

GRADUATE COUNCIL Meeting Notes
Tuesday, February 11, 2020 - 2:00-3:30 p.m., Maryland Room

Member in attendance: Fetter (chair), Avilez, Beise, Cohen, Dawkins, Duncan, Enriquez, Fernandez, Jiang, Jones, Kirmani, Klauda, Lawley, McIver, Rabenhorst, Shea, Sprinkle, Waguespack, Washington, Xie, Zhu.

GS Staff: Enekwe, Liu, Oguntolu, van Son, Roberts, Rodgeron, Warrick-Bell, Woodwell.

1. Welcome and announcements

a. Approve the minutes of the November meeting (see attached)

Correction: Item 2.a. "if doctoral students enrolled in 899 are ~~not~~ making satisfactory progress, then they are given a grade of "S".

b. Welcome Assistant Dean Scott Roberts and Counselor Simone Warrick-Bell!

Dean Fetter reported that the Graduate School had two very successful searches resulting in the appointment of Ms. Simone Warrick-Bell as the new Graduate Academic Counselor and Dr. Scott Roberts as the new Assistant Dean and Chief of Operations.

Simone noted that this is a new position. She is open to feedback and ideas members may have. She is available to help: (1) if a student has a mental health issue and you have already been contacted by BETA; (2) if a student needs counseling or has behavioral health issues; (3) if a student is considering a leave of absence and they want resources, e.g., hospitalization; (4) if a student is returning from a leave of absence with recommendations to get counseling; (5) if a student would like to step down from a doctoral program and pursue a master's degree. In addition, she can support communication with a student of concern by talking with the student and those involved about how to help them legally. She would be happy to review and explain the Red Folder with faculty or staff and advise on how to use it.

Scott stated that he received his PhD in social psychology here at UMD. In his new position, he intends to serve as an advocate and bridge. He invited Council members to contact him if there is anything he can do to help.

c. GA time-use study update (see attached)

Liana Sayers is not here but there is a correction in the slides. TAs and GAs were reversed.

d. Health insurance update (see attached)

Information about the new requirement for all graduate students to have health insurance is now on the Graduate School website, <https://gradschool.umd.edu/health-insurance>. A letter will go out to all admitted students soon. Graduate assistants can sign up for SHIP or state plan, but teaching assistants do not have the state plan option.

On September 1, we will look to see who is enrolled in SHIP and the State employee plan, ask those not enrolled to provide insurance information, and work with the SHIP administrator to verify the information for accuracy. By September 15, it will be hard to get a refund. If the process goes well, we may move to the undergraduate process for verification.

e. EnrollmentRX update

We are proceeding with the new admissions system. We have a contract with SalesForce to provide the EnrollmentRX system, which will replace Hobsons. Everyone involved with graduate admissions will need to be trained, including faculty who are reviewers of applications. Training will take place in May. EnrollmentRX will go live on June 1 for Fall and Spring 2021.

f. Academic Analytics PhD career outcome data

Academic Analytics has been tracking 6241 PhDs that were awarded over the last ten years. In April we will get a report from AA, and it will be available on Tableau at <https://reports.umd.edu/>. We are hoping it will stimulate discussion within PhD programs about whether their programs are adequately preparing students for the workforce.

g. gradSERU update

h. NASEM report, UMD working group, and BTAA conference on mentoring

In October The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine published a report on best practices in mentoring. Blessing Enekwe, who is in charge of mentoring for the Graduate School, has formed a working group to look for ways to increase awareness of best practices. The Big Ten Academic Alliance is having a workshop in two weeks on mentoring. We can send six people. They hope to have a satellite session, and we will send an announcement about accessing that.

i. TerpTax

The website is close to being ready. There are 900 appointment slots available. We will send announcement soon.

j. Events:

GradTerp Exchange: Feb 5, Mar 3, Apr 14, May 5 at Ledo's Pizza

Ph.D. Pathways Conference, May 1, Stamp (for non-academic career paths)

Candidacy Reception, May 4, 4-5:30 pm, University House

Celebration of Doctoral Graduates, May 11, 4-6 pm, Stamp; Jim Gates, speaker (new date to be confirmed)

Fellowship and Award Celebration: May 13, 3-5 pm, Grand Ballroom Lounge, Stamp

k. Coronavirus.

Dean Fetter stated that we have 2000 graduate students from China. This presents problems for us and our peer institutions. He sent guidance via email for current students, but those students who are now in China cannot access their Gmail accounts. Students enrolled in 899, 898, and 799 can remain enrolled and keep their assistantship if their advisor certifies that they can get their work done remotely. If they cannot enroll, we can give them a 100% refund and extend their enrollment. This is affecting some master's programs

in the Business School, and we are working with them on a method to ensure English language proficiency. All ETS testing centers are shut down until March 1 or later.

ACTION ITEMS

2. Graduate credit for undergraduates policy (see attached).

We changed the graduate policy but not the undergraduate policy. We just made the change to limit the number of graduate credits an undergraduate can take. This policy does not touch a master's 4+1. It applies only to the undergraduate who decided to take graduate courses on their own and then later wants to apply them to a graduate degree.

