

Graduate Council Meeting No. 524 September 23, 2019 Minutes

Council Members Present: Jacqueline Britto, Theresa Deeney, Feruz Ganikhanov, Nisa Ghonem, Kathy Hutchinson, Amanda Izenstark, Kathryn Jervis, Stephen Kogut, Ingrid Lofgren, Mary Moen, Derek Nikitas, Ted Walls, Fred Vetter, Mehmet Gokhan Yalcin

Council Members Absent: Colleen Mouw, Bethany Jenkins

Graduate School Present: Nasser Zawia, Brenton DeBoef, Alycia Mosley Austin, Cara Mitnick, Jessica Martinez

I. Call to order

➤ Time: 2:04 pm by Dean Nasser Zawia

II. Approval of Minutes of Meeting Number 523, 29 April 2019 (please see attachments)

★ *Minutes approved by council members present during the April 23, 2019 meeting.*

○ *Council members present: Ingrid Lofgren, Derek Nikitas, Mehmet Gokhan Yalcin*

III. Announcements

A. Introductions

1. All council members introduced themselves.
2. Dean Zawia explained the role of the Graduate Council.
 - a) The culmination of the work of the Graduate Council translates into policy which changes in the Graduate School Manual.
 - b) Each council member is an ambassador of their own college.

B. August Degree Certification

- ★ *Motion: Move to recommend to the Council of PostSecondary Education approval of the candidates for the award of graduate degrees whose names were certified by the Faculty Senate last Thursday, be certified by the Graduate Council and the Graduate School for August 2019.*
- *All council members approved.*

C. Provost Committee on Graduate School/Faculty Senate governance

1. The Provost and President's committee was formed to review the governance issues and jurisdiction between the Faculty Senate and the Graduate Council.

2. The Provost would like to attend a Graduate Council meeting to discuss the report from the committee. Possibly an hour prior to the regularly scheduled meetings and either on October 7th or November 4th. Will notify in advance.
3. This committee was formed when the Graduate School initiated a framework for the ABM, Accelerated Bachelor's and Master's. It was the first time double-counting was introduced. It would allow students to double count credits towards both their bachelor's degree and their Master's degree.
 - a) The Graduate Council voted unanimously in favor of ABM.
 - b) Based on the University Manual, the Graduate Council has powers to develop policies independent of the Faculty Senate.
 - c) The Faculty Senate tried to vote to alter some aspects of ABM. Any changes to the Graduate School Manual would need to be presented to the Graduate Council for approval.
 - d) The Faculty Senate created a special committee to review the ABM. The special committee like the framework and advised to simplify the process.
4. The President's and Provost's committee consisted of six faculty, three representing the Graduate Council and three representing the Faculty Senate. The committee met ten times for two hours each session.
 - a) The committee was charged to review the Graduate Manual and the University Manual for any discrepancies or inconsistencies that need to be fixed.
5. Brief overview:
 - a) The committee affirmed that the Faculty Senate is representing all faculty and is the governance unit of the University.
 - b) The committee acknowledged that the Graduate Council is independent. A council that has its own members from every college, own committees that deal with the policies of graduate education, publishes in the Graduate School manual, and also serves as a review body for all curricular matters that go to the Faculty Senate.
 - c) The committee did not propose a new structure. They affirmed the Graduate Councils right to form its own policies and its own guidelines.
 - d) The committee did state that whenever the Graduate Council makes policy which invokes undergraduate education, the Faculty Senate should be involved.
 - e) Three items the committee brought to light:
 - (1) Grad Faculty Status
 - (2) In regards to why the Graduate School Dean serves as chair of the Graduate Council.
 - (a) The University Manual states the Dean of the Graduate School serves as the Chair of the Graduate Council.
 - (b) The committee suggested that the chair should be one of the council members, but the Graduate School continue to prepare all the work for the person who chairs the meetings.
 - (c) The President and the Provost responded by saying the Graduate School Dean still presides over the meetings. The Dean of the Graduate School also has veto power over decisions made.
 - (3) The Graduate Council is not a committee of the Faculty Senate.

- (a) If the Faculty Senate has an issue with a policy made by the Graduate Council, it will be presented to the President and he will serve as mediator to resolve the issue.
- f) No changes have been made to the University Manual. Legislation would have to begin within the Graduate Council and then will be presented to the Faculty Senate for a vote which will lead to changes in the University Manual.
- g) The Graduate School has decided to begin with having a Chair for the Graduate Council. Votes were submitted by the Graduate Council and Colleen Mouw, from GSO, was voted in as Chair.

