

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

MINUTES

August 30, 2023

10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

SUB 168

Council in Attendance:

Catherine Dunlop (Letters)
Marc Giullian (Business)
Brian Rossmann (Library)
Colter Ellis (Faculty Senate)
Craig Ogilvie (Dean of The Graduate School)
Stephan Warnat (Engineering)
Sweeney Windchief (Education)
Heidi Koenig (Student Representative)
Christopher Livingston (Architecture)
Scott Powell (Agriculture)
Brennan Reeves (Office of International Programs)

Also in Attendance:

Lauren Cerretti (Graduate School)
Emily Peters (Graduate School)
John Neumeier (Physics)

Absent

Katey Franklin (Health & Human Development)
Amy Reines (Sciences)
Wade Hill (Nursing)
Rollin Beamish (Arts)

Meeting started at 10:00 a.m.

May 4, 2023 minutes

- Motion to approve by Giullian, Warnat 2nd, 4 pass, 1 abstain, motion passes

Announcements

- **Update from the Dean**

- Currently up about 30 students compared to last year; 50-60 more doctoral students – credit to faculty for recruiting and retention
 - About ¼ of new students this fall were graduate students
 - 50 more graduate students in university housing than last year
 - Was there a process difference?
 - Waiting list now takes into account graduate status
 - Study this semester to assess possibility of additional student housing
 - CBA is pending BOR approval – some students will get stipend back pay
 - Bridge to doctorate grant: funding for 12 indigenous PhD students in STEM
 - Dean Ogilvie will send out an email to departments once website is live
- **Faculty Senate update (Ellis)**
 - Ellis is newly appointed chair of FS; chair-elect may take over serving on UGC once elected
 - Will provide updates to UGC as graduate policies go through FS this semester

New Business

- **Open discussion/goals: Council members are invited to bring forward bottom-up concerns and initiatives**
 - Program of study form is now electronic through MyInfo
 - Some concerns raised regarding removal of certificate approval form for final thesis/dissertation
 - Add as an agenda item
 - Potential future discussion on protections in place for students regarding PI relationships
 - Discussion on concerns some faculty have raised about the proposed changes to the qualifying exam policy
 - Proposal is currently going through JAGS process
 - Clarify policy changes: Qualifying exams were never in graduate school policy. The policy UGC approved in spring was that a qualifying exam cannot be the only grounds for dismissal from a program.
 - Open discussion on how different departments use qualifying exams, some departments are removing (ex: replace with a literature review)
 - Graduate Student Leadership Committee (GSLC): if you have any students to recommend for the committee, send to Heidi Koenig
- **What can the graduate council add to CFE's Generative AI guidance?**
 - Discussion on what topics to include that are important to graduate education
 - Address thesis, dissertation, admissions applications
 - TAs are concerned about lab reports
 - CFE's guidance seems applicable in term of citations
 - Helpful to have some consistency across advisors, committees, departments

- Uses will vary by discipline – could suggest that departments expand on the general guidelines
 - Important to address and engage with AI, it is changing higher education
 - UGC can write up guidance for faculty on graduate level issues
 - Policy subcommittee will create a draft
- **In-absentia graduation: first discussion on a proposed policy to replace one-credit extension**
 - Review of one-credit extension policy:
 - Advantages: additional time to complete without having to register for 3 credits
 - Disadvantage: some students end up paying for the additional credit themselves, get switched from resident rate to non-resident rate when no longer on an assistantship
 - One option is in absentia registration: existing process used at undergraduate level, \$30 fee
 - Another option: keep one-credit extension, but student’s residency status is the same as the prior semester
 - BOR policy says tuition policies can be set by the institution – MSU policy allows students with assistantships to get in state tuition
 - Another use of the current one-credit extension policy is to complete I grades. The proposed in absentia policy would allow students the following semester to complete, the same as undergraduate handles I grades
 - Could use in absentia for I grades/transfer courses and use one-credit extension with in-state tuition for finishing thesis/dissertation
 - Dean Ogilvie will revise policy and send updated draft for review

Public comment

- Appreciate options to accommodate students in extenuating circumstances
- Like the idea of maintaining in-state status for one-credit extension, to reduce financial burden
- Discussion on importance of preparing students to start searching for employment before they graduate
 - New graduate career officer scheduled to attend next UGC meeting, wants to discuss how she can partner with faculty
 - Suggest offering a “next steps” presentation for graduate students twice a year

Adjourned at 11:30 am

Next scheduled meeting – September 13th in SUB Room 236