

1 Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council

2
3 March 14, 2017

4
5 Members Present: J. Albert (BIOL), D. Baker (MKHP), D. Bellar (KNES), H. Damico (CODI),
6 P. Das (ECON), Mark DeWitt (MUS), M. Farmer-Kaiser (ex-officio member), A. Fekih (ELEE),
7 S. Gawronski (GSO), E. Habib (CIVE), K. Hermann (COUE), R. Hernandez (CHEE), H. Hurst
8 (NURS), M. Kightley (ENGL), J. Lemoine (NURS), A. Magidin (MATH), K. McClung
9 (ARCH), D. Olivier (EDFL), C. Parker (HIST), C. Ratliff (ENGL), C. Roche-Wallace (MUS),
10 D. Stevens (MGMT), M. Young (PhD ALSS)

11
12 Members Absent: D. Harrington (NURS), C. Richter (GEOL), K. Smith (ARCH), W. Xu
13 (CHEM)

14
15 Guest Present: Gwen Fontenot (Interim Dean, College of Business Administration), Robert
16 Viguerie (Associate Dean and MBA Director, College of Business Administration), Suzanne
17 Ward (Head, Department of Accounting)

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19 The meeting was called to order by H. Hurst at 2:03 p.m.

20
21 H. Hurst requested an amendment of the agenda to move the two College of Business items
22 forward in the meeting so that guests G. Fontenot, R. Viguerie and S. Ward from the College of
23 Business Administration could address the council. No objections were raised.

24
25 H. Hurst introduced the guests and directed discussion to the new business request from the
26 MBA program. R. Viguerie presented the proposal, which had been circulated to Council
27 members prior to the meeting, and formally requested that the MBA program be allowed, first, to
28 waive the GMAT and letters of reference requirement for applicants with a 3.0 cumulative
29 undergraduate GPA and no work experience or a 2.75 cumulative undergraduate GPA with at
30 least 3 years of work experience; and, second, the ability to waive the GMAT on a case-by-case
31 basis for applicants with a 2.5 cumulative GPA with at least 5 years of work experience. He
32 explained the reasons why MBA programs have been moving away from requiring the GMAT
33 and presented examples of peer and competitor programs that presently waive the admission
34 requirement for some applicants or do not require it. The MBA program here and programs
35 nationally, he noted, have found undergraduate GPA and work experience to be the best
36 predictors of success for business graduate students. He further explained that as the College of
37 Business Administration prepares to introduce an online delivery format for its MBA degree, it
38 has come to acknowledge the need for more competitive admission requirements and admission
39 requirements that allow for faster application review and admission decisions. Following R.
40 Viguerie's presentation of the proposal, Hurst opened the floor for questions by the Council. D.
41 Stevens noted his support of the proposal citing GMAT/graduation rate research and reinforcing
42 the conclusion that the GPA provides a better indication of the work ethic and hard work needed
43 to complete an MBA program. P. Das also offered support for the proposal and further described
44 his experience as a faculty member who has taught MBA students in online courses. D. Baker
45 too offered support for the proposal, asserting that standardized tests are not an accurate indicator
46 of success and noting that he did not see the ability to waive the GMAT as a weakening of
47 admission requirements but rather a necessary step to ensure the program's ability to remain

1 competitive in the ever-growing online MBA market. R. Viguerie reassured the Council that
2 continuing to deliver a quality, high-caliber MBA program remains at the forefront of decision-
3 making about changes to the program. He also reminded the Council that the request is not to
4 provide a complete waiver of the GMAT but rather the ability to do so for the best applicants
5 outright and, for those who would be considered only for a conditional admission, the ability to
6 do so when the work experience is strong. He further reiterated concern about being able to
7 compete in an increasingly competitive market, even in Louisiana. He pointed out also that the
8 MBA program is a professional program that must meet the needs of students who work full time
9 and pursue graduate studies part time. J. Albert agreed that standardized tests are not a good
10 indicator of success and asked about how such a change would impact the program's
11 competitiveness for grants from the Board of Regents. M. Farmer-Kaiser remarked that, at least
12 in the case of the BORSF grant proposals, success appears to be more dependent upon a
13 program's ability to show retention and completion success with admission requirements
14 (including official test score expectations) not necessarily being a consideration as long as they
15 are in line with requirements regionally and nationally; she also noted that the traditional BORSF
16 fellowships program is being phased out. Farmer-Kaiser went on to offer support for the
17 proposal, noting that the question of offering a GMAT waiver or no longer requiring it has been
18 an on-going discussion with the College of Business Administration leadership since her she
19 became Interim Dean of the Graduate School; she also indicated that she was pleased with the
20 measured request and expected fully that the MBA program leadership would be ever-constant in
21 evaluating its effectiveness if approved. M. Kightley asked R. Viguerie to explain how work
22 experience is evaluated in the application review process. R. Viguerie responded by saying that
23 they look at what the student has accomplished, their success in business, since they finishing the
24 undergraduate degree. Hurst asked about the request to waive letters of reference. R. Viguerie
25 indicated that this request is motivated by the desire to shorten the time from application to
26 acceptance, especially for those interested in the online delivery format. D. Olivier asked if a
27 statement of purpose was required. R. Viguerie answered that it was and that he reads with
28 special care letters of reference and statements of purpose for applicants eligible only for
29 conditional admission S. Gawronski asked if this proposal was only for applicants to the online
30 delivery format. R. Viguerie answered, saying that the programs seeks to have the same
31 admission requirements for all applicants and, thus, no, the proposal was not only for online
32 applicants. Discussion ensued, turning to consideration of the expectation for a substantial
33 increase in the number of applicants and, thus, students. C. Parker asked who would be teaching
34 all these students. Both D. Baker and G. Fontenot responded, both commenting on accreditation
35 requirements and the need for and reliance upon adjunct faculty. M. Farmer-Kaiser added that as
36 the online offerings grow the program, there will be a constant need to evaluate the impact of
37 admission requirement changes and to ensure that we continue to provide a high-quality program
38 for both students and faculty. C. Parker noted continued concerns about the larger trend in higher
39 education to outsource teaching. R. Viguerie and G. Fontenot reassured the Council that
40 continuing to deliver a high-quality program remains always at the forefront as they work to
41 move the MBA forward. Discussion ensued. H. Hurst thanked G. Fontenot and R. Viguerie for
42 their participation and indicated the Council would deliberate further.