D. Graduate Committee Assignments & Chair

- 1. Colleen Mouw of GSO was voted as Chair by the Graduate Council.
- 2. All council members received their first choice in committee assignment.
- 3. The Graduate School choose the Nominating Committee who were Theresa Deeney, Colleen Mouw, and Stephen Kogut.
- 4. Committee assignments were distributed.
 - a) Dean Nasser Zawia will Chair the New Program Committee.
 - b) Associate Dean Brenton DeBoef will Chair the Curriculum Committee.
 - c) All Council members serve on the Awards Committee.
- 5. Committee Assignments will be posted on the Graduate School Website.

E. Graduate Program Directors Lunch (Date TBD) ; GradCAS, ABM, ABD (*DeBoef*)

- 1. Planning to host the lunch in late October, date to be determined.
- 2. Forward any suggestions on items to address (in addition to GradCAS, ABM, and ABD) to Associate Dean Brenton DeBoef at bdeboef@uri.edu.
 - a) Online programs
 - b) TransForm - document management system
 - (1) Discuss different platforms the Graduate School uses
 - c) InfoReady is the new software that will be used for managing awards. Council members will soon receive notification to review applicants for the EGRAs.
 - d) Address common issues seen within new programs and curriculum that can be reinforced to Directors.
 - (1) New Program Proposal Pathway and common FAQ

F. Update on Graduate Writing Center (*Mitnick*)

- 1. The Graduate Writing Center (GWC) is highly utilized. Students are returning for multiple visits.
- 2. Handout was distributed indicating statistics from September 2018 to April 2019 and quotes from very satisfied users.
- 3. The Graduate Writing Center stayed open during the January break and had high utilization rates.
- 4. Higher users of Professors encouraging their students to attend, sometimes a class is encouraged to go.
- 5. 45% of users are non-native English speakers. There are two trained tutors and two trained ELL tutors.
- 6. The GWC was able to stay open during the summer for 10 hours a week. Almost every appointment was taken. The hours were then increased to 15 and an extended two weeks were added.
- 7. Some classes have asked TAs to attend a class. The GWC currently have two TAs that have attended classes and can also be requested.

8. With the help of Cara Mitnick and Ingrid Lofgren, the GWC has been a success.

G. Dean's Fellowship, Dean's Diversity Fellowship, and Tuition Scholarship

1. Handout was distributed with award recipients.
2. The Dean's Fellowship was awarded to four recipients.
3. The Dean's Diversity Fellowship was awarded to seven recipients.
 - a) To maximize a larger amount of students funded, the stipend was used with funds from NEBHE.
4. The Tuition Scholarship was awarded to eleven recipients.
5. In addition, two assistantships were awarded to the Graduate Writing Center.
6. Two assistantships was awarded to Diversity students.
7. One assistantship was awarded to ENRE/SURF/SURFO.

H. EGRA Call Released (*Mosley Austin*)

1. The call was announced through the Graduate School listserv.
2. Encourage your students to apply. Students can apply for up to \$1,000 for research support. The funds can be used for equipment, materials, travel to a conference, and/or travel to a field site.
3. About 60-70 applications are received and about 20 students are awarded depending on how much funds they apply for.
4. InfoReady will be used as the application software.
 - a) Reviewers will receive an email invitation with your list of applications to review there will also be a link to a video tutorial to show you how to use the system.
5. A change in the application requirements:
 - a) A CV/Resume will be required instead of the supplemental documents to reduce the amount of pages an applicant submitted.
 - b) Letters of Recommendation will be directly uploaded by the faculty member. The applicant will enter the faculty members email address and then an email will be sent with a link to that person. The letter is not confidential the student can see it once it's submitted.
6. Comments/Questions:
 - a) Instructions do not state that a student who is applying for a conference during the review period is not eligible for funding.
 - (1) The proposal should be for work, conference, or materials they will need and then once approved will receive the funds to accomplish their proposal. We would like to fund future work not past work. Would have to be discussed for next year's process.
 - (2) Will remove applicants whose proposal has already happened.
 - b) Non-confidential letters versus confidential recommendation letters.
 - (1) Recommendation Letters have never been confidential.
 - c) Why did students in my department (engineering) get Awards in the past for attending a conference that was always in the late October early November time?
 - (1) We have never reimbursed students for travel that has already occurred after the application process.
7. Feedback request:
 - a) Should it become part of our practice to share reviewer comments with applicants or not? There is a space for comments, but many times reviewers don't include comments. There are two columns, one to the applicant and one to the Dean. The functionality exists in InfoReady, but

it also makes it easier for us to include that feedback in the award letter if we choose.

