



Graduate Council Meeting No. 521 February 25, 2019 Minutes

Council Members Present: Mark Comerford, Peter Adamy, Nisa Ghonem, Peter Larsen, Ingrid Lofgren, Lauren Mandel, Diane Martins, Scott McWilliams, Colleen Mouw, Derek Nikitas, Daniel Sheinin, Gary Stoner, Mehmet Gokhan Yalcin

Council Members Absent: Nick Constant, Michael Greenfield, Nasser Zawia

Graduate School Present: Andrea Rusnock, Alycia Mosley Austin, Cara Mitnick, Jessica Martinez

I. Call to order

➤ Time: 2:04 pm by Associate Dean Rusnock

II. Approval of Minutes of Meeting Number 520, 28 January 2019 (please see attachments)

★ *Approved: Majority approved*

★ *Abstained: 1 council member (absent from previous meeting)*

III. Announcements

A. GS Fellowships, Scholarships, and Diversity Awards

1. Reminder that the nominations for the Graduate School Fellowships, Scholarships and Diversity Awards are due March 1st.
 - a. If someone were to submit for both the Fellowship and Diversity Fellowship, can the same letter of recommendation be used?
 - i. Yes
 - b. If they already received a Fellowship are they able to apply for the Tuition Scholarship?
 - i. Yes
2. A memo with the call for nominations for Excellence in Doctoral Research Award, Excellence in Master's Thesis Research Award, and Excellence in Graduate Mentoring Award was distributed to Council members. Nominations are due March 15th.
 - a. All available through the InfoReady platform.
3. There is also new Teaching Assistantships listed in the memo. One is for the Diversity Graduate Teaching Assistantships due March 11th and the other is for the Graduate Writing Center Teaching Assistantship due March 1st.

B. Professional Development upcoming events

1. Upcoming Professional Development activities:

- a. On Thursday, there will be an interviewing best practices for international students. There will be an outside expert coming in and partnering with the undergraduate career office.
- b. Next Thursday there will be a Strengths Personality Test Inventory program. Students who attended last year really enjoyed the program.
 - i. Could this test be shared with Doctoral Student Candidates?
 - 1. Speak with Cara Mitnick to see how this might work.
- c. Development Director, Cara Mitnick, will now hold office hours at GSO beginning on March 5th, every Tuesday for two hours at the GSO Library

C. Recent appointments to the Graduate Faculty since those listed on the agenda for 28 January 2019 meeting

- 1. No new Graduate Faculty.

IV. New Programs

A. PhD in Health Sciences

- 1. The proposal was submitted in January and then revised to address some of the concerns the New Program Committee raised.
- 2. The proposal is to establish a new PhD in Health Sciences that would only be open to students who already have a post baccalaureate degree and have 5 or 6 tracks in the different programs that are part of Health Sciences. (Communicative Disorders, Human Development and Family Studies, Nutrition, Kinesiology.)
- 3. The committee was informed that Dean Zawia would share the committee's concerns with Deb Riebe and receive revisions.
- 4. Comments:
 - a. The new revisions are not very different from what was originally proposed. Unsure if Dean Zawia is aware of additional information aside from the proposal.
 - b. *New Program Committee concern:* Credit would be granted in a form of at least 30 credits for the previous degree. Dean Zawia had stated that this could not be possible because the degree was in a different area other than Health Sciences. Not sure what might have been discussed, but it is not addressed in the revised proposal.
 - i. DPT is explicitly excluded.
 - ii. For example, a student could come in with an MD.
 - 1. All terminal degrees cannot be used for credits towards a PhD and this is not stated in the revised proposal.
 - c. Dean Zawia wanted to share this proposal with the Graduate Council for additional comments or concerns before he goes back to the College of Health Science.
 - d. *New Program Committee Concern:* It appeared as though the program was light on curriculum and in some way each admitted student would have a doctoral program that was individualized between the student and their major professor. There would be no consistency and no core curriculum.
 - i. The committee understands their colleagues' expertise and ability to work with students to develop a curriculum that works for that particular student. The issue came up that you may be an advisee that has a specific view towards an area of a field that excludes another area. If you have a terminal degree in that field, you should have a broad understanding of the entire field as opposed to just the specialization that your particular professor/advisor is comfortable with.

- ii. Will the new PhD program have tracks like a Communicative Disorder track or Physical Therapy track? That would seem like the most reasonable approach.
 - 1. If tracks are adopted, there is currently no definition of a core within each track. It's simply listed as 12 credits to be negotiated with the advisor.
 - 2. There are seminars in Health Sciences that appear to be rotating. The topics would vary from year to year or semester to semester. The PhD seems to be more methodology focused. There isn't advanced coursework in the area the student is coming in with and maybe that is part of the design. There was some confusion. If a student is getting a PhD, how is it more than methodology on top of what a student already enters with.
- e. How will it appear, as customized seminars?
 - i. There are only three core courses, but not an interdisciplinary common content core.
- f. What would comprehensive exams look like?
 - i. It was discussed within the New Program Committee in the context of figuring out what the graduate student experience would look like from matriculation to graduation. The comprehensive exams might be individually designed between the major professor, the student, and the committee, but it is unclear. If it is a PhD program, would there be commonality across the comprehensive exams of the students within that program?
 - ii. When program assessments are done and everything is individual, what is being assessed?
 - 1. Are all programs now, every department within the program, do all their comps the same way? It has not been the experience. Sounds like we are expecting something different for this program than what might already have.
 - 2. What if comps and final defenses within different tracks are not similar? There are some programs where the presentation of the research isn't part of the two hour oral comp, and others where it is. How much of a core would people want to see beyond the 9 credits within a PhD level?
- g. What is the core in other PhD programs like?
 - i. In Education, it is Foundation Policy and Research across Education, about 12 credits.
 - ii. If other programs have 9 credits of common core courses, then what is the issue with this proposal?
 - 1. If a student receives a PhD in Education and a specialization underneath that, the specialization has common core courses. It is assumed that the 9 credits of specialization are negotiated with the advisor or other faculty.
 - 2. For example, the core in Education has to do with educational theory and foundations, educational policy, etc. The proposed topics course in Health Sciences is the closest of the proposed courses to the core in the Education program.
 - iii. What is the core of a PhD in Health Sciences? A student isn't going to receive a PhD in Kinesiology, PhD in Nutrition; it is not an individual PhD, it is a common PhD. It is incumbent upon the proposing group to have a common core curriculum of some sort.

1. In Psychology there are 6 graduate courses; Developmental, Social, Physiological, etc., a statistics in methodology core of a minimum of 9 credits and then an additional specialty totaling 27 credits.
 - a. A PhD in Nutrition doesn't exist because of the number of students. Currently, doctoral students in nutrition get a PhD in BES. All biology PhD programs were considered too small and cut by the Board of Governors. A number of Master's and PhD programs were collapsed into BES so programs could continue on.
2. Is it fair to assume all students getting a PhD with a common name have some core set of knowledge and skills that they will graduate with as well as a specialty? It seems it is more speciality focused and the core, in some extent, inferred or individualized. If it is ok for a PhD program to share a name and have every student have a different program of study, then the proposal is fine in some ways. The committee's read on it is that as one PhD program it still lacks an identity.
 - a. Also, the opposite argument was not made in terms of a core. For example, Kinesiology vs Nutrition has to look different for the following reasons which would have been fine, but there wasn't a separate core identified for each area. The assumption is there's a commonality and that is why they can group them under the umbrella of Health Sciences.
- h. Would a possible proposal be to have one or two more core courses that weren't just method based but content based like being fluent in current US healthcare policy?
 - i. Since it is not our area, we would like to hear from the college an argument if there should or should not be a core. It seems a little too nonspecific for someone outside of Health Sciences to really understand.
 - ii. Many of the Health Sciences programs do not have a PhD program right now; they only have Master's programs
- i. In summary, the Council would like another round of revisions to the proposal that would strengthen the core to give it more coherence across the different sub plans/specializations.
 - i. Would also like to check in with Dean Zawia since he held a meeting with the College of Health Sciences.
- j. Suggestion: There are five sub plans, could it be clustered into two branches and enhance the core?
 - i. The proposal groups felt they had a 9 credit course core, but would have to go back to the planning committee. They considered combining, but then you get further and further away from your own degree. Someone who is looking into the Nutrition degree wouldn't necessarily look under Biological and Environmental Sciences. Part of the concern with staying with the departments for the track was to be able to have the specialization stated on the second line of the transcript. It wouldn't appear on the diploma.
 - ii. There is a similar setup within the College of Business where a student gets a PhD in Business but not in one of the specializations (e.g. supply chain management). There is little crossover and they struggle to come up with common courses although there are a few when students crossover.
 - iii. One of the issues is there isn't a Master's in Health Sciences that would bridge into the PhD in Health Sciences.