43
44 The Council then proceeded to consider the College of Business Administration request for an
45 exception to the requirement that Graduate Coordinators be a member of the Graduate Faculty
46 for Pam Meyer, who serves as Graduate Coordinator of the MS program in Accounting. H. Hurst

1 invited S. Ward to present the request. She explained that, since creation of the program in 2014,
2 P. Meyer has served as Graduate Coordinator and that, last Fall, M. Farmer-Kaiser had granted a
3 one-semester emergency appointment to the Graduate Faculty for Meyer so that the College and
4 the Department could determine the best course of action. She clarified that Meyer does not hold
5 the terminal degree as required by the University guidelines and College of Business
6 Administration criteria for Graduate Faculty Membership. Meyer, however, is a licensed CPA
7 who is familiar with the policies governing the Louisiana State Board of Accountancy. The
8 College and Department argued that this credential is the more necessary credential to guide
9 students through the path toward attaining the CPA certificate and the CPA license. Moreover, S.
10 Ward explained, of the eleven faculty members in Accounting, only three are CPAs. Given
11 Meyer's credentials, successful record of guiding and teaching Accounting graduate students,
12 and significant history with the program's creation, the College respectfully requests an
13 exemption for Meyer to serve as Graduate Coordinator despite not being a member of the
14 University Graduate Faculty. H. Hurst then invited the Council to ask any questions. D. Stevens
15 supported the request and added that the Accounting program is one of the strongest in the nation
16 with a ranking of 19th for students passing their boards on the first attempt. J. Albert asked the
17 Department to speak to the important role that a Graduate Coordinator plays in academically and
18 professionally preparing graduate students. S. Ward replied that P. Meyer has long taught
19 graduate students and has a particular professional training and knowledge as a CPA that is
20 necessary to prepare Accounting graduate students for success. A. Magidin asked, since she is
21 not eligible because she does not have a terminal degree, does she meet the other requirements
22 for Graduate Faculty membership. D. Baker responded by saying that P. Meyer is dedicated to
23 the program and argued that possession of the CPA perhaps better qualified her to serve as
24 Graduate Coordinator than a PhD-prepared professor. A. Magidin stated that membership on the
25 Graduate Faculty ensures that faculty members stay current in their field. S. Ward noted that as a
26 CPA, P. Meyer is required to satisfy annually requirements to maintain certification and
27 licensure. S. Ward further reminded the Council that the MS Accounting program is not a
28 research-focused graduate program but rather is an applied degree program. M. Kightley asked
29 what percentage of students completing the program transition into an academic field. S. Ward
30 indicated that, at present, none; all have moved into CPA careers, remaining focused on sitting
31 for the boards and attaining licensure as a CPA. H. Hurst noted that P. Meyer has been teaching
32 at the University for 38 years and noted concern about what the Council would be conveying if
33 the request was not granted. G. Fontenot clarified that the College and Department asked only
34 for this exception for P. Meyer only; future Graduate Coordinators would be expected to meet
35 the University expectations. H. Hurst thanks for guests from the College of Business
36 Administration and they left the meeting.

37
38 The Council turned its attention back to the College of Business Administration's request that the
39 MBA program be allowed, first, to waive the GMAT and letters of reference requirement for
40 applicants with a 3.0 cumulative undergraduate GPA and no work experience or a 2.75
41 cumulative undergraduate GPA with at least 3 years of work experience; and, second, the ability
42 to waive the GMAT on a case-by-case basis for applicants with a 2.5 cumulative GPA with at
43 least 5 years of work experience. Discussion ensued. A motion was made to approve the
44 proposed request with the addition of the word "relevant" prior to all mention of work
45 experience. Motion seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 19-0 with two members of the
46 Council abstaining.

