

1 **Meeting Minutes of the Graduate Council**

2
3 May 12, 2020

4
5 Members Present: P. Lanier (Chair), A. Barhorst (MCHE), T. Cline (ARCH), H. Damico (CODI), G. Davis
6 (KNES), F. Del Favero (EDFL), S. Kahn (ACCT), J. Geer (ENGL), A. Latiolais (ARCH), J. Lemoine (NURS), D.
7 Khey (CJUS), C. Lenahan (NURS), R. Mielusel (MODL), M. Mokhtari (PETE), C. Parker (HIST), A. Petculescu
8 (PHYS), C. Roche-Wallace (MUS), H. Stone (EDCI), M. Totaro (CMIX), B. Wade (MATH), D. White-Jefferson
9 (NURS), Farmer-Kaiser (ex-officio), A. Barhorst (MCHE), M. Farmer-Kaiser (Ex-Officio)

10
11 Members Absent: Eric Ferré (GEOL), A. Ibrahim (MS COUE), C. Matherne (MGMT), M. Zappi (CHEE)

12
13 P. Lanier called the meeting to order at 2:04pm.

14
15 Motion made to accept the April 7, 2020 meeting minutes with corrections. Motion seconded and
16 carried.

17
18 **Presentation of Applicants to Candidacy**

19 Motion made to accept presentation of applicants to candidacy. Motion seconded and carried.

20
21 **Provost's Report**

22 J. Hebert said that several committees have been assembled to work on the campus reopening plan for
23 the University and that the guiding principle is supporting the health and safety of students, faculty, and
24 staff. In addition, his office and the Office of the President are collaborating with local public health
25 organizations to develop appropriate health mitigation plans. He said that the objective is for the
26 University to move into its phase 1 plan by June 15th; preparing for face-to-face courses in the fall
27 semester and knowing that modifications will have to be made for appropriate social distancing in
28 classes. C. Parker asked J. Hebert about how state and federal relief funding will be used to support
29 research at the graduate level and asked if discretionary funds can be used to pay graduate students. J.
30 Hebert confirmed that the discretionary funds can be used in this way and affirmed that graduate
31 research will continue to be a top priority as the University develops its response plans. He also clarified
32 for F. Del Favero that many summer courses will be remote but that courses that are held in buildings
33 off-campus will have to consider the protocols related to those spaces as well.

34
35 **Committee Reports**

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37 Appeals Committee – No report.

38
39 Curriculum Committee – A report, with action sheet, was submitted to the Graduate School by S. Young
40 stating that, in April, the Curriculum Committee reviewed 26 course change forms and that all 26 were
41 approved with no changes. Motion made to accept the report. Motion seconded and carried

42
43 Fellowships Committee – No report.

44
45 Graduate Faculty Membership Committee – Two reports were provided by C. Ratliff, not present,
46 detailing the 15 applications for membership on the Graduate Faculty. The first report identified the 8
47 applications that did not require Committee review as all three independent review entities (College
48 Dean, Department Head, and College Peer Review Committee) were in agreement with

1 recommendation for appointment at the level requested by the individual applicants. The second report
2 detailed the remaining 7 applications that required review by the Graduate Faculty Membership
3 Committee. The committee recommended appointment in all cases at the level specified. Additionally,
4 the committee asked specifically that the College of Sciences and Department of Biology review and
5 reconcile their criteria and, more generally, that all the colleges remind applicants to include
6 supplemental documents demonstrating that publications are peer reviewed, to expedite and clarify the
7 review process.

8 9 **Old Business**

10 11 **COVID-19 Updates**

12 M. Farmer-Kaiser reported that applicants can now submit Duolingo scores and that the Graduate
13 School has been reassuring applicants that the application process is continuing. She added that I-20s
14 continue to be issued accepted international students seeking an F-1 visa with the hope that they will
15 be able to arrive but that it would be wise for departments and faculty have back-up plans for Fall 2020
16 assistantship needs. She said that there has been a proposal to use residual funds from current budgets
17 to support students who expected to be funded by research grants this summer. With this need in mind,
18 she requested consideration to be given to students who can serve as GTAs for faculty members who
19 are now working remotely over the summer and could use more support as well as doctoral students
20 who will be instructors of record in the fall semester. She reported that at this time 211 graduate
21 students will likely need either time or funding extensions. In addition, doctoral progress reports will be
22 delayed until Fall so as to gather student perspective on expected need for time and funding extensions.
23 She also reported that the Graduate School had purchased and delivered doctoral hoods to all Spring
24 2020 doctoral graduates. She thanked the academic colleges that contributed funds to help make this
25 graduation gift possible. The Graduate School also is covering the cost of archival paper and printing for
26 thesis, dissertation, and synthesis project writers who graduating in May 2020.

27 28 **New Business**

29 30 **Graduate Student Appeal**

31 An appeal was considered for a graduate student who asked to continue in their program despite no
32 longer meeting the minimum GPA requirement. After a discussion of the petition from the student,
33 consideration the initial appeal documents and recommendation of the Graduate Student Appeals
34 Committee, and the departmental response to the student's petition, a motion was made to deny the
35 request. Motion carried with 23 votes in favor of denial and one abstention.

