

MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
The University of Alabama
March 30, 2021

The regular meeting of the Graduate Council was held virtually via Zoom on Tuesday, March 30th, 2021 at 3:00 pm.

Members Present: Kristi Acker, Monica Anderson, Kenon Brown, Heather Carmack, Pat Carter, Jeffery Carver, Katherine Chiou, Bill Evans, Allison Grant, Peter Harms, Janie Hubbard, Paul Hubner, Sebrene Jackson, Linda Knol, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, Steven McCall, Kristina McDonald, Sharif Melouk, Dana Patton, Raheem Paxton, Joshua Pierce, Troy Pollard, Cecil Robinson, Nicole Ruggiano, Jenny Shaw, Steve Shepard, Merinda Simmons, Brenda Smith, Wei Song, Firat Soylu, Amanda Thompson, Mesut Yavuz

Members Absent without Alternate: Arthur Allaway, Angela Benson, Mary Alice Davis, Martin Evans, Carmen Mayer, Nicole Swoszowski

Student Representative: Dudley Moore

Ex-officio Members Present: Donald Gilstrap

Graduate School Representatives: Susan Carvalho, Dean; André Denham, Associate Dean; Andrew Goodliffe, Associate Dean; Kelly Burns, International Graduate Admissions Officer; Catherine Doughty Walker, Executive Secretary; Amanda Maltbie, International Admissions Counselor Beth Yarbrough, Registrar

Guests: Jaber Abu Quahog, Ginger Bishop, Ken Foshee, Robert Hayes, Susan Vrbsky

Dean Carvalho called for any corrections to the minutes of the February 2021 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:

- The Graduate Curriculum Committee report was presented by committee chair Deidre Leaver-Dunn.
 - Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Master of Arts: The Graduate Council voted 29 to 1 to approve the proposal as presented. Dean Carvalho added that there was great interest for this and the Interdisciplinary MS among current undergraduates who were recently surveyed. Departments expressed interest in getting more information about these programs. The Graduate School will host information sessions this fall for faculty about these new programs.
 - Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Master of Science: The Graduate Council voted 28 to 1 to approve proposal as presented. See additional information presented by Dean Carvalho above.
 - The Graduate Council voted 24 to 4 to approve the Graduate Curriculum Committee's recommendation that the minimum number of hours for new graduate certificates be set at 12 hours. The University currently has 13 graduate certificates ranging from 12-21 hours. The 12-hour minimum is a standard minimum number of credit hours among

many of our peer institutions.

- The Admissions & Recruitment Committee report was presented by committee chair Steve Shepard.
 - Proposal for Cyber Security (CYS-BS) and Computer Science (MS) AMP program: The Graduate Council voted 26 to 1 to approve the proposal as presented. This program has a minimum GPA of 3.3 and a maximum of 12 double-counted hours. Beth Yarbrough asked that we ensure that double-counted classes are clearly marked in the example curriculum presented. This change will be made via boldface font, in the final version of the AMP proposal.
 - Proposal for International Studies (INST) and Political Science (MA) AMP program: The Graduate Council voted 27 to 1 to approve the proposal as presented. The program has a minimum GPA of 3.75 and a maximum of 15 double counted hours. Beth Yarbrough asked that we ensure that double counted classes are clearly marked in the example curriculum presented. This change will be made via boldface font, in the final version of the AMP proposal.
 - Proposal for International Studies (INST) and Master of Public Administration (MPA) AMP program: The Graduate Council voted 28 to 1 to approve the proposal as presented. The program has a minimum GPA of 3.75 and a maximum of 15 double counted hours. Dean Carvalho asked for clarification on why the GPA minimum is so high. Dana Patton answered that this is the determined by the faculty to ensure that only the highest-performing students are admitted to AMP.
 - There was an additional conversation about the ongoing review of the AMP Program. There are some concerns in regard to both the standard 3.3 GPA requirement and the high number of possible double-counted hours (15). This has been an area of SACSCOC scrutiny lately, and we are laying the groundwork for our 10-year SACSCOC review. 59% of University undergraduates have a 3.3 GPA or above, implying that AMP is not only for “exceptional” students. The GPA requirement for all AMP programs could be raised at the Graduate School level. Additionally, our allowance of 15 hours for double counting is on the high end for SACSCOC institutions. This will likely undergo changes as well, to bring UA’s program more in line with those at other SACSCOC institutions. Paul Hubner brought up the point that undergraduate GPAs can be inflated by the ability to get A+ grades. Ken Foshee, University Registrar, is not sure what other SEC institutions do with regards to 4.33 grades, but this situation is being investigated within the review committee.

