



Graduate Council Meeting Notes

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

10:00-11:30 am

Zoom

Attendees: Paulo Prochno, Leila De Florian, Jeffery Klauda, Divon Pender, Rob Wells, Evelyn King, Leonid Koralov, Radu Balan, Ernesto Calvo, Alexis Lothian, Varaa Kukreti, Laura Schneider, Carly Woods, Evelyn King, Candace Turitto, Janet Walkoe, Matthew Nesson, Lucy Qiu, Henry Gittens, Katrina Groth, Hiro Iseki, Will Reed, Chis Ellis (21 voting members)

GS Staff: Jillian Randall, Kate Oravec, Jason Farman, Stephen Roth, Masuka Straton, Brittany Humphreys, Edith Shields, Brent Hernandez, Vanessa Ettema, Waqelat Gaji, Heather Kissinger, Olutoyin Ogontolu, Patricia Woodwell, Simone Warrick-Bell, Blessing Enekwe

AGENDA NOTES

1. Announcements and Discussion

- a. Associate Dean for Graduate Student Success - [posted](#) (50% FTE)
- b. *For the end of the meeting: open discussion of federal actions and consequences for campus.
 - <https://govrelations.umd.edu/federal-relations/executive-orders-memos-and-federal-regulations>
 - <https://research.umd.edu/federalupdates>
 - Recent communications from The Graduate School
 1. <https://us8.campaign-archive.com/?u=27a4d12315ecb3e7066455a17&id=660110cb58>
 2. <https://us8.campaign-archive.com/?u=27a4d12315ecb3e7066455a17&id=1a67d93add>
 - Executive orders are not law. If your programs were in alignment before January 20, they remain.
 1. If needed, correct, but don't overcorrect.
 - There are many collaborative relationships across associations to advocate for higher education.
 - Campus leadership is carefully monitoring the situation, decisions can't be made instantly.
 - The Office of VPR is tracking students and faculty impacted by grants/funding loss.
 - Admissions are a local-level decision. Be thoughtful about decisions and funding.



1. Retracting funding is allowed. If this is an existential threat to your budget, associate deans have been advised to consider this action or recommend deferral.
 - a. First, do no harm, especially for international students.
 2. There will likely be a decrease in enrollment across all R01 institutions.
- Funding/Fellowships
 1. No changes to funding promises from The Graduate School at this time (allocations to colleges, funding offers to students).

2. Proposed policy discussions

a. Graduate Certificates - Double Counting of Courses

- Added language clarifying our existing policy/practice that courses in graduate certificates may not double count toward another certificate, nor may they count toward a second Master's degree.
- Discussion:
- Comment: Alexis Lothian notes that it would be beneficial to consider allowing double counting across certificates where there is curricular overlap or synergy. For example, doing the Digital Studies certificate could overlap well with courses in WGSS certificate or similar graduate certificates. Jason notes that there is a minimum credit requirement for certificates that may be in jeopardy with this approach. Such courses would, in essence, triple count toward each certificate and the Master's degree. We don't allow such a model.
- Vote:
 1. Yes - 86%
 2. No - 5%
 3. Abstain - 10%

b. Attendance in Graduate Courses - do we need to clarify our policy vs undergraduate? Graduate policy does allow for attendance taking; undergrad does not.

- There is vague language in our attendance policy.
- Comment - Candace Turritto: Apologies for my hearing, you said the general consensus on campus is that attendance should NOT be able to be used in grading?
 1. Currently attendance is clearly not allowed to be graded independently from other activities for undergrad courses. That prohibition is not present in the grad course policies.
- Comment - Hiro Iseki: It is a burden on faculty to accommodate the student's needs. Making flexibility in the policy will be appreciated from our perspective. At least faculty can make their choice when they structure their course. It may be useful to clarify the policy, but as long as we still have flexibility.
- Comment - Candace Turritto: Is the consensus at the graduate level that we should not use attendance as part of a grade? What are potential downsides of



clarifying the language? Some students are a bit more reserved; sitting and listening in the back may be their form of participation, even if not verbally.