- (1) Are comments used for decision making process or is it quantitative and then comments are used for tie breakers?
 - (a) Comments have usually been situations where there was an applicant that maybe was not eligible or had missing items. More of programmatic information.
 - (b) Could be an intensive process. We would have to ask reviewers for a summary and both summaries would be included in the award letter. The score drives how the funds are awarded. It is not peer review. Sometimes when there is disparity between the scores we do assign third reviewers internally within the Graduate School.
- (2) Could we provide a mean score?
 - (a) It would be more labor-intensive. The least labor-intensive would be either all of the scores plus comments or nothing. Putting in the mean score would be more data entry.

★ *Motion: That there be a default scenario for the small number of people who inquire about the comments that were made and provide a summary for those decimal number rather than adding to process for all of us.*

- *No second was received. Motion did not pass.*

- b) Should there still be two columns available for student comments and comments to the Dean?
 - (1) Keep both because if there is a student who really wants to know, Associate Dean DeBoef or Dean Zawia will be able to explain the process and if there is something indicated within the comments that benefits the student, it can be conveyed.
 - (2) There was no motion to eliminate the comments to the students. Comment section will remain. Discussion for future changes to the process will be discussed at a later meeting date after the process of EGRAs has ended.
 - (a) Possibly start the application process sooner.
 - (i) If you get an application and the conference is going to be for October of next year. And you think it's really justified, indicate it in the comment section to the Dean. The Graduate School may try to find money and reserve it somewhere. We don't want to make it as a rule because the funds we get for this purpose are really restricted in the time period spent.
 - (ii) We have to have an application period like every grant. There's a deadline when you apply and there is a period when you spend the funds.
- c) Reviewers can have read only access to all the applications and only have the ability to score the ones that they've been assigned or reviewers can only see the ones that they've been assigned to.
 - (1) Can only view application file not actual scores.
 - (2) Reviewers will not receive applicants from their own colleges.

★ *Motion: To see all applications.*

- *No second was received. Motion did not pass.*

- d) Possibility for reviewers to receive an example of an exemplary proposal.
 - (1) Due to the non peer review and the diversity of the programs, selecting one example that was scored by people from outside the discipline and different college, could be the best one at the time but not the best overall.
 - (2) A committee can be formed to review the best proposals over the past five years.
 - (3) Reviewers need to use the full score scoring range more faithfully.

I. Professional Development upcoming events (*Mitnick*)

- 1. Handout was distributed with upcoming Professional Development Events.
 - a) Amanda Izenstark will be speaking as part of the Search Savvy Seminar.
 - b) Co-sponsoring at a teaching intensive institution.
 - c) Photographer coming in for a LinkedIn Program.
 - d) Bridgewater State University visit with our students. Will be able to shadow classes. They're actually hiring for three positions; one in Computer Science, one in Math, and one in Chemistry Chemical Sciences.

J. Recent appointments to the Graduate Faculty since those listed on 29 April 2019 meeting agenda (*DeBoef*)

- 1. Grad Faculty status request should be sent to Associate Dean DeBoef. The database tracking the Grad Faculty Status is being updated and a new form will be created.

Veronique Oldham	Oceanography	9/19/19
Numi Mitchell	Department of Natural Resource Science	9/19/19
Rachel Walshe	Theater	9/19/19
Richard Clements	Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences	9/20/19

IV. New Program Committee (*Zawia*)

A. Updates

- 1. Jessica will begin to add the New Program Committee members to the shared team Google drive.
- 2. Upcoming proposals:
 - a) Three applications from the College of Business.
 - b) Tabled proposal from Health Sciences
- 3. A meeting will be scheduled within two weeks.

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

A. Updates

- 1. Jessica Martinez will begin to add the Curriculum Committee members to the shared team Google drive.
- 2. There will be 12 items to review.
- 3. A meeting will be scheduled within two weeks.

