

1 Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council

2
3 September 12, 2017

4
5 Members Present: J. Albert (BIOL), D. Baker (MKHP), C. Belden (NURS), C. Browne (MATH), T. Cline
6 (ARCH), H. Damico (CODI), G. Davis (KNES), Mark DeWitt (MUS), S. Duke-Sylvester (BIOL), E. Habib
7 (CIVE), M. Farmer-Kaiser (ex-officio member), K. Hermann-Turner (COUE), R. Hernandez (CHEE), M.
8 Kightley (ENGL), P. Lanier (MGMT), M. Mokhtari (PETE), D. Olivier (EDFL), C. Ratliff (ENGL), C. Richter
9 (GEOL), P. Sheppard (EDCI), K. Smith (ARCH), D. Stevens (MGMT), W. Xu (CHEM)

10
11 Members Absent: P. Das (ECON), H. Hurst (NURS), J. Lemoine (NURS), A. Stearns (CJUS)

12
13 Guests Present: Dr. David Danahar, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
14 David Bellar, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee for Graduate Student Admissions

15
16 D. Olivier called the meeting to order at 2:02pm.

17
18 D. Olivier welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Graduate Council for the 2017-2018 academic
19 year and allowed time for introductions across the Council. She then asked the Council to permit moving
20 Dr. Danahar to the top of the agenda. All were agreeable.

21
22 D. Danahar thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak at the first meeting and expressed his
23 delight at being able to stay at the University in a more permanent capacity. He also thanked M. Farmer-
24 Kaiser for her dedication to graduate education and for keeping him informed on graduate issues. He
25 addressed the following initiatives and projects:

- 26
27 1. Implementation of the University's current strategic plan is ongoing and with that, he indicated
28 that the Strategic Plan Implementation task force continues to review what we've accomplished,
29 where work continues, and where we need to go. Of particular focus is the need to better link
30 resources and support to the areas and initiatives that have been identified and need it most.
31 2. The University's visitation from SACS is approaching, and as such, we all must prepare for the
32 self-study year that will arrive in calendar year 2018. D. Danahar discussed the importance of
33 the University being able to assess areas of strengths and weaknesses as well as where we
34 invest our resources. In 2010, during the last SACS review, the University did not adequately
35 show how expenditures connected to key institutional effectiveness and initiatives. This will be
36 an area of focus as we prepare for the upcoming self-study year, visitation, and review. D.
37 Danahar emphasized that the SACS review will be of utmost concern and focus for him.
38 3. D. Danahar explained that he continues to work with the deans to secure more new positions,
39 especially faculty lines but also staff positions, in hopes of adequately staffing and advancing the
40 University.

41
42 D. Danahar concluded by thanking the Council for the welcoming atmosphere they have created for him
43 in this position. D. Olivier then opened the floor for questions, herself asking if he could address what
44 we've done well in the past. D. Danahar answered, saying that this University is great at articulating
45 needs but that we need to better highlight what we've accomplished in relation to the resources we
46 currently have. S. Duke-Sylvester asked what the major disconnects were in the last SACS report. D.
47 Danahar explained that we have an opportunity to better connect our spending with the University
48 mission and strategic plan. M. Kightley asked how the University might improve its shared governance

1 model, with D. Danahar responding that the University has historically functioned as a top-down
2 institution and added he supports the Strategic Plan's call for more engagement of faculty and staff in
3 governance. D. Olivier asked how we're doing with regard to funding graduate education. D. Danahar
4 answered that while additional support has been provided, there is much work to do in terms of
5 resource allocation, program creation, and faculty hires.

6
7 The Council thanked D. Danahar for his time and for the opportunity to ask questions openly. D.
8 Danahar left the meeting at 2:42pm.

9 10 **Old Business**

11
12 D. Olivier asked the Council for approval to reorder the agenda yet again to allow another guest, Dr.
13 David Bellar, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Student Admissions, to provide his report. All
14 were agreeable.

