Minutes of Graduate Council

The University of Alabama

February 1, 2023

Members present:
Arthur Allaway, Monica Anderson, Mary Lindsey Bailey, Yuping Bao, Angela Benson, Blake Berryhill, Susan Dewey, Martin Evans, Patrick Frantom, Allison Grant, Ann Graves, Steven Holiday, Sebrena Jackson, Seung Eun Jung, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, Steven MacCall, Kristina McDonald, Dana Patton, Steven Ramey (alternate for Richard Martin), Daniel Riches, Cecil Robinson, Jonathan Shemwell, Steven Shepard, Brenda Smith, Firt Soylu, Miriam Sweeney, Alan Tidwell, Teresa Welch, Mesut Yavuz, Lea Yerby

Members absent with Alternate: Richard Martin (on sabbatical)

Members absent without Alternate: Jeffrey Carver, Peter Harms, Troy Pollard, Sonya Pritzker, Nicole Ruggiano, Nicole Swoszowski, Amanda Thompson (on sabbatical), Peggy Trosper

Student Representatives: Royce Dickerson

Ex Officio Members present: Shanlin Pan, Faculty Senate representative

Graduate School Representatives: Susan Carvalho, dean; Andre’ Denham, associate dean; Andrew Goodliffe, associate dean; Eric Harris, registrar; Karin Bryson, assistant registrar; Catherine Doughty-Walker, staff; Deanna Clements, staff

Guests: Ginger Bishop, Institutional Effectiveness; Ken Foshee, University Registrar

Dean Susan Carvalho opened the meeting.

The minutes from the November 2, 2022, Graduate Council meeting were unanimously approved.

The Graduate Curriculum Committee Report was presented by chair, Dr. Cecil Robinson. All requests have the necessary college approval and have demonstrated proof of alignment with peer institutions.

- Counselor Education requested to reduce their Ph.D. coursework requirement from 87 to 63 hours through a reconceptualization of the curriculum and reconsideration of how
transfer hours are dealt with. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- Curriculum and Instruction, Ph.D. requested to reduce their coursework requirement from 78 to 48 hours through a reconceptualization of the program. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- Curriculum and Instruction, Ed.D. requested to reduce their coursework requirement from 60 to 48 hours through a reconceptualization of the program. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- Educational Leadership requested to reduce their Ph.D. coursework requirement from 60 to 57 hours through the removal of a previously required course. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- English requested to reduce their Ph.D. coursework requirement from 48 to 42 hours through a reduction in required elective courses. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- Human Nutrition requested to reduce their Ph.D. coursework requirement from 48 to 36 hours through a reduction in required elective courses. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- Instructional Leadership Nurse Educator, Ed.D. requested to reduce their coursework requirement from 72 to 60 hours through a reformatting of the curriculum. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- Interdisciplinary Studies requested to reduce their Ph.D. coursework requirement from 48 to 36 hours through a reduction in required elective courses. This includes a proposed reduction in transfer credit hours from 24 to 18 hours. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.
• Operations Management requested to reduce their Ph.D. coursework requirement from 48 to 36 hours through a reduction in applied coursework while maintaining the coursework that would provide students with a methodological foundation in the discipline. The applied coursework will now be an option for students based on their research interests. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

• Instructional Technology requested to reduce their Ph.D. coursework requirement from 60 to 48 hours through a reduction in technology course hours, and a reduction of foundations courses from 12 to 6 hours. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

• Human Nutrition requested their minimum required 699 hours be reduced from 24 to 18 hours. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

• Mathematics requested their minimum required 699 hours be reduced from 24 to 18 hours. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

• Chemistry & Biochemistry requested their minimum required 699 hours be reduced from 24 to 18 hours. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

• Educational Research requested their minimum required 699 hours be reduced from 24 to 18 hours. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

• Chemical and Biological Engineering requested their minimum required 699 hours be reduced from 24 to 18 hours. This change was approved by the Curriculum Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

• Master’s Entry to the Profession of Nursing program, a new program in the Capstone College of Nursing, was presented. Individuals holding a bachelor’s degree or higher in another field can enter this accelerated program, obtaining pre licensure knowledge and skills that will prepare them for licensure at a faster rate than traditional pre licensure programs (such as BSN). Graduates will be able to serve in a multitude of roles; no additional education will be needed upon graduation. The Graduate Council approved the
The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- An information item was presented regarding program changes to the Chemical and Biological Engineering Ph.D. program, including changing two course descriptions, adding an additional one-credit-hour research techniques course and a mentored grading experience course, and including a computer methods course as another alternative for the advanced math course requirement. A change is also being made regarding the candidacy exam; the preliminary exam currently serves as the candidacy exam, but the proposed change is that the candidacy exam will be given roughly a year after the student passes the qualifying exam and completes at least 30 hours of coursework (including transfer credits).