VI. Old Business

A. Revisions to Graduate Manual regarding applications (*Mosley Austin*)

- 1. Handout was distributed indicating current language and the new proposed language in a track format.

2. Assistant Dean Alycia Mosley Austin started to review the Graduate Manual last year and realized that there were policies practiced within the Graduate School regarding Admissions that were missing from the manual.
3. Sections were updated to reflect the Graduate School actual practice on Graduate Admissions.
4. Moved from ApplyYourself to CAS. New language was added to reflect the changes.
5. All URLs were removed since some links change. Instead within some sections where URLs were listed, the language was changed to reference the Graduate School website.
6. GPA Section:
 - a) It's been our practice for applicants who have GPAs between or below 3.0 but not less than 2.5, programs can appeal to the Graduate School for them to be admitted under regular admission or contingency admission.
 - (1) With contingency admission, Master's degree students are asked to take two courses as a non-matriculated student before admission. If a Certificate student, would need to take one course at the Graduate level as a non-matric before admission. Once they've reported to the Graduate School that they've achieved 3.0 in those courses, then they will be admitted.
 - b) Regarding the grade point average within the last sentence that ends "in their graduate work or in previous graduate work," is it meant to be an 'and' instead of an 'or'?
 - (1) Student would have to stay with a 3.0 or above, if a student falls under will be on provisional status. With undergrad GPA, it should be between 3.0 and 4.0
 - (2) The current language can be interpreted as someone could have a 3.0 or above during their undergrad, but then had below a 3.0 for their Master's program and is seeking a different program.
 - (3) Some people might not have had a 3.0 in undergraduate degree, but they have prior graduate work. It's not "and" because the undergrad wasn't a 3.0. What ends up happening is we only go by the Graduate degree when they have it, we don't go back to undergrad because they already completed a graduate degree.
 - (4) "Or" gives more flexibility.
 - (a) The danger of keeping the "or" is that you will have a student that did poorly their graduate work, but did ok in their undergraduate work. That student would be qualified for acceptance.
 - (5) Will remain as "or."
7. Deadlines were removed, especially since the online programs will have different deadlines. Statement now indicates "Deadlines are set by the individual graduate programs." The only deadline we suggest is the international deadline because students need to get their visas on time.
8. Certificate program students who would like to apply to a degree program will be offered a fee waiver. Fee waivers for the application is both certificate students who are applying to a masters and degree students who are applying to an additional degree program of study.
9. Language was changed regarding who letters of recommendation should come from. Minimum of two letters of recommendation from instructors, employers supervisors or other professional colleagues.

10. Standardized Test Scores section was added. The Graduate Schools doesn't require standardized test its the program that decides whether they're going to require the GRE or other standardized tests from applicants.
 - a) We do reinforce the message from ETS and the makers of these tests that we discourage the use of standardized tests as a cut off score. Also, if programs require standardized tests than the applicants have to send us official scorers.
 - (1) Suggestion: Change language where it states submit scores directly to the University to submit through the online application system.
11. The Graduate Manual is informational for both the students and faculty.
12. Regarding section 3.33 - "...upon the recommendation of the student's **potential** Major Professor and the Graduate Program Director ..."
 - a) The Graduate Program Director would be enough and asking for a Professor to basically agreed to be a Major Professor for somebody before they're even in the program is a bit much.
 - (1) The word potential will be removed and replaced with "... Major Professor **and/or** the Graduate Program Director..."
13. Regarding section 3.13 - "Fee waivers must be requested ten business days before..."
 - a) Change to "Fee waivers must be requested **no later than** ten business days before..."
14. Section 3.35 is in reference to the new re-enrollment process and to clarify the difference between readmission and re-enrollment. The Transfer Policy and the Records and Privacy Policy is new.
 - a) Does that mean is that for our current students we have now, who are doing a PhD in five years, that we have to throw away their application material after two years or can we keep it the whole five years?
 - (1) This is only in reference to what comes to The Graduate School, each department can determine what they would like to do with their own record documents.
15. Final version will be shared with the Graduate Council at the next council meeting.

- ★ *Motion: Approve the new revisions to Graduate Manual regarding applications.*
- *All council members approved.*

VII. New Business

VIII. Adjournment

- **Time: 3:55 pm by Dean Nasser Zawia**