1 The Council then turned its attention to the College of Business Administration’s request for an
2 exception of Graduate Faculty membership requirement for Pam Meyer to serve as Graduate
3 Coordinator for the MS program in Accounting. Discussion ensued. Debate generally centered
4 on (1) whether there are different needs and/or expectations for Graduate Coordinators who
5 administer research vs. applied graduate degree programs and (2) whether to grant a waiver of
6 the Graduate Faculty membership expectation to this one individual and/or the degree program
7 more broadly. Motion made to grant a waiver of the requirement that a Graduate Coordinator be
8 a member of the Graduate Faculty to P. Meyer so as allow her to continue to serve in the
9 capacity of Graduate Coordinator for the MS degree program in Accounting but that the
10 Graduate Council further resolves that the next individual who holds this position shall meet all
11 University requirements for Graduate Coordinator. Motion seconded. Motion passed
12 unanimously.

13
14 The Council then resumed the agenda as presented. Motion made to approve the minutes from
15 the February 14, 2017 meeting of the Graduate Council with corrections to page 3, line 39
16 (“desires of the faculty” and “approving the request”) and one correction to the attendance.
17 Motion seconded and passed.

18
19 H. Hurst congratulated C. Parker, member of the Council, for his recent recognition as a
20 recipient of the Ray P. Authement Excellence in Teaching Award.

21
22 **Announcements:**

23
24 The list of degree candidates was presented to the Council. Motion made to accept the list of
25 degree candidates. Motion seconded and passed.

26
27 M. Farmer-Kaiser provided an update on the formation, charges, timeline, and membership of
28 the recently-created ad hoc committees. The membership of the Ad Hoc Committee on Non-
29 Thesis Master’s Degree Minimum Credit Requirement includes M. Kightley (Chair), K.
30 McClung, and K. Hermann. The Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Admission Policies will be
31 chaired by D. Bellar and the membership is presently being finalized. H. Hurst and M. Farmer-
32 Kaiser offered thanks to M. Kightley and D. Bellar for agreeing to lead these important
33 initiatives and indicated they had met with each to discuss the committees’ charge, membership,
34 and timeline. H. Hurst offered that the formal committee charges will be included in packets for
35 the next meeting.

36
37 **Committee Reports:**

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39 Student Appeals Committee – No Report

40
41 Curriculum Committee – No Report

42
43 Fellowship Committee – M. Farmer-Kaiser reported that the committee met and provided the
44 Graduate School with recommendations for recipients and alternatives for the four University
45 Master’s Fellowships. Upon approval of the Graduate School GA and Fellows budgets,
46 fellowship offers will be made. Motion to accept report made and carried.

1 Graduate Faculty Membership Committee – No report.

2
3 **New Business:**

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5 The Council reviewed nominations for Grand Marshal for the Spring 2017 and Summer 2017
6 commencements. H. Hurst invited discussion of nominations. M. Farmer-Kaiser noted that the
7 printed packets contained three additional nominations not included in the electronic materials
8 provided to Council members prior to today’s meeting. The Council considered nominations for
9 eight individuals. After much discussion, the Council selected two individuals and an alternate to
10 be recognized with this important honor. Additionally, the Council decided that, beginning next
11 Spring, a single Call for Nominations will be issued in the Spring semester and honorees will be
12 selected for all three commencement ceremonies (i.e., Spring, Summer, and Fall) for the calendar
13 year at that time.

14
15 H. Hurst then invited M. Farmer-Kaiser to present a request from the Graduate School to revise
16 the University policies governing the graduate admission of “Outstanding Seniors” in the
17 University Catalog. M. Farmer-Kaiser explained that this request is prompted by the discovery
18 that our policy is not in compliance with those set forth by the UL System. In short, the UL
19 System requires that graduating seniors who are considered for early graduate admissions
20 possess “a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.2 on all undergraduate work attempted” while our
21 policy requires only a 3.0 cumulative undergraduate GPA. Motion made to change the policy
22 governing admission of “Outstanding Seniors” as stated in the University Catalog to be in line
23 with the UL System rules. Motion seconded and passed unanimously.

24
25 M. Young called the Council’s attention to her absence (as either present or absent) in the
26 meeting minutes for Fall 2016, although she had been in attendance for all meetings. Motion
27 made to retroactively correct the minutes to reflect M. Young’s attendance. The motion was
28 seconded and passed unanimously.

29
30 H. Hurst thanked D. Olivier and the other members of the Provost Search Committee for their
31 participation and asked if there were any updates. D. Olivier indicated that there had been
32 excellent participation by faculty and students in the on-campus interview process. She further
33 reported that she had met with Dr. Savoie to deliver the report of the committee and now we are
34 awaiting his decision. M. Farmer-Kaiser also offered commendation for the leadership provided
35 by D. Olivier as Chair of the Provost Search Committee.

36
37 Motion made to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded and passed.

38
39 Meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.