15
16 D. Bellar reminded the Council of the charge and mission of the Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Student
17 Admissions and explained the earliest efforts of the committee. A survey was distributed to the
18 members of the Ad Hoc Committee to determine baseline thoughts regarding graduate admission
19 requirements while information from peer institutions was collected. Additionally, D. Bellar provided the
20 Committee with a scholarly review of GRE literature as well as the CGS study on holistic application
21 review, which have aided the Ad Hoc Committee in its early work. D. Bellar explained that the Ad Hoc
22 Committee has met once and preliminary discussion has focused predominantly on whether the GRE is
23 an accurate predictor of graduate student success; one possible recommendation may be to make the
24 GRE a program, rather than Graduate School, requirement for admission. Discussion also has focused on
25 conditional admission requirements, GPA thresholds, and letters of recommendation. D. Bellar noted
26 that the Ad Hoc Committee is charged with consulting with the Graduate Coordinators for input. M.
27 Farmer-Kaiser commented, for new Council members, that the charge established a November timeline
28 for a report and recommendations for admission requirement changes and targeted implementation of
29 any changes for Fall 2019; this timeline will allow graduate programs to make any necessary Catalog
30 changes they deem fit prior to implementation. D. Bellar thanked the Council for the time to provide an
31 update and asked that members encourage prompt responses to requests for input from the Ad Hoc
32 Committee. He emphasized that this review needs to be a collective effort.

33
34 D. Olivier thanked D. Bellar for the Ad Hoc Committee's work thus far and for his willingness to update
35 the Council. D. Bellar left the meeting at 3:00pm.

36 37 **Announcements**

38
39 D. Olivier took a moment to explain to members of the Council what materials had been provided to
40 them, including the Graduate Council Handbook (and standing committee descriptions), Council
41 Membership, the Guidelines for Graduate Faculty Membership, the Report of the University Taskforce
42 on Graduate Education Governance, and today's meeting agenda and materials. She also emphasized
43 that attendance at Council meetings is expected from all members.

44
45 The Council then resumed the agenda as listed, reviewing the Council meeting minutes from the May 9,
46 2017 meeting minutes. Motion made to accept the May minutes. Motion seconded and carried.

47

1 D. Olivier presented to the Council applicants to candidacy. Motion made to accept the Applicants to
2 Candidacy report with one correction to spelling. Motion seconded and carried.

3
4 M. Farmer-Kaiser provided a brief update on the Graduate Student Leave of Absence Policy. The policy
5 has received approval of the Provost and has been included in the 2017-2018 University Catalog. Several
6 requests for an official leave of absence have already been received by the Graduate School. D. Olivier
7 applauded the work of the University Committee on Graduate Student Success and Retention for
8 proposing this policy, as the recent applications for official leave show that a need existed.

9 10 **Committee reports**

11
12 Student Appeals – Report from R. Viguerie, prepared by the Graduate School and submitted on his
13 behalf, detailed the August 8, 2017 meeting of the Student Appeals committee. Motion made to accept
14 the report. Motion seconded and carried.

15
16 Curriculum – H. Stone, not present, provided a brief notice to the Council that the Committee had not
17 yet met but rather was in the process of transiting to a new chair and orientating five new members.
18 The Committee will review the backlog of course changes submitted since May in the weeks to come,
19 with a full report expected at the October meeting of the Graduate Council. No motion needed.

20
21 Graduate Faculty – No report.

22
23 Fellowships – No report.

24 25 **New Business**

26
27 The Council considered a request for continuation of thesis committee chair/membership for departing
28 faculty member. M. Farmer-Kaiser explained that a faculty member has taken a position at another
29 university (effective July 31) and thus has requested permission to finish his current master's thesis
30 students. She also provided institutional history by explaining the different ways that the Council has
31 considered such requests in the past. D. Olivier also clarified that, since this request was made on June
32 1, two of the five students in question had graduated and three remain in advanced stages of research.
33 M. Kightley expressed support for the request in principle but suggested the requirement of a co-chair,
34 if nothing else to act as a physical presence here on campus. Further discussion ensued, with the Council
35 agreeing that if the University does not have the expertise to meet the needs of these advanced
36 graduate students, then they should not be penalized at such a late stage in the thesis process. P.
37 Sheppard motioned to allow the faculty member to remain as the thesis chair for the identified
38 students, but requested that the faculty member be made to revise their request to ask to retain chair
39 status rather than to retain graduate faculty status. M. Kightley offered that a revision of the request
40 was not needed as the Council minutes would serve as the official record of what was granted,
41 regardless of how the request was worded. He further suggested that the Council vote on the request in
42 two parts, one addressing ability to chair these committees although no longer a faculty member at UL
43 Lafayette and the other addressing the request to retain graduate faculty status. Motion made to allow
44 the faculty member to continue serving as the thesis chair and voting committee member for the
45 students indicated through Spring 2018. Motion seconded and carried. Additional motion made to deny
46 the faculty member's request to retain graduate faculty status. Motion seconded and carried.

47
48 M. Farmer-Kaiser asked for clarification regarding the recently revised Grand Marshal selection process,

1 including the decision at the March Council meeting to select all three Grand Marshals needed for
2 Spring, Summer, and Fall commencement at once. Although the Graduate School was clear on the desire
3 to consider nominations at once for all three commencement ceremonies, there was uncertainty as to
4 whether the Council wanted call for nominations to be for the academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) or
5 calendar year (Spring, Summer, Fall). The Council reviewed the March meeting minutes, which, D. Olivier
6 pointed out, seem to indicate that the Council planned the new selection process to begin in the Spring
7 for the calendar year. M. Kightley suggested beginning the process in the Fall semester, basing the
8 selection on the academic year, and concluded that there was really no reason to wait to the Spring.
9 Motion made to modify the Council decision on March 14, 2017 to set up the cycle for call for
10 nominations and selection of Grand Marshal for the academic year, beginning in Fall 2017. Motion
11 seconded and carried.

12

13 Both P. Sheppard and C. Ratliff exited the meeting at 3:50pm. Quorum was retained.

14

15 D. Olivier explained that situations requiring Graduate Council approval have continued since the
16 University reinstated Summer commencement. Because certain Graduate Council approvals are needed
17 for graduation clearance in the Summer (e.g., approval of candidacy), the Council Chair has been asked
18 to provide approval of the Council when the body is not in session. Thus, D. Oliver and M. Farmer-Kaiser
19 have asked for guidance on how the Council might allot some formal authority to either an executive
20 committee or the Council Chair during the summer months to offer necessary approvals or input. M.
21 Farmer-Kaiser noted that these needs have arisen each summer since 2014. M. Kightley suggested an
22 executive committee as putting the Chair in a position of unchecked summer authority could lead to
23 problems with other University leadership; he further noted that, because the Chair would have been
24 recently elected at the May meeting, he or she may not possess the knowledge or experience to be fully
25 comfortable making informed decisions alone. The Council seemed in agreement over the creation of an
26 executive committee that could act on the Council's behalf in the Summer months, although M. Dewitt
27 noted that there's no obvious way to select who would serve on that committee. The Council suggested
28 having representation from each college. M. Kightley also suggested limiting the authority of the
29 executive committee based on urgency. P. Lanier seconded, saying that an exhaustive list of abilities
30 could never be listed so placing a restriction on urgency enforces the idea that what can wait should
31 absolutely wait. The Council was in agreement. M. Farmer-Kaiser offered that no changes in policies
32 governing graduate education should be considered when the Council is not in session. D. Olivier agreed
33 to work with M. Farmer-Kaiser to draft a starting point for consideration in October. The Council was
34 agreeable.

35

36 D. Olivier noted that the Council meeting for February 2018 is set to meet during the Mardi Gras holiday,
37 when the University is closed. She suggested moving the February meeting either up or back a week.
38 Motion made to move the February 13, 2018 meeting up to February 6, 2018. Motion seconded and
39 carried. M. Kightley suggested amending the Graduate Council Handbook to move meetings forward
40 when University holidays fall on regular meeting dates.

41

42 Motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded and carried.

43

44 The meeting adjourned at 4:05pm.