

Minutes of the Graduate Council (GC) for May 1, 2018
12:30pm-1:30pm in the Maryland Room

Present: Franke, Fetter, Welch, Green, Steiner, Martin, Goodman, Maddux, Klauda, Weeks, Lucas, Beise, McIver, Bakhshi, Robertson, Zambrana, Besharov, Dougherty

Staff: Strausser, Long

- I. Welcome
 - a. The meeting started at 12:33.
- II. Approval of the minutes for March 27, 2018 meeting
 - a. Meeting minutes were approved with no changes.
- III. Proposed Graduate Policy Changes
 - a. Graduate Student Grievance policy (action)
 - i. We went through this line by line at the last meeting. After this meeting, the policy will go to Senate. It needs to go to Senate because it involves faculty and the faculty code of conduct. The Graduate School will work with Faculty Affairs to create a joint proposal and the grievance policy will be part of that. However, until it goes to Senate, the Graduate School will have a process of handling grievances covered in this policy.
 - ii. Opened the conversation up to discussion this and there were no questions or comments.
 - iii. Everyone in attendance voted in favor of this policy. We will keep everyone informed in the fall on how this is going.
- IV. Discussion Topics
 - a. Defense remote participation
 - i. We reviewed the proposed changes.
 - ii. We are now allowing for multiple remote participants, but the candidate, chair and the Dean's Representative must all be present. We are trying to preserve the integrity of the dissertation process.
 - iii. The policy now states that the defense must be recorded- both audio and video. This is included so that if anyone ever asks about the process of the defense, there is a recording to prove that everyone was on the video for the entire duration of the defense.
 - iv. The Councilors raised some concerns:
 1. Several councilors noted that there are always problems with technology during defenