# Graduate Council Meeting Notes
**April 10, 2024**
**10:00 - 11:30 am**
**Zoom**

**Attendees:** Leonid Koralov, Will Reed, Evelyn King, Jason Rudy, Jeffery Klauda, Alexander Williams, Paulo Prochno, Christina Getrich, Leila De Floriani, Lauren Cain, Kenneth Elpus, Min Wang, Hiro Iseki, Matthew Nessan, Chris Ellis, Ernesto Calvo, Stephen Mount, Ryan O'Grady, David Van Horn, Souradip Chakraborty, Jeffrey Shultz, Maria Bustamante, Jiannan Xu, Autumn Perkey
(23 voting members, 1 non-voting member)

**GS Staff:** Steve Roth, Evelyn Cooper, Brent Hernandez, Brittany Humphreys, Waqeelat Gaji, Toyin Oguntolu, Vikash Gujju, Teddy Wu, Fan Tsao, Simone Warrick-Bell, Heather Kissinger, Linda Macri, Yi Hao, Patty Woodwell, Robyn Kotzker, Kate Oravec

**Excused Absences:** Alexis Lothian, Jessica Gatlin, Lucy Qiu

## AGENDA NOTES
1. Approval of [March meeting minutes](#)
   a. There is no policy saying that meeting minutes need to be voted on.
2. Welcome and announcements
   a. Open Forums are open to all UMD graduate students, though each is focused on a particular topic or group of interest, as follows:

      - April 22, 1p (ESJ 0201, and [Zoom](#) - *umd.edu email required to join*): **International Graduate Students (co-hosted with the Office of International Affairs)**. International graduate students have a variety of unique issues that affect their student experience. Representatives from OIA, ISSS, and other international affairs offices will join this session to answer questions and hear your thoughts about improving the international graduate student experience. https://umd.zoom.us/j/95830737602

      - April 30, 3p (ESJ 2204, and [Zoom](#) - *umd.edu email required to join*): **Graduate Student Housing (co-hosted with Division of Administration and Division of Student Affairs)**. Graduate student housing is a major concern for some of our students. This forum will provide an update on a new graduate housing project that will double UMD's graduate housing capacity in

fall 2026, allow discussion about current graduate housing, and elicit feedback on a possible living-learning community idea for graduate students.
https://umd.zoom.us/j/91051856996

b. End-of-year updates
- Graduate faculty nominations and exceptions made in the academic year
  1. Some programs have a limited number of tenure-track faculty. We made about 22 different exceptions over the past 12 months.
- Grievances and outcomes
  1. We work with departments in an informal process.
  2. About 7 incidents have been reported in the past 12 months. A majority of them have been resolved, and some that were submitted this week are in process.
  3. Once we work out our reporting process for these, we will have a better number here.

c. SME Task Force
- We asked for volunteers to provide guidance for us on how we can further strengthen the SME process.
- We had a charge meeting with this group a few weeks ago. They just finalized a survey that will go out to departments and students.

d. Thank you to our outgoing Counselors
- AGNR: Debabrata Biswas
- ARHU: Ken Elpus
- BSOS: Christina Marisa Getrich
- CMNS: Steve Mount
- CMNS: Jeffrey Shultz
- ENGR: Sennur Ulukus
- JOUR: Rob Wells
- SPH: Edmond Shenassa
- GSG: Autumn Dawn Perkey
- GSG: Jillian Rothschild
- ARHU GRAD: Lauren Cain
- CMNS GRAD: Souradip Chakraborty

e. 3MT Competition, April 17, Charles Carroll Room, 1 pm

f. Annual Updates for the next admissions cycle are ongoing. Release July 1st.
- DGS/CGS should have received an email about this. We ask that everyone gets this done so we can release this by the July 1 deadline.
- Comment: Matthew Nessan - Some questions we get is why do we have to do annual updates for our programs? Other institutions just create their application, and leave it as-is.

1. Information needs to be correct and up-to-date. Also, deadlines will change and move to weekends, and questions arise about whether to move them to the week before or the week after.
2. We can look into automation, but we noticed that the data over time became out-of-date. Also, new directors might come in and change requirements.
3. This year, it's due a week earlier in order to have time to work with programs who haven't met the deadline.

g. Holistic admissions: [personal experience prompts survey](#)
- A couple weeks ago, we sent out a survey about the personal experience prompts added to the graduate admissions process. Please check with your DGS/CGS to fill this out. The deadline was a week ago, but we are still accepting responses.
- The subject of this email is: Feedback Needed on Personal Experience Prompts.

h. 2024 spring graduation deadline for doctoral students to submit a dissertation and REC form is 4/16/24

i. Statement of Mutual Expectation (SME) [survey](#)
- If you are a DGS, you should be getting an email today. The survey is meant to help us understand the Statement of Mutual Expectations process: what is working well and what can be improved. We hope that faculty and students will take a few minutes to fill it out.
- We want responses by April 22 so we have time to read through open-ended responses so we can create our report for the end of the year.

3. Proposed policy discussions
   a. [The role of Graduate Council in the approval of Combined Degrees](#)
   - The combined programs are reviewed and approved the same way other degrees are.
   - The small change is to clarify that Graduate PCC is the approving body for these combined degrees, which is the same for all other degrees.
     1. Graduate PCC is a standing body of the Graduate Council.
   b. [GAs working from abroad](#)
   - GAships are not allowed to be done abroad. They need to be provided to students in the US.
   - During the pandemic, we made some exceptions to where students can do GAships. However, the campus needs to be in compliance with legal requirements with ISSS and the Maryland Office of the Attorney General.
   - We do understand that students have some international fieldwork.
   - Comment: Ernesto Calvo - A student who does less than a semester abroad and comes back, but then goes abroad again, would this go beyond the 2 semesters?
     1. This seems entirely legal.

- Comment: Evelyn King - I would recommend defining "less than a semester" if not done so already. How does this translate to the summer? Some students go abroad in the summer.
    1. Summer is not counted in this guidance, so there is additional flexibility here. This seems to be in compliance.
- Comment: Autumn Perkey - What happens for students who are held when reentering the US and are deported when trying to return? We currently have a student who had this occur. What is the emergency policy to protect students who this occurs to?
    1. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection detained a Chinese student. The campus is working to get this issue resolved.
    2. The campus is seeking guidance from attorneys on what guidance we can give to students concerned about traveling abroad. We are not the only university who has experienced this.
    3. In emergency situations, we are working to make sure the student still holds their student status.
    4. Comment: Leila Floriani - This student was in our program. We needed somebody to talk to the students about this, as some students have concerns about traveling home over the summer.
        a. ISSS is working on getting some guidance that we can share with students. They are also considering doing a separate open forum to address this. Maybe not campus-wide, but department-specific.
    5. Comment: Jillian Rothschild - Is there anything we can do to help this student?
        a. The student has returned home, and we are still issuing tuition and stipend support. They are in contact with their program and ISSS.
- Comment: Lauren Cain - Does this mean one day less than the semester?
    1. Arguably yes.
- Comment: Jason Rudy - I appreciate this clarification. Is this retroactive, or is this going into effect in the future?
    1. We are not necessarily making this retroactive, but this has been the stance of the Office of General Counsel. We were asked to put this into our policy to make it clearer for people.
- Comment: Jillian Rothschild - I am wondering about situations in which a student and advisor discuss if work can be done for a couple of weeks abroad. Do they need to submit anything here?
    1. No, those are exceptions and are not under the guidance here.
- Comment: Leonid Koralov - What about if a student has a conference trip abroad?

1. The Office of General Counsel suggests that as long as it is a temporary trip, this should be fine.
- Comment: Hiro Iseki - Appointment and re-appointment needs to be processed much earlier than the first day of the semester. How does the time frame work here in order to comply? How does this work for international students coming back to the country?
    1. Appointments are made on different timelines in different programs.
    2. This falls under the summer period, and is not a point of concern.
- Comment: Ernesto Calvo - Does this mean we can allow students to work remotely if in the US ? Does this apply for international students working in the US?
    1. Yes, we have some policy around this, and leave it up to the discretion of the department. The SME has a section that discusses what work can be done remotely, so there is some flexibility.
    2. We will learn more about this soon because the campus is working on policy on remote work for faculty and staff.
    3. I will refer to ISSS for the second point.
- Comment: Stephen Mount - Our appointments generally start mid-August. The international students are usually arriving around the same time. I see a lot of problems around this.
    1. I will get additional guidance from ISSS and the Office of General Counsel about this issue, and will add some clarification to this language.
    2. Comment: Autumn Perkey - Could we have an open discussion with ISSS and General Counsel?
        a. This meeting wouldn't be able to be held until fall, so I'd like to have more guidance on this sooner.

4. Future Discussion
    a. Plagiarism detection software for dissertations and theses (AI usage generally)
        - Some schools, like UT-Austin, have implemented this software. Some graduate schools are encouraging students to use these tools to make sure what they are submitting is free of plagiarism.
        - There are challenges around this, such as privacy issues. The campus has no guidance or policy around the use of this software.
        - Comment: Jeffery Klauda - Another part that could be added is the use of AI to help with writing.
        - Comment: Jillian Rothschild - I would encourage us all to think about this as a tool to use. It might be worth thinking about these tools more like "we all write a lot of things, it might be useful for all of us to use these tools" in order to pass any plagiarism investigation.

- ■ Comment: Stephen Mount - I know the privacy concern is that it requires to store the scan.
    1. Comment: Evelyn King - I'm fairly certain there's a way to un-check it so it's not stored in a repository. We are also thinking about using these tools for testing.
- ■ Comment: Jason Rudy - There is lots of skepticism in my department (English). Our preference is to just speak with our students about the ways that AI can be used.
- ■ Comment: Matthew Nessan - There are a lot of tools on the open market, so I expect students will use them anyway. We also have conversations about limiting the number of times students could check their paper for plagiarism.
- ■ Comment: Leila Floriani - Our students are aware of this. Having a tool that they can use will be very useful. I understand applying this to the entire Ph.D. process will be challenging.

b. Graduate School strategic planning and Grad Council's involvement
- ■ We are wrapping up our strategic planning exercise in the next few weeks. We will be reaching out to the Graduate Council for feedback on priorities coming out of the Graduate School.

c. SPH query - [Evelyn King](#)
- ■ Can anyone share if your departments have a recruitment budget? Is it different for Masters vs. Ph.D. students? If you have an estimate you could send to me, that would be great.

d. Next Graduate Council meeting (Fall)
- ■ We are hoping to start the semester with an in-person Graduate Council meeting.