There was discussion about completing master's in one year if an undergraduate student comes in with 9 credits taken as undergraduate.

The vote was tabled by consensus.

3. Transfer credit policy (see attached)

The Graduate School received an inquiry from the Dept. of Anthropology (ANTH) regarding a student in another graduate program that was being discontinued. ANTH requested permission to recognize 9 credits. The existing policy said it must be approved by the Graduate Council. Dean Fetter was suggesting that GC members delegate that authority to him to make a decision about whether to accept the credits. In another department, an advanced PhD student was following his advisor here. The program thought that the limit on transfer credits applied, but there are no course requirements for PhD. It is up to the advisor to decide if the student meets the requirements for candidacy. The transfer credit policy does not apply.

Beise pointed out the incongruence of the policy being about the transfer of graduate credit yet the approval is for 400 level courses.

Fetter agreed and suggested that the policy be amended to delete that bullet. The Council agreed by consensus.

The policy was approved unanimously.

4. Credit for alternative learning policy (see attached)

Students have asked for credit for courses taken at the Smithsonian, which is not a degree-granting institution. There is no provision in existing policy to accept or approve credit for the course. Language in the existing policy refers to credit by examination. In the proposed policy, we have added language about credit by petition, which would include the Smithsonian course. An advisor would petition on behalf of the student to receive credit for that course, and the petition would require several levels of approval.

The policy was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Funding for Ph.D. students taking unpaid summer internships (see attached)

The National Academies report on Graduate Education for the 21st Century recommended that students get exposure and experience outside of academia and to learn how the environment in a national laboratory or non-profit affects the work they do.

The Graduate School proposes to provide a small number (no more than 20) of fellowships for PhD students doing unpaid internship in the summer. It is difficult to know what the demand will be until we offer it. The fellowship amount would be approximately \$5000. A student's application for a fellowship would have to be endorsed by the advisor. The intention (and requirement) is to expand the student's professional development. Among the Big 10 schools, only Michigan and Purdue have programs similar to this.

The following points were raised in the ensuing discussion:

- a. How would conflict of interest be prevented if faculty benefitted personally from an internship arrangement?*
- b. Awards could be on a sliding scale. If the internship employer provided some funds, UMD would make up the difference up to total of \$5k.*
- c. A letter from the internship provider would need to accompany a student's application.*
- d. Could we allow an internship provider to pay for travel, etc.?*
- e. Could a student work on a political campaign? Dean Fetter said there would be a faculty selection committee that would review proposals for propriety. The advisor would have to make the case for it.*
- f. Would it take away funds from the Graduate Summer Research Fellowship? Fetter said the GS would not reduce the number of GSRFs lower than 50 to make this happen.*
- g. Could a student apply for both the Internship and the GSRF? Fetter replied that if a student applies to both, the college/school would decide which one to put forward to the GS. The same GS selection committee would be used for both awards.*

6. Collective bargaining (see attached)

This issue has been brought before General Assembly for the past three years when it passed in the House but not Senate. This year it could pass in the Senate. The Dean wants everyone to be aware of the impact and possible consequences. The Bill includes research assistants (but not so for our peers). The terms of the contract have no bearing on degree requirements. It would cover their duties as TA/GA/RA but not their degree requirements. Please read the information sheet. There are possible tax implications. Graduate assistants do not meet the IRS definition of employee, so they don't have to pay payroll taxes, etc., but if they want employment benefits such as sick leave, they would have to pay taxes as an employee. Tuition benefits could then be taxable.

Fetter asked members to help improve this document by sending him their comments. He encouraged members to stimulate discussion in their units.

When asked what the students hope to get from collective bargaining, Dean Fetter said that they hope to get higher stipends (Rutgers), increased benefits, and better working conditions (work hours). He added that we do have a Meet-and-Confer process to address these issues, and as a result, we now have a

grievance policy and procedures in place. But we haven't met all of their demands, so that's why they want unionization.

Larry Washington suggested that we modify the MIT living wage to include adjustments for graduate assistants. Fetter said that minimum stipends are now above the cost of attendance, so students can't qualify for federal student loans. There will be testimony in the Senate, and if they pass it, the bill will go to the Governor for signature. The value of tuition is more than \$30k per year. The out-of-state tuition rate is considered to be the full cost of education. We want the information we provide to graduate students to be accurate and not misleading.

7. Other agenda items for Spring 2020

- a. Zero-credit courses; GRAD courses
- b. Dual master's degree policy
- c. PhD student support and student success (right-sizing 2.0)
Data shows that 4-5 years of full funding correlates to success.
- d. Eliminating use of GRE cut-off scores
- e. Appointments of graduate students as lecturers
- f. Research assistantships supported on (*foundation*) grants that disallow tuition charges
In that case, who is on the hook for tuition? Right now there is no policy.
- g. Training and certification of teaching assistants

Dean Fetter announced that the Provost wants us to work on a change-of-advisor policy. Wisconsin has been reconsidering their policies.