

Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council
October 11, 2016

Members Present: D. Baker (MKHP), H. Damico (CODI), P. Das (ECON), Mark DeWitt (MUS), M. Farmer-Kaiser (ex-officio member), A. Fekih (ELEE), S. Gawronski (ENGL/GSO), E. Habib (CIVE), D. Harrington (NURS), K. Hermann (COUE), H. Hurst (NURS), J. Lemoine (NURS), M. Kightley (ENGL), A. Magidin (MATH), D. Olivier (EDFL), C. Parker (HIST), C. Richter (GEOL), K. Smith (ARCH), C. Roche-Wallace (MUS), W. Xu (CHEM)

Members Absent: J. Albert (BIOL), D. Bellar (KNES), R. Hernandez (CHEE), K. McClung (ARCH), C. Ratliff (ENGL), D. Stevens (MGMT),

The meeting was called to order by H. Hurst at 2:07 p.m.

Announcements:

H. Hurst welcomed Mark Dewitt from the College of the Arts to the Graduate Council. M. Dewitt has graciously accepted an appointment to serve the remainder Paul Morton's term.

H. Hurst introduced special guest Dr. David Danahar, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. D. Danahar thanked the Council, and the rest of the University, for welcoming him to campus. He provided a brief overview of his experiences in academia and higher education administration. Since arriving, D. Danahar noted that he has worked through the University strategic plan to assess what can realistically be implemented during time at the University. He noted that he has assembled a small working group that will propose implementation of different initiatives geared towards faculty, students, and University facilities. For example, he explained that he, the deans, and this group are working to start the strategic plan's calls for improvements to academic facilities with an expeditious identification of classrooms in need of limited technology. He addressed the University's goal of becoming a tier 1 research institution, stating that much work and investment will be needed to reach that goal. He cited compensation rates, for instance, as being askew with other tier 1 research institutions. M. DeWitt noted that the teaching loads on campus also do not align with tier 1 research institutions. D. Danahar agreed but noted that with decreased teaching loads comes a higher expectation for research. D. Olivier noted that faculty are expected to do increasingly more work with no additional support from the University. D. Danahar characterized both the rhetoric and goals surrounding the strategic plan as ambitious and openly speculated about whether they could be fully accomplished in the four years remaining of the strategic plan. He stated that the University is in a good place, but it can be better, and he's looking forward to working with a number of entities on campus to move the University forward as much as possible in the time that he's here. D. Danahar thanked the Council again for their time and encouraged everyone to visit him with questions, comments, or concerns. D. Danahar left the Graduate Council meeting at 2:32pm.

The Council voted to approve the September 13, 2016 meeting minutes with a small correction. A motion was made to add the word "of" when referencing the Grand Marshal selection process. Motion seconded and carried.

The list of degree candidates was presented to and accepted by the Council. Motion made to accept the list of degree candidates. Motion seconded and carried.

H. Hurst noted that the revised Grand Marshal selection process has been implemented with a call for nominations sent out. M. Farmer-Kaiser noted that while the new process has received positive feedback, no nominations are in hand as of yet.

H. Hurst thanked J. Lemoine and M. Kightley for their work in preparing the revisions to the current Outside Observer catalog entry. M. Farmer-Kaiser provided a handout to the Council with the proposed changes listed and explained that one line was added to the revisions that the Ad Hoc Committee and Graduate Council had missed. The added line states that Outside Observers must be members of the Graduate Faculty. The Council agreed that this stipulation was necessary and approved of the addition.

Committee Reports:

Student Appeals Committee – Committee report submitted by Robert Viguerie, not present. H. Hurst relayed a message for R. Viguerie asking the Council to encourage their colleagues and students to submit appeals for consideration as early as possible for each review cycle. Motion made to accept the report of the Student Appeals Committee. Motion seconded and carried.

Curriculum Committee – Committee report submitted by J. Lemoine. She notified the Council that moving forward, bulk requests for course changes would not be allowed, citing a large number of errors and insufficient information (particularly in terms of justification for the action requested) on those larger requests. Motion made to accept the report of the Curriculum Committee. Motion seconded and carried.

Fellowship Committee – No report.

Graduate Faculty Membership Committee – No report.

Old Business:

H. Hurst asked for a report from the Ad Hoc Committee on International Student Admissions Policies. M. Farmer-Kaiser explained that the Committee would be meeting again soon and had already met once this semester to continue their conversation regarding barriers to international student admissions. She noted several different issues that the committee is considering, including international student application fees, outsourced credential and transcript evaluation, and University expectations for English language proficiency exams and GRE verbal scores. The Committee is looking at peer institutions for an idea of best practices and is working to have a set of recommendations for the Graduate Council by the end of the Fall 2016 semester.

New Business:

D. Olivier, serving as Chair of the search committee for the Provost and Vice President of

Academic Affairs, provided an update on the search committee's activity so far. She thanked everyone who was able to meet with John Hicks, the search firm consultant, who was on campus recently. The search committee is currently working to finalize the job description so the announcement can be made for the position. They are looking to speak with candidates in early February to narrow down the pool for on-campus interviews. Following their established timeline, the committee plans to provide President Savoie with final recommendations for March 6, 2017. H. Hurst thanked D. Olivier for the update and for the search committee's work thus far.

S. Gawronski, Graduate Student Organization president, notified the Council that the GSO travel budget is already depleted, due to a record number of applications. S. Gawronski explained that the GSO has always awarded funding on a first-come, first-served basis, and that practice had never been particularly problematic. The rapid depletion of funds has spurred the GSO to review their policies for distributing travel funds, however. M. Young explained that, currently, students traveling anywhere in the United States are eligible for the same amount of funding, whether it's to Baton Rouge or New York. GSO hopes to make changes that will enable them to help the greatest number of graduate students.

Motion made to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded and passed. Meeting adjourned at 3:45pm.