Graduate Council Meeting Notes
Monday, February 14, 2022
12-1:30 pm
Zoom

ATTENDEES: Betsy Beise, Debabrata Biswas, Byung-Eun Kim, Lindsey May, Laura DeMaria, Alexander Williams, Annemarie Ewing, Amna Kirmani, Christina Getrich, John Shea, Patrick Wohlfarth, Autumn Perkey, Katy Lawley, Steve Mount, Doug Julin, Amy Mullin, Jeffrey Shultz, Paul Gold, Andrew Elby, James Duncan, Sennur Ulukus, Lorae Bonamy-Lohve, Steve Fetter, Brooke Fisher Liu, Amanda Strausser, Tamara Allard, Susan Moeller, Matthew Nessan, Robert Sprinkle, Paul Turner

Graduate School Staff: Marion D'Aurora, Fan Tsao, Christopher Perez, Robyn Kotzker, Patty Woodwell, Wendy Koch, Linda Macri, Simone Warrick-Bell, Spencer Benson

AGENDA
1. Welcome
2. Approve November 19, 2021 meeting minutes
   a. Meeting minutes are approved with no changes.

3. Updates and announcements
   a. Assistant Dean/Chief of Operations search update
      ■ Evelyn Cooper is beginning Mar 14, 2022 , and she will join the next meeting.
      ■ An announcement will go out to the campus community relatively soon.
      ■ Brooke Liu will leave the Graduate School on July 1, 2022, and return to her department, Communication. A new Associate Dean will be announced soon.
   b. Amended Revised FY22 Graduate Stipend Memo (effective 1/2/22); reminder of new step structure effective 7/1/22
      ■ At our last meeting, we discussed the plan to increase the minimum stipend (14.5%) increase. You can find the new stipend minimums in the memo linked above.
      ■ All stipends increase by 1% for COLA.
      ■ The bonus has been given to GAs prorated by FTE. A full-time GA gets a $750 bonus as long as they meet the requirements.
      ■ We expect additional increases on July 1 when the new state budget passes.
      ■ We continue to work and think about ways to increase graduate assistant stipends. Our goal is to bring the stipend up to the level that they can afford their expenses for the College Park area.
   c. President's Fellowship update
      ■ Increase diversity of the Ph.D. population.
      ■ Received 63 nominations
         1. Eight colleges and 29 departments submitted nominations.
         2. The Graduate School plans to make 40 offers.

3. $40,000 award base package, departments contribute $10,000, and the Graduate School contributes the remaining $30,000 over 4 or 5 years.

4. Fostering Excellence in Graduate Student Research Mentoring: a discussion paper
    a. Peer group in Big 10 of graduate deans - introducing various new mechanisms to address problems in mentoring.
    b. Subjects that should be on the list that isn't? Are there subjects that should be removed? Concerns?
        ■ Initial suggestions that were discussed:
            1. DEI training as part of the faculty tenure process.
            2. Interventions should be conducted at the college level. Concern over response actions occurring too late/student has already left.
            3. Small departments foster a strong mentorship culture. Various support for not mandating a particular mentorship model but encouraging/incentivizing mentorship as a departmental goal.
            4. A list of faculty who are good mentors should be made available, but we are not sure how that list would be generated. More discussion is needed.
            5. Require colleges/departments to create guidelines/procedures for students to switch advisors/research group. This would not just be policy but action steps for all parties.
                a. Some colleges/departments did this already and said that it was successful. Many councilors agreed that this would be very helpful to have clear procedures and guidelines.
            6. Consider adding something to the GS orientation about where to go if you have issues with your advisor.
            7. Have a well-publicized department ombuds (is anyone in the dept actually an ombuds?)
        ■ Concerns:
            1. Some councilors were opposed to mandating mentoring reviews as it increases the burden on faculty.
            2. Concerns over neglectful Advisor/Mentor, mutual understanding in advising relationship requirements.
            3. Concern over raw data on outcome, drop-out, time-to-degree, change of advisor. Raw data does not include individual context?

    c. What are the two/three ideas that hold the most promise to be implemented?
        ■ One vote for IDP and making it mandatory for students to complete.
        ■ Encourage multiple mentoring and peer mentoring.
        ■ Graduate research scholars. Surrounded by like-individuals in underrepresented groups is beneficial to academic outcomes.
        ■ Ways to sanction bad advisors?
        ■ Departments can have statements regarding mentoring.
            1. Included department values.
            2. Attention to graduate student onboarding.
            3. Sections on different aspects of mentoring graduate students.
        ■ Action items councilors supported

1. Adding a mentoring review is part of the tenure review process. The tenure process already exists, so it would be beneficial to add this as part of that process.
2. Elevating mentorship credit for workload.
3. Students who do not connect organically with mentors could use extra support.

    d. Examples of actions already being taken in programs:
- Councilors stated the importance of the SME as protection.
- A robust tenure review process in some departments/colleges.
- Chemistry/Biochemistry guide for changing groups.

    e. Further steps
- GSG suggested an open forum to discuss this issue and how it can be addressed with incoming students and trouble faculty.
- We will consider all of this feedback, and we will determine 1 or 2 things we can start this coming semester.

5. Future Discussion
    a. Please send us future discussion items! Dean Fetter welcomes agenda items if you are aware of an issue in your program or department.

These minutes were unanimously approved at the 3/14/22 Graduate Council Meeting.