- k. The PhD in Health Sciences is very similar to BES PhD program. There are five specializations in the BES program. If you looked at what courses each student took, it is very individualized. Before this system, there were PhDs in a variety of fields. What the specializations did was consolidate and now every student within the PhD program within a specialization has a common core.
 - i. With the BES program, the specializations do not map onto the departments but with the PhD in Health Sciences they do. There is wonderful potential for interdisciplinary work, but it isn't visible.
- l. Can it be phased? Start with two tracks and then increase to six within the next three years. Wait for the following year to see how the demand is and then keep rolling out new tracks.

★ *Motion: Table proposal and return suggestions to the College of Health Sciences.*

- *Approved: Majority approved*
- *Opposed: 2 council members*
- *Abstained: 1 council member*

V. Graduate Curriculum (See Google Drive for Course forms)

Notice of Change

Part time MBA program

Change in the number of credits required from a minimum of 30 to a minimum of 36, and maximum of 45 to a maximum of 42. Change in the courses that are required and those that can be waived.

New description:

The Part-time MBA program requires a minimum of 36 credits and a maximum of 42 credits. First, students are required to take the following eight courses: ECN 590 (or MBA 531X), MBA 500, MBA 502 (or 532), 503 (or 533), 504 (or 504), 505, 560, and 565. Waiver exams are available for MBA 500 and ECN 590, or they can be waived with permission of the program director based on successful completion of equivalent college-level courses at an AACSB-accredited institution within the past five years. Students may also waive one of the following courses with a waiver exam or permission of program director based on successful completion of equivalent college-level courses at an AACSB-accredited institution within the past five years: MBA 502, MBA 5023 MBA 504, MBA 505. If students waive MBA 502, MBA 5023 MBA 504, or MBA 505, the waived course will be replaced with an elective.

★ *Motion: Approve notice of change*

- *Approved: Majority Approved*
- *Abstained: 1 Council Member*

Master of Science in Finance

Make the MS in Finance a STEM Designated Degree Program, which makes graduates eligible for 24-month STEM optional practical training (OPT) extension.

★ *Motion: Approve notice of change*

- *Approved: Majority Approved*
- *Abstained: 1 Council Member*

VI. New Business

A. Comp exams

Proposal 1) Written: Add a choice of "pass with reservations" and wait a minimum of 2 weeks to resubmit

Proposal 2) Oral: Different form to request to schedule the Oral Exam.

Proposal 3) Oral: Add a choice of "pass with reservations" and wait a minimum of 2 weeks to meet an re-examine.

1. Approached by Pharmacy and Business on ways to modify the comp exams.
2. Two years ago the Graduate School changed the way the Comprehensive exams were scheduled and created a single form. It is not working. The Graduate School is going to break up the form again.
3. In Pharmaceutical Sciences and College of Pharmacy, students submit written proposals as their written comprehensive exam followed by a two to three week period in which they will have their oral comprehensive exam. There is no stop point in between the written and the oral. The only form we have is either pass or fail with the option being a 10 week wait to retake it. The request and discussion emerged as an alternative timeline. Proposed:
 - a. Either there will be a different timeline, maybe a 4 week period instead of a 10 week period.
 - b. Two separate forms for the written and oral portions of the comprehensive exams, so that if pharmacy wished to have a student revise their written it is possible instead of all or nothing.
 - c. An alternative flexibility.
4. The 10 weeks is to allow the students time to master the content.
5. There are only two options and students do not perform at a level of A or B. The different levels would allow for different time frames. If a student needs to redo one question out of eight and otherwise does well, there is no need for the student to wait 10 weeks. This proposed change would allow the committee the freedom and the flexibility to make a judgement and put a timeframe next to that assessment. The students would still receive detailed feedback. It's like having an A or an F, there is nothing in between.
6. The reason for going back to two forms is to not allow scheduling of the oral comps until the results of the written are submitted. Right now, the Graduate School does not receive the results of the written comps until much later.
7. Each department may have a different format of how they conduct a comprehensive exam. It's tough to have one rule that applies universally when exams are structured differently.
 - a. There is a multiplicity of approaches to comprehensive exams. The forms now are written for sit down exams.
8. There are a lot more students falling in between and by default have to accept them as passing when the student could have used a bit more time to make revisions.
9. One committee would allow a student to pass if the deficiencies are not severe, but would have the student address it during their oral comp exams.
10. The reasoning behind possibly objecting to doing this change would somehow weaken our program or weaken the quality of what our students are doing, but in fact when there is a marginal student we pass them. This change could actually strengthen the quality of the written exams. We won't be pushing a student through. We would be forcing them to improve their work before they go on to the next stage.

