP: Spring 2021)

Distributed Learning Proposals

EDEX 691 (3) Collaborative Partnerships PK-12 (CCP: Summer 2020)

PSYC 565 (3) Psychology of Physical Activity (CCP: Fall 2021)

Special Topics Course Proposals

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

10. Associate Graduate Faculty Nomination (Murray Mitchell)

Two nominations were considered, and additional information has been sought from programs in support of the nominations.

11. Fellowships and Scholarships Committee (TBA)

No report.

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

None at this time.

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

None at this time.

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

No report.

15. Other Committee Reports

None

16. Old Business

None

17. New Business

Presidential Fellow Criteria. Please see attachment.

Dr. Jean Ellis, previous chair of the Fellowships and Scholarships Committee, submitted the suggestion that GRE scores should not be considered when departments nominate students as Presidential Fellows. The standard that a program can only submit their top two nominations was operational last year. No other nominations can be submitted should a nomination no longer be considered. The new standard for Presidential Fellows nominations is that standardized test scores will not be considered.

The Graduate Council voted unanimously to approve the new criteria.

18. Good of the Order

Dr. Mitchell would like to support what Jim has suggested—please share information from this (and other meetings) with your colleagues. In addition, please solicit from your colleagues and students any graduate student or graduate education issues that warrant consideration by this body. You are welcome to bring up discussion items as new business, and/or to share with him in advance so that we can get your topic on the agenda, perhaps with any kind of supplemental documentation that may help members by giving them a chance to reflect on the topic rather than to have a topic be ‘sprung’ on them without the opportunity to provide a more thoughtful response.

Dr. Mitchell thanked everyone again for making the time to join us for this meeting. He hopes that all are able to remain safe and healthy as the semester moves ahead.

19. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58p.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



Department of Geography

May 15, 2020

Re: Report Out from AY 2019-2020 Scholarships and Fellowships Committee and Future Suggestions

Dear Vice Provost Addy, Associate Dean Mitchell, Associate Dean Brandt, and Mr. Culpepper:

After another very successful year of the Scholarships and Fellowships Committee, we have some suggestion for your consideration, especially regarding the Presidential Fellowship.

- Committee supports future University-level considerations to not require the GRE, which this is currently a threshold for the PF nomination
- Committee suggests that in the future, additional information is disseminated to Graduate Directors about “suggested qualifications and/or characteristics of a Presidential Fellowship” (listed below). This should be communicated clearly in the letter from the Graduate Director. This letter should not be generic and will hold more weight in the future as the committee weighs the unique contributions of each applicant against the aims of the program and PF cohort composition.
 - Linkages between the incoming student, potential advisor, and other entities on campus
 - Candidate’s potential contribution to the mission of the University / College / Program
 - Unique qualities of the incoming student that make him/her an outstanding addition to the Presidential Fellowship cohort
 - Track record of significant accomplishments and special interests
 - Exceptional creativity
 - Commitment to improving the lives of others
 - Capacity for leadership
- Committee recommends continuing the policy that only two nominations are submitted per unit limit and that both nominations submitted in the same round.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Taylor Ellis, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Geography
WINDlab Director

On behalf of the 2019-2020 Scholarships and Fellowships Committee:
Dr. Nate Bell (Nursing), Dr. Kirk Foster (Social Work), Dr. Jim Mensh (Athletic Training), Dr. Greg Stuart (Music), Dr. Songhua Xu (Engineering)