



Graduate Council Meeting Notes

Thursday, September 15, 2022

2:00-3:30 pm

Maryland Room or [Zoom](#)

ATTENDEES:

Online: Helim Aranda-Espinoza, Betsy Beise, Debabrata Biswas, Cecilia Busamante, Eun Kyoung Choe, Andrew Elby, Leila De Floriani, Laura Demaria, Henry Gittens, Paul Gold, Lizzie Irlbacher, Douglas Julin, Byoung-Eun Kim, Leonid Koralov, Lindsay May, Matthew Nesson, Yueming Qiu, Edmond Shenassa, Jeff Shultz, Michelle Tan, Paul Turner, Sennur Ulukus, Rob Wells, (23 online)

In-person: Lauren Cain, Evelyn Cooper, Peijian Ding, Jason Farman, Steve Fetter, Joey Haavik, Nicole Menkart, Steve Mount, Paulo Prochno, Jason Rudy, Alexander Williams, Jianan Xu (12 in-person)

GS Staff: Blessing Enekwe, Fan Tsao, Robyn Kotzker, Marion D'Aurora, Teddy Wu, Heather Kissinger, Simone Warrick Bell, Patty Woodwell, Brent Hernandez (9 staff - 5 online, 4 in person)

AGENDA

1. Welcome and announcements.
 - a. Graduate School staff update
 - Evelyn Cooper joined GS Staff in March as Assistant Dean.
 - Jason Farman joined the new Associate Dean in June.
 - Brent Hernandez joined as the new Director of Graduate Student Services.
 - Fan Tsao is the Coordinator for Graduate Academic Services.
 - New assistant to the Dean in October.
 - Susan Martin left - we hope to search for a replacement.
 - b. Fall 2022 COVID-delay fellowships: 39 awards totaling \$408,000.
 - Dissertation or research impacted by the pandemic.
 - This will be the last round of COVID-Delay fellowships.
 - c. [Summary of recent investments in graduate students and education](#)
 - Increases in minimum GA stipend. 26% last year, 52% overall.
 - d. Updated guidelines for [Flagship](#) and [President's](#) fellowships.
 - There are now two rounds of President and Flagship fellowship presentations. Programs are free to nominate at either of these rounds so long as they do not exceed maximum nominations.
 - Two deadlines allow for better recruitment for programs.
 - e. [FY22 research expenditures on graduate assistantships](#)
 - Previously there had been a downward trend in GA appointments.
 - Now there is an upward increase in the number of GAs appointed through sponsored research.



- f. [Expectations for faculty mentoring of graduate student research](#) are due Oct 15.
 - A review committee will be established.
 1. Call for Grad Council member volunteers to review guidelines
 2. Graduate Students who are on the graduate council can also be on the committee.
 - Feedback will be provided by Dec 15 and documents should be finalized by January 15.
 - Every program with a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation is required to write expectations.
- g. Renewal of Academic Analytics and gradSERU contracts
 - Collecting data on Ph.D. alumni over the last 20 years.
 - Detailed information is available to all Deans, Directors/Coordinators of graduate Study.
 - 17% response rate in 2019, 30% response rate in 2021.
 - The gradSERU survey runs in the Spring (every other year).
 - This can be viewed at reports.umd.edu - The first report on the page.
2. Approve [April 24, 2022](#) meeting minutes
 - a. **Approved (27/27)**
3. Proposed policy changes for discussion (any Grad School Policy changes are vetted by the Graduate Council first. The Grad School does not unilaterally change policy):
4. Graduate Teaching Faculty appointments [[Proposed Changes](#)]: vote required when a member does not hold the highest degree in that field?
 - a. **Approved (28/28)**
 - b. The proposed change would no longer require faculty to vote for individuals who have terminal degrees in their field of study to become full-member of the faculty.
 - c. It would create a standard for what the letter of nomination should include.
 - d. Questions/Discussion
 - Does this nomination occur before an individual teaches?
 1. Yes. This is a five-year appointment.
 - Given that units are given this choice, what are the original motivations for the vote in the first place?
 1. If the person does not have a terminal degree, this could become controversial if this individual was appointed by a chair. We assume that having the highest degree in the field is required to teach. However, we want the faculty to still have a say.
 2. The original motivation was to have full members certify new faculty members were qualified to serve.



