



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

GRADUATE COUNCIL Meeting Notes

Tuesday, October 13, 2020 from 9-10:30 via Zoom

Attendees: Fetter (chair), Cohen, Dasgupta, DeMaria, Duncan, Gold, Haring, Jarynski, Julin, Kim, Kirmani, Laffin, Lawley, May, Moser Jones, Mullin, Rabenhorst, Robertson, Sayer, Shea, Sheaff, Turner, Vera, Waguespack, Washington Xie

Ex Officio and GS Staff:

Beise, Enriquez, Fisher Liu, Gittens, Roberts, Strausser

1. Welcome
 - a. Dean Fetter welcomed everyone at 9:02am.
2. Approve [4/15 meeting notes](#)
 - a. Councilors were asked to give corrections or comments.
 - b. 19 approved the minutes, 1 abstained, and 0 did not approve.
3. Approve [9/15 meeting notes](#)
 - a. Councilors were asked to give corrections or comments.
 - b. 21 approved the minutes, 0 abstained, and 0 did not approve.
4. Updates and announcements
 - a. Graduate enrollment, [Fall 2020 v. Fall 2019](#) (link requires UMD login)
 - Enrollment was higher than expected, after preparing for a decline. More international students were able to get visas and begin programs remotely.
 - We are anticipating that more students will be able to arrive in the spring.
 - Domestic enrollment is up in many programs.
 - b. Fall 2021 admissions plans, practices, and policies
 - We hope that students who have deferred their enrollment until Fall 2021 will be able to come as soon as possible.
 - We have provided tuition fellowships to GA's who are unable to arrive. Dean Fetter has offered to extend that, if necessary.
 - We cannot appoint students as GAs if they are residing outside of the US.
 - We have polled all DGS about their Fall 2021 admission plans. So far, there are 4 doctoral programs that will suspend admissions for fall 2021 and there are 7 programs that will reduce admissions for fall 2021.
 - These Fall 21 plans may affect the Dean's Fellowships. Dean Fetter would like this allocated to students whose progress was delayed due to COVID-19 to help address some of the consequences of the pandemic.



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Please note that the allocations to each college will remain the same. The colleges decide how to distribute the funds to programs.

- Dean Fetter asked councilors to refrain from sharing the enrollment spreadsheet with their program staff until it is final.
 - Programs whose admissions will be reduced for Fall 21 should share that information with prospective students. We will provide language for programs to use. Councilors were asked to share views on this as a way to proceed.
 - The councilors discussed strategies to communicate admission cycle changes.
 - Decisions about admissions may change once programs know if there are budget cuts for GAs.
 - The number of GA appointments did not go down significantly. We do not expect that there will be a significant reduction in funding available for students.
- c. Admissions process - Graduate students are often used at the program level to review applicants. Dean Fetter is asking Councilors for input on employing that practice. Should graduate students take on the first round review (without faculty)?
- There are confidentiality concerns, training concerns, FERPA, etc.
 - Dean Fetter suggests that we develop guidance review processes taking place at the program level. This guidance would include a statement about how to employ graduate students in this vetting process.
 - Councilors who would like to be part of a small working group that reviews applications, please let Brooke (bfliu@umd.edu) know.
- d. [Proposed rule](#) establishing a fixed duration of stay; [comments to ISSS](#)
- We are closely monitoring these issues related to the government. Right now we have the flexibility to extend a student's stay as long as they are making progress. DHS proposes issuing visas for a fixed amount of time for 2 years. You can ask for an extension, but no time extension past 4 years will be granted. Only 10% of doctoral students finish in 4 years. https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=DHS_FRDOC_0001-1933 This uncertainty might cause students to not even pursue doctoral programs because they might not be able to finish in this fixed time.
 - We are encouraging all faculty and students particularly to please comment about this policy using [this link](#). ISSS is collecting these comments and we will keep you posted.
- e. [Executive order](#) on diversity training
- This has raised concerns that this might apply to teaching. We are working with the Office of General Counsel on this.
 - A course that discusses or includes critical race theory is not covered by the executive order. But, if you have training for graduate students for



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part of their GA, TA, RA, then they can still participate in these trainings because they are part of the core values of our university. However, the implementation of this executive order might change with the upcoming election. We will keep you posted.

- f. Compliance with [policy on volunteer assistantships](#)
 - Requirement to teach is fine, but programs must pay them to do so.
 - Sometimes students cannot take additional funding (if they had a full fellowship)
 - We are making programs aware that you cannot require a student to be a teaching assistant, only if they request to do so.
 - g. Rolling out updated [committee nomination form](#) and request for electronic Report of Examining Committee (REC)
 - The Graduate School has implemented a procedure to sign off on thesis and dissertation defenses. In the original workflow, there were many limitations like external to UMD faculty.
 - We will now be using Adobe Sign and require a request for electronic signature for the Report of Examining Committee (REC). Requests for remote defenses are no longer required. They have been approved by the dean for the time being.
 - Please submit a request to receive the digital Report of Examining Committee. This form is through Adobe Sign and all members of the masters and doctoral committees can sign off using this form.
 - For more information about the new REC request process, please go here: <https://gradschool.umd.edu/faculty-and-staff/electronicrecrequest>. If you have any questions, please email graduate-dean@umd.edu.
5. Action Items - links require UMD login
- a. [Policy on Change of Graduate Program and/or Degree Objective](#)
 - We already have a process in place for students to switch between degree objectives. We wanted an explicit policy to reflect this process. Associate Dean Liu covered the updates in this process. This policy covers different situations when you would submit a new admissions application and then they complete the form, if they are eligible to switch degree objectives. Please review the link above for the policy.
 - Councilors voted on the approval of this policy. 26 Approved, 1 Abstained, 0 Did not approve.
 - This policy takes effect immediately and will be posted in the Graduate Catalog.
 - b. [Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Policy Review](#)
 - Allows students to earn a certificate along the way to a master's or doctoral program
 - There will no longer be a student approval process.
 - Current Master's students can also take these classes.



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- Councilors voted on the approval of this policy. 25 Approved, 1 Abstained, 0 Did not approve.

6. Future Discussion

- a. Year Two of the Graduate Outcome Assessment Pilot Program
- b. Please let us know if you have any future agenda items.

The meeting adjourned at 10am.

As a reminder, the Graduate Council will meet at the following days and times for AY 20-21.

November 17: 9-10:30

February 9: 10-11:30

March 8: 2:30-4

April 19: 1-2:30

The November meetings will be held via zoom. We will send a calendar invite with the agenda and zoom registration ahead of the event. Registration is now required for all zoom Graduate Council meetings. Please contact astraus3@umd.edu if you have any questions.

These minutes were unanimously approved at the 11/17/2020 Graduate Council Meeting.