The Committee on Fellowships and Scholarships Report was presented by Dr. Andrew Goodliffe, associate dean of the Graduate School. Dr. Goodliffe shared details of awards distributed during rounds 1 and 2 of the fellowship process and encouraged the group to identify and admit their top-tier students early in the process so they can be included in the early fellowship rounds.

The Graduate Academic Policy Committee Report was presented by chair, Dr. Dana Patton.

- Incompletes and No Grade Reported – The committee proposes the addition of a clause to the existing policy regarding the length of time in which students can resolve grades of “I” or “N”. The proposed policy states that in cases where an “I” grade causes a student’s GPA to drop below a 3.0, all “I” grades must be removed within the first four weeks of the next term of enrollment; if the “I” grade does not cause the student’s GPA to drop below 3.0, it must be removed by the end of the subsequent semester or will automatically be converted to an “F”. (References to an “N” grade are being removed from the policy since an “N” grade results from the failure of a faculty member to submit a grade.) This is a catalog change and will take effect beginning Fall 2023. Dean Carvalho noted that this information should be communicated to students by the departments rather than by the Graduate School, so that the message has appropriate department/program context. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- Thesis and Dissertation Defense Dates – This policy serves to clarify when thesis and dissertation defense dates can be scheduled by defining what is meant by the University being “open” or “closed”. The deletion of the word “offices” from the phrase “University offices” serves this purpose. Additionally, the policy clarifies that nine-month faculty
members will not be required to attend a defense scheduled during the summer months or when UA is not in session. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

- The “No Clear Path Forward” policy is being reviewed by the Office of Counsel and will be presented at the April Graduate Council meeting.

The Admissions and Recruitment Committee Report was presented by chair, Dr. Steve Shepard.

- A proposal modifying the policy governing UA seniors taking graduate credit if not enrolled in an Accelerated Master’s Program (AMP) was presented. The modification would only apply to students in a bachelor’s program, not an AMP program. Previously this has been an internal policy, but an official policy is needed since curriculum agreements with Stillman College and other schools are taking place. The new policy states that bachelor’s-seeking students who are not enrolled in an AMP may petition to take graduate classes if they have completed the equivalent of at least 90 hours of undergraduate classes with a GPA of at least 3.0 overall. Graduate courses taken as part of this policy may be applied to either a future graduate degree or the undergraduate degree, but not both. The motion was unanimously approved by Graduate Council with no opposing votes.

The Teaching, Research, and Service Awards Committee Report was presented by chair, Dr. Allison Grant, who reported that the Outstanding Graduate Awards Committee has made most of its selections; notification letters will be sent to award recipients tomorrow.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) report was presented by Royce Dickerson, president, who gave an overview of GSA’s purpose and its goal of choosing committee representatives from a variety of campus areas. Another goal is for graduate students to have a sense of ownership in Tuscaloosa and the UA community through efforts such as book drives, furniture drives, days of service, etc. Some issues GSA is working on are transportation problems for graduate students and programming accessibility for distance-learning students. A major priority is working with upper administration to identify a dedicated space for graduate students.

Reports from Standing University Committees & New Business

- UA Faculty Senate – Dr. Shanlin Pan gave a presentation on the EPSCOR RII-BEC program, a bridge program for students from three HBCUs interested in opportunities in renewable energy.
Report from the Dean’s Office:

Associate Dean Goodliffe reported on the topics of Applications and Admits for Fall 2023, and a newly available AMP Scholarship Extension for In-State students.

Applications and Admits—the Graduate School has seen massive growth in international applications, but in-state and out-of-state applications are not growing at the same rate.

AMP Scholarship Extension for In-State Students—a new initiative has been put in place for in-state students; if an in-state AMP student is on a four-year scholarship and that scholarship has been depleted, they can now receive an extension of up to two semesters. The goal is that this will increase in-state enrollment in AMP programs. Dr. Goodliffe asked that the group inform their in-state students about this. Undergraduate Admissions is notifying eligible students, but the Graduate School wants the word to be spread about it while exercising caution because of the initiative only being available to in-state students.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.