36 37 **Retention Committee Annual Report and Recommendations**

38 D. Olivier provided an overview of the committee's detailed written report that was provided by the
39 Graduate Council and opened discussed on the following key action items under consideration today.

40 41 **Creation of Diversity and Inclusion Standing Committee**

42 D. Olivier introduced the recommendation to create a Graduate Council standing committee to
43 promote diversity and inclusion in graduate education. She requested on behalf of the committee
44 that a standing committee focused on diversity and inclusion would provide sustained, intentional
45 focus on cultivating success and retention, particularly for graduate students from
46 underrepresented groups. She added that the standing committee would apply a broad
47 understanding of diversity, including characteristics such as race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality,
48 age, religion, disability, socioeconomic background, etc. Particular initiatives for the committee

1 would include: cultivating the success of scholars participating in the SREB Doctoral Fellowships
2 Program, assuming the leadership of the James Jackson Community of Scholars, which provides
3 graduate student programming and mentorship, expanding the resources available to the Graduate
4 School to support the recruitment and success of underrepresented students, reviewing existing
5 policies to ensure that they align with the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and
6 proposing new policies to the Graduate Council that promote diversity and inclusion within our
7 graduate programs. A motion was made to accept the proposal creating a Diversity and Inclusion
8 Standing Committee. Motion seconded and carried.
9

10 **Continuation of Statistical Consulting Center**

11 D. Olivier outlined the committee's recommendation to extend the Statistical Consulting Center
12 beyond its pilot year and provided a detailed report of its ongoing use. She also emphasized that
13 after approximately three years of planning for a statistical support center that involved a needs
14 assessment, review of various models for university statistical labs, development of goals and
15 objectives, and finally a pilot year, the University Committee for Graduate Student Success and
16 Retention is disappointed with the commitment of University support. She reported that the pilot
17 year has been very successful and the activity reports, as well as ongoing positive feedback from
18 graduate students, indicate a clear need and appreciation for the services. In addition, she said that
19 the director and one graduate assistant have worked to ensure the success of the Center. She
20 reported that the committee is quite concerned since this initiative appears to be in jeopardy and
21 thus jeopardizes students' ability to complete and improve time to degree. Funding the center
22 promises significant student success, retention, and degree completion. After a discussion of these
23 issues, a motion was made to recommend extending the Statistical Consulting Center for another
24 year and to request that the financial commitment by the University be confirmed for its continued
25 success including: academic year release time for the director, summer support for the director, 12-
26 month GTA support, equipment, materials and resources, and software. Motion seconded and
27 carried.
28

29 **Recommendation: Revision of Official Leave of Absence Policy**

30 A discussion followed on the Retention Committee's recommendations for modifications to the
31 current Leave of Absence Policy. The committee recommended addition of the statement, "A
32 request for a leave of absence from graduate studies must include the reason(s) prompting the
33 request." and the deletion of the following: "...and provide supporting documentation as
34 appropriate. A leave of absence may be granted for medical reasons, family necessity or dependent
35 care, and/or military service. A leave of absence due to financial hardship will not be considered." D.
36 Olivier said that the retention committee's consensus was that it would be in the interest of
37 students for their programs, as well as the Graduate School, to have a sense of why they were
38 requesting a leave of absence without putting the onus on them to provide additional
39 documentation. A motion was made to accept this revision to the Leave of Absence Policy, motion
40 seconded and carried.
41

42 D. Olivier concluded by introducing additional recommendations, including a recommendation for
43 facilitation of graduate student access to University data and research resources, requesting that the
44 University develop a uniform procedure to facilitate graduate student access to University data and
45 research resources, such as Qualtrix, student information, and employee information related to
46 thesis, dissertation, and synthesis project research. In addition, she introduced a recommendation
47 of time and funding extensions due to COVID-19, urging individual graduate programs, the Graduate

1 Council, the Graduate School, and the University to make appropriate adjustments to graduate
2 degree completion time and funding limits. A motion made to accept report as submitted. Motion
3 seconded and carried.
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5 **Recognition of Council Members whose Terms are Ending**

6 P. Lanier thanked G. Davis, M. Mokhtari, H. Damico, J. Geer, R. Mielusel, D. White, M. Totaro, and B.
7 Wade who were completing their terms this year as well as student representatives. J. Miller, P. Byerly,
8 and A. Bekhet.
9

10 **2020-2021 Graduate Council Chairperson Election**

11 The Graduate Council then invited nominated candidates for the chairperson of the body for 2020-2021.
12 Having accepted nomination, J. Albert (BIOL), J. Lemoine (NURS), and C. Parker (HIST) offered remarks as
13 to experience with the Council and vision for the upcoming year, the election was conducted
14 electronically. J. Lemoine was elected as Chairperson for the 2020-2021 academic year.
15

16 M. Farmer-Kaiser thanked P. Lanier on behalf of the entire Graduate Council for her leadership and
17 support over the past two years of service as Graduate Council Chairperson.
18

19 Motion made to adjourn at 3:50. Motion seconded and carried