

MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
The University of Alabama
February 2, 2021

The regular meeting of the Graduate Council was held virtually via Zoom
on Tuesday, February 2nd, 2021 at 3:00 pm.

Members Present: Monica Anderson, Kenon Brown, Heather Carmack, Pat Carter, Jeffery Carver, Katherine Chiou, Mary Alice Davis, Bill Evans, Peter Harms, Janie Hubbard, Sebrena Jackson, Linda Knol, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, Carmen Mayer, Steven McCall, Kristina McDonald, Sharif Melouk, Dudley Moore, Dana Patton, Joshua Pierce, Cecil Robinson, Nicole Ruggiano, Jenny Shaw, Steve Shepard, Merinda Simmons, Brenda Smith, Wei Song, Nicole Swoszowski, Amanda Thompson, Mesut Yavuz

Members Absent with Alternate: Kristi Acker/Felicia Wood, Allison Grant/Randy DeCelle

Members Absent without Alternate: Arthur Allaway, Angela Benson, Martin Evans, Karena Gill, Paul Hubner, Quin Kelly, Raheem Paxton, Troy Pollard, Firat Soyulu

Ex-officio Members Present: Jaber Abu Qahouq, Donald Gilstrap

Graduate School Representatives: Susan Carvalho, Dean; André Denham, Associate Dean; Andrew Goodliffe, Associate Dean; Catherine Doughty-Walker, Executive Secretary; Deborah Mamuti, Office Associate; Beth Yarbrough, Registrar

Guests: Ginger Bishop, Ken Foshee, Carmen Jones

Dean Carvalho called for any corrections to the minutes of the November 2020 meeting, included in the packet. Hearing none, the minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

The Graduate Council meeting began with business items. Committee reports are posted below.

Graduate Council committee reports:

- Graduate Curriculum (*Deidre Leaver-Dunn*)
 - The committee moved that the Council approve a NISP for an Interdisciplinary Master of Arts program, to be housed in the Graduate School. After some discussion, the motion was approved by the majority.
 - The committee moved that the Council approve a NISP for an Interdisciplinary Master of Science program, also to be housed in the Graduate School. After some discussion, the motion was approved by the majority.

- Fellowships and Scholarships (*Jenny Shaw*)
 - Round 1 (Current Students) – 20 Graduate Council Fellowships, 2 McNair Graduate Fellowships, and 6 National Alumni Association Fellowships were awarded. The acceptance rate was 100%.
 - Round 2 (New Students) – Awardees were chosen on February 1. Departments and students will be informed of the results in the coming days. This round includes the David A. Francko Fellowship.

- Rounds 3 and 4 (New Students) are due on February 4 and March 4 respectively.
- Admission and Recruitment (*Steve Shepard*)
 - No updates.
- Academic Policy (*Bill Evans*)
 - No updates.
- Teaching, Research, and Service Awards (*Amanda Thompson*)
 - The following awardees were selected by the committee:
 - Outstanding Teaching by a Master's Student – Louise Stewart (English)
 - Outstanding Teaching by a Doctoral Student – Margaret Montgomery (History)
 - Outstanding Research by a Master's Student – Dillon Patterson (Anthropology)
 - Outstanding Research by a Doctoral Student – Karen Landay (Management)
 - Outstanding Service by a Graduate Student – Melissa Walton (Elementary Education)
 - The following awardees were selected by a group of emeritus faculty:
 - Outstanding Thesis – Jonathan Tidwell (Anthropology)
 - Outstanding Dissertation – Christopher Wanstall (Mechanical Engineering)
 - A Virtual Awards Ceremony will be held April 14th, 2021.
 - Council members were asked to keep in mind students to nominate for next year as well as potential faculty nominees for the Outstanding Mentor Award for the fall.

Dean's Office and Academic Affairs reports:

- André Denham, Associate Dean
 - Program handbooks, that currently exist only at the department level, will be incorporated into the Graduate Catalog over the next few years
 - Biennial survey on GTA training will be conducted this Spring
 - The new ODS-linked policy on 699 Leave of Absence was presented as an information item, and will be incorporated into the August 2021 Graduate Catalog
 - GradACTS is a series of workshops for advancing career and teaching skills. The offerings are presented in a monthly newsletter sent to all graduate students and graduate program directors. Some example workshops include Overcoming Imposter Syndrome, Abstract Writing, and S.M.A.R.T. Goals.
- Andrew Goodliffe, Associate Dean
 - Fall 2021 Applications Report: Overall good growth in applications across the colleges. As of January 31, there is a 93% increase in Fall applications over January 31, 2020. There is a positive trend in admitted students (12% growth), but it is still early for some departments to have fall acceptances settled. Positive growth in domestic applicants (20%), but enormous growth in international applications (270%) due to the free application week in November 2020.
 - Update on Admission test score waiver - The waiver is currently at the systems office awaiting approval. Departments are encouraged to begin discussing their own policies on this waiver as approval is expected.
 - Feedback on Slate – A request was put forth to have notifications when applications are ready to be reviewed. A request was put forth to be able to run

queries to download spreadsheets of applicants. Reports can be set up to be sent to departments. A request was put forth for notifications when application committee members add reviews.

- Susan Carvalho, Dean
 - Spring 2021 Enrollment Report – There was an increase in overall enrollments of about 3.6% from fall to spring, which is unusual. The increase between Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 is 25%. The growth from Fall 2020 to Spring 2021 has been greatest in Nursing and Business, particularly online programs.
 - In UA’s overall growth plan for graduate students, the goal is that graduate and professional students will comprise 22% of the overall student population, to place us in the middle of the SEC range. Our figure has increased from 15% to 18% between 2019 and 2020. The goal is to continue to increase graduate numbers, but not to continue to see undergraduate declines such as the COVID-19 pandemic brought this year.
 - For our research identity, we need to watch increase of master’s degrees over doctoral degrees. Due to the recent increase in master’s students, the percentage of graduate degrees that are at the master’s level has increased from 64% to 68%. We will need to ensure that our doctoral programs keep pace with the master’s growth.

- Discussion of the recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, “Will Covid Finally Force Us to Fix Our Broken Doctoral Advising?” What are we preparing our doctoral students for? Tenure track jobs are becoming more and more rare. Many faculty are aware of this issue, but are not sure what to do about it. What are the ethics of taking on students when the job market for their future is so tenuous? Faculty need to learn how to prepare students for life beyond academia. The university is investing in resources for this (e.g. Versatile PhD), but faculty need more training in it. What are the core skills to make our students the best for the job market beyond being professors? Students need to learn from their professors early on in their programs that success has many different outcomes.

Standing University Committees Reports

- None

New Business

- Future Meeting Dates – 3:00-4:30 PM
 - Tuesday, March 30, 2021
 - Wednesday, September 1, 2021
 - Wednesday, November 3, 2021
 - Wednesday, February 2, 2022
 - Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Note that, beginning in August 2021, Graduate Council meetings will occur on the first Wednesday of September, November, February, and April, both to provide greater regularity and to avoid conflict with regular Faculty Senate Steering Committee meetings.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:10 PM.