3. If a unit wants to continue to have a vote, they can still have one, but not required by the Graduate School. Graduate School will leave it up to the department to decide.
 - a. The unit should stay consistent with their decision to all members of their unit.
4. Please distribute this information through the DGS/CGS.
5. Graduate Credit for Undergraduates: remove the 6-credit limit on the [Permission Form](#) to align with our [policy](#).
 - a. **Approved (Approved 26/26)**
 - b. Six credit limits are per semester.
 - c. Secondly, remove graduate-level course restrictions since some units are using 400-level courses at the graduate level. Remove graduate-level course number.
 - d. Question/Discussion
 - Not an issue of combined undergraduate and graduate programs. This is for students who are utilizing credits outside of combined degrees
 - This would allow undergraduate students to take 9 credits at the graduate level?
 1. Yes. They still have to obtain permission.
 - Some courses have both a 400-level and 600-level number
 - Why can't these graduate credits count towards undergrad credits?
 1. Have to choose one or the other, except where in a formal, approved Bachelor's+Master's program
 2. In other courses, undergrad can take grad courses for UG credit for UG degree, a separate policy
 - Previously, an undergraduate was going to take a graduate course, but they did not take it because it did not count towards undergraduate courses.
 1. Graduate School policy does allow this. This may have been at the discretion of the department.
 - Changing the limit - some courses are 4 credits. Also, are they paying grad or undergrad tuition?
 1. They would pay Undergraduate if they have not finished the Bachelor's
6. Graduate admission requirements [[Current Policy with Degree Requirements Highlighted](#)]: accept graduate degree with no bachelor's?
 - a. Discussion re: admitting students without bachelors.
 - A Department wanted to admit a student to Ph.D. program without a Bachelor's. Current practice: must have a U.S. Bachelor's degree or international or comparable degree. Even if there is a master's, we want to see proof of a bachelor's.



1. The student had worked in a research lab for a long period of time doing sophisticated research.
 - There are exceptions to this policy for prodigies.
 - Most big 10 universities require a bachelor's degree, however, there are exceptions for prodigies.
 - Illinois and Minnesota - allow exceptions: the department must justify why they want to admit this person despite a lack of a Bachelor's (mostly apply to Master's level, in the case of those institutions)
 - Sometimes 10 years of work experience could account for the degree experience required.
 - Sometimes there are students who are "ready" for grad school early.
- b. Questions/Discussion:
 - Advocacy for removing this requirement. At other institutions, only one or two years of research or classes may set an individual up for graduate school. There likely would be few cases.
 1. Secondary agreement except with fear of situations where a chair would be predatory with admissions for financial gain.
 2. Take this on a case-by-case basis, and admissions have to ensure there are extenuating circumstances.
 - Taking for example, Minnesota, what are the parameters that UMD would consider an undergraduate degree for international students?
 1. We are already on a case-by-case review of the validity of bachelor's degrees outside the U.S.
 2. International credential validation. Ensure the institution is recognized by the country of origin.
 - Minnesota gets about 30 - 50 (no bachelor's or 3-year degree bachelors, mostly the latter).
 1. What happens If this results in a lot (a 1000) applications that are not qualified, but maybe a few that are qualified but it's not visible among the unqualified?
 2. Use "rare cases" in language. Programs must petition on behalf of the student.
 - It could be reviewed by the Dean of the Graduate School.
 - Councilors are open to this idea - would want the policy to use proper language.
 - One person opposed, prodigies should be treated individually as exceptions (as opposed to a wholesale policy change?) - proper language may address it matter.
 - Next meeting language would be presented for:
 1. Who is doing the evaluation?
 2. What constitutes evidence for an exception?



3. Illinois language - letter of support provides a compelling justification for the student's success. The department must also provide a plan to support the student in this rare case.
-
7. [English proficiency testing](#) for applicants with degrees from institutions for which English is the exclusive language of instruction.
 - a. Currently, we waive this for countries that have English as their official language
 - b. Peer institutions waive requirements for students with degrees from institutions where English is the sole language of instruction, even if not in an English-speaking country
 - Michigan has a list it will exclude from the English proficiency requirement. (110 institutions)
 - c. A list of institutions where English is the primary teaching language will be created.
 - d. We will begin looking at students who earned degrees at these institutions to see where their scores placed them.
 - Data results and language will be presented at the next GC meeting.
 - e. There are other qualifications that the institutions have, such as timeframe and type of degree.
 - WI: Degree earned in the last 5 years
 - MI: States the degree cannot be a 1-year degree or research degree
 - f. Questions/Discussion
 - Can different departments have different requirements: e.g., English would need a higher score?
 1. GS sets a baseline standard, programs are free to set a higher standard.
 2. If GS says "waiver for ELP test," some programs may still require it. (MATH and STAT still require, I believe).
 - If we update the policy to not require a TOEFL, it would affect ITA as well.
 - The exemption would need to apply for both admission and ITA.
 1. Except we do this... if someone earns their degree in the U.S., they're waived the TOEFL for admission. But they still take the ITA if their entire education wasn't in the U.S.
 - Concerns over some universities where English is the main language of instruction but perhaps not spoken well.
 1. Consider adopting Michigan's list.
 - Concern over not requiring TOEFL but requiring testing to be a TA.
 - PR Students are American citizens but are still required to take TOEFL. We are losing students to other institutions because they are not required there.
 1. We don't base exemption on citizenship but on where the degree was obtained and the language of instruction. So even if an American student received a degree from a French university, they would be required to provide TOEFL.
 2. PR - The language of instruction is Spanish



3. Canadian citizens still take TOEFL if they have a degree from a French-speaking institution in Quebec
 - Comment: The current standard is simple and easily applied. This change could complicate admissions screening.
 - This would impact applicants from India more than other countries.
 - Would we accept a 1-year Master's? Or require 2 years?
 1. We will have to decide what our limits are.
 2. Other institutions have a timeframe for obtaining the degree

8. Ph.D. completion rates by race/ethnicity; discussion of possible initiatives to reduce and eliminate the completion gap
 - a. To be discussed at the next meeting.

9. Topics for future discussion