11. Suggestion: Have the Academic Policies Committee frame a new guideline for the comprehensive exam for the Graduate Council to consider and vote on for the Graduate Manual.
 - a. Dan Sheinin and Nisa Ghonem volunteered to assist in addition to the Academic Policies Committee members, Peter Larsen, Scott McWilliams, and Mehmet Gokhan Yalcin.

★ *Motion: Delegate the Academic Policies Committee to draft a new policy regarding comprehensive exams*

- *Approved: Majority Approved*

B. Dissertation/Thesis Embargo policy

1. The English Department is in full support of this proposal that arose out of concern from graduating students whose creative dissertation/ thesis falls under the umbrella of digital commons distribution of their work. They do have an option of a six month to two years embargo for that distribution. Many are finding that time period is not enough and some feel it should be permanent.
2. Main Reasons:
 - a. Limits the Author and potential publisher the ability to market the materials and sell the materials if they are available online. Some publishers will refuse to even consider to work that is readily available digitally.
 - b. There is a growing issue with corruption of third parties taking these materials and re-selling on Amazon.com. They do it with regular published books but publishers have recourse to shut them down. With ProQuest, they do not have that recourse.
 - c. A thesis that passes for a masters degree is not the same thing as a publishable quality work. If that is out there in the world 5, 10, 15 years later, it can be a source of embarrassment.
3. Associate Dean Rusnock conducted a quick survey on our peer institutions and they do not have a permanent embargo. Some have a 10 year embargo in place.
4. Peter Larsen was able to speak with Julia Lovett who runs the Digital Commons.
 - a. The University, the Colleges, and the Graduate Council have a long standing commitment to making materials available.
 - b. The library has very strong reservations about challenging that for what is essentially a very small part of the university's output to make a broad change for that purpose.
 - c. Over the summer, there was a meeting where there was a general agreement that creative projects are a special case and make a reasonable argument for special extensions.
 - d. Roughly three quarters of the students make no request for any kind of embargo. There are a lot of benefits that include increased readership, citations, etc. It is useful for both the students and University. Many of our theses and dissertations receive a lot of attention from around the world.
 - e. Of the remaining 25 %, students have picked between six months and two years. Any extensions after that are very small, about five cases in the last six years.
 - f. Making a permanent embargo would get in the way of the University's commitment to making materials available and confuse students to some degree.
 - g. Theses and dissertations are a matter of record. Historically, it was printed in book format and weren't as easily available. The idea of simply censoring material from existing after getting a degree is kind of a violation to the spirit of the academy.

5. Solution proposed to have a paper copy available in the library and in-network availability.
6. The outcome of the meeting that took place during the summer was to bring this request to the Graduate Council.
7. Regarding the small number of embargo extension requests, is there a system in place to remind student that they selected a two year embargo when the expiration date is near?
 - a. Unsure. That would be the student's responsibility to keep track.
8. How many times can an extension be requested after the two years?
 - a. It is on a case by case basis.
9. How do other creative areas handle this such as art and music? Is it specific to creative writing because it is a written product?
10. Are there any open access pressures on the students in terms of getting any funding to support their dissertation work? Are they required to have it be open access?
11. University of Connecticut allows authors to place embargo from 6 months to 10 years, it is a drop down menu option. Brown University has a two year embargo with two year extensions up to 10 years. James Madison University has a one or two year embargo. UMASS has a 6 month embargo and if requesting it for a longer term would have to go to the Graduate School Dean.
12. The primary argument is that creative works are fundamentally different from scholarly works. It is not unreasonable to say they should receive a special treatment.
13. We cannot go back to storing thesis and dissertations to paper format. The resources to do so are no longer available.
14. What the department hopes to get out of this is that students have a choice no matter what.
15. Associate Dean Rusnock asked Peter Larsen to discuss the embargo request with Julia Lovett; this issue will be brought to the Graduate Council again for a vote.

VII. Old Business

A. Review request from Electrical Engineering to require ELE 601 every semester

The issue is if you require students to attend every seminar, there will be 8 to 10 credits that the student will have to pay for and will appear on the program of study. Fred Vetter gave additional materials for Associate Dean Rusnock to review before the council meeting.

★ *Motion: Table in order for Associate Dean Rusnock to review materials presented.*

a. *Approved: Majority Approved*

VIII. Adjournment

➤ **Time: 3:42 pm by Associate Dean Rusnock**