- The Graduate Academic Policy Committee report was presented by committee chair Bill Evans.
 - Proposed Change to Course Credit Transfer Rule – Master’s Degrees and Doctoral Degrees: The Graduate Council voted 29 to 0 to approve proposed change as presented. The sentence “Credit will not be accepted for transfer from any institution at which the student failed to achieve a “B” average on all graduate work attempted.” will be removed from the policy for both the Master’s and Doctoral levels. Dean Carvalho clarified that departments still have final say over which courses are counted towards transfer into the UA Master’s program, based on their content and applicability to the degree program.
 - Proposed Change to Master’s Degree Transfer Credit Timeline: The Graduate Council voted 29 to 1 to approve proposed change as presented. Master’s students will now be able to transfer approved coursework that they earned in the six-year period (18 fall,

spring, and summer semesters) preceding the semester of admission to the University of Alabama master's program. This is aligned with the doctoral rule on transfer credit, and will ensure that transfer credits do not expire during the course of the student's master's studies. Departments may establish more restrictive timelines where deemed appropriate.

- In the coming academic year, the committee will be considering the continuous enrollment requirement for doctoral students, a graduate second opportunity option similar to the one on the undergraduate level, and the revalidation of expired credits.
- Teaching, Research & Service Awards Committee report by Amanda Thompson.
 - The Virtual Awards Ceremony will be held April 14th at Noon.
 - Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award – Please be thinking of nominations as the deadline is in early fall. The winner will be submitted to the Council of Southern Graduate Schools for the regional competition.
- Fellowships and Scholarships Committee report by Jenny Shaw.
 - This year we received more fellowship nominations overall, especially Graduate Council Fellowships. Details were presented. A final fellowship report for the year will be presented in September as the deadline for students to respond to offers is not until April 15, 2021. Thank you so much to the committee for their hard work.

Dean's Office and Academic Affairs reports:

- Andrew Goodliffe, Associate Dean
 - Application and Admits Report – We have had an enormous increase in applications over the past two years. Most programs have seen more than a 60% increase in applications compared to this time last year. Admits are up 17% over this time last year. The numbers for admits are still preliminary as some programs admit students throughout the summer. Applications from African-American students are up 40% and applications from Hispanic students are up 47% compared to this time last year. Admits are higher for both groups as well. These are the kinds of trends we really like to see. Our international application numbers are up over 200%, largely because of Free Application Week last November. Our In-State, Out-of-State, and International admits are all up compared to this time in 2020.
- André Denham, Associate Dean
 - Leave of Absence Form – This new form and process is for students that have a need to take an ADA-based leave of absence once they have started their dissertation research (699). The Office of Disability Services will review petitions for these ADA accommodation-based leaves, and will issue a recommendation to the Graduate School. A student on leave of absence would have not access to University resources during the months of leave.
 - Graduate Program Handbooks – Policies in handbooks will be centralized in the Graduate Catalog. We acknowledge this process may require significant work from departments. There will be a template and specific instructions.
- Susan Carvalho, Dean
 - Thank you to members that are rotating off the Graduate Council.

- College elections are in progress. Newly elected Graduate Council members will be announced after April 15th, 2021 via email. Committee assignments will be announced in the summer.
- We are designing a process for a strategic plan for graduate education at the University this fall. We need to define our priority investments and initiatives . We are looking for members for this committee for the fall. If you end up being a part of this committee, you will rotate back to your regular Grad Council committee in spring 2021.

Standing University Committees Reports

- None

New Business

- Reminder that future meetings will be on the first Wednesdays of the month in September, November, February and April.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:12 PM.