1. We haven't dug into the general consensus across campus.
 2. For the sake of clarity and parsimony, is it better to say it.
 3. We want to get away from having a student just show up, and sit there as "present" (checkbox attendance versus present in a meaningful way).
 - a. Pedagogical approach of individual faculty to be considered.
 - b. Individual faculty judgment of what student engagement/participation means.
- Comment - What is the difference between attendance and student participation as a criteria for grading?
 1. It is restricted as part of grading at the undergraduate level.
 - Comment - Rob Wells: It's on us to make sure that grad students are meant to be here. I think it is problematic to grade for attendance; leave it as course participation. I put it down on my syllabi and be as clear as possible what I expect for graduate-level participation. Having it as the current policy as participation is the way to go.
 1. To note, the current policy at the graduate level does not say that attendance is graded as participation.
 - Comment - Ernesto Calvo: But adding more clarity, I don't think this will help.
 1. The language we would move toward would be a clarity that faculty can incorporate attendance into grading if that is their pedagogy. When we face a lack of clarity in policy language, we see an unequal treatment of students across campus. This could be within the same course, or the same course with different instructors. If we have no language to point back to, we can't enforce equity across the student experience.
 - Comment - Alexis Lothian: Having openness is good. The reason for the undergrad policy is for accessibility, making sure students stay home when sick, and having students participate in other ways. Since COVID, we have made an effort to ensure there are other ways for students to participate. I like the undergrad policy, I think it is more equitable.
 - Comment - Katrina Groth: I'm advocating for keeping attendance as part of grading. Without it, it undermines the idea that being there is part of what you need to do. I recognize we need to be flexible, but in engineering, you can't replace interaction with the person in front of you with alternate forms of attendance. I'd like to have some flexibility to hold people accountable. We don't want to look at participation as transactional.
 1. In ARHU, I resonate with Alexis' point, so I see how this might fit differently based on the discipline.



- Comment - Candace Turitto: If we "inherit" the undergrad policy (sort of), it could be that some instructors take the conservative approach and do not consider attendance, even if they actually would otherwise (with awareness of the freedom of choosing to).
- Informal vote to add, "with caution, faculty may grade for attendance".
 1. Majority agreed.

c. **Proposing grievance "Resolution Officers" from each college to support the grievance policy. How do we approach improving this process for graduate students?** [\[Michigan's Example\]](#)

- Our policy language is robust and comparable to those around the country. How we present it, however, is complicated. It requires a more legalistic approach, as opposed to being more accessible to students. Other institutions hand out policy in smaller pieces to students.
- Resolution Officers are a point of contact in the college that help manage the grievance process, and are familiar with the policy.
- This is not really a policy change, but rather a layer on top of the policy to better present policy to the students. This would likely be the associate deans in the colleges.
- Comment - Carly Woods: What is the difference between this role and the ombudsperson?
 1. The ombuds officer would still exist. One exists for all graduate programs. This person would be a person at the college level.
- Comment - Hiro Iseki: I've dealt with grievance issues myself as DGS, and have solved it within the department/program. Someone else who can take part of this responsibility will be of substantial help. Usually the DGS can get some release of teaching load. Resolution officers won't have much to do when there are no problems, but may have substantial burden when something does arise.
 1. The current policy does point to the local level as the first stage for handling grievances. Rarely does it come to the Graduate School that can't be resolved at the college level. These can take a lot of time. My assumption is that the person who is named the Resolution Officer would be an already existing administrative role. We would defer to the college for who exactly would be in the role.
- Comment - Candace Turitto: Is the outcome that students have an advocate through a stressful situation? Is it possible that this could encourage students to skip over the DGS and escalate this to the Resolution Officer where it could have been resolved with a pause? What if the conflict is with that person? Maybe it would be a good idea to have 2 people locally? Would this go in the formal process; where would the person fit?



1. I see this person as being a helping, calming force to redirect the student to the unit or college-level. Otherwise students tend to go straight to the President's Office, and they and GS Dean/GS get pulled in. They will be another point of contact to help the student navigate the process. Start at an informal process before a formal process outside of the college-level. Could be valuable in some of the larger colleges.
 2. This would be a "screen-door" to the formal process, and does not change the policy at all.
- Comment - Hiro Iseki: In all departments, there are some politics. Say the grievance issue is between a student and faculty member. As DGS, I try to be neutral and address the issues in order to accommodate the student's needs. That is a difficult responsibility. The ombudsman is good because they are always neutral, as they aren't associated with the department.
 1. Often this is what students do with the ombudsman. Having an internal person to understand the department politics may help the student.
 - Informal vote for those in favor of Resolution Officers:
 1. About 10 people were in favor.
 2. Need to circle back and will provide some language for associate deans as a starting point.
 - Two helpful links for this conversation:
 - 1) Grievance Policy:
<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/school-policies/#graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities>
 - 2) Incident Reporting Page:
<https://gradschool.umd.edu/students/incident-reporting-support>

3. Future Discussion

- a. [University of Maryland Generative AI Guidelines](#)
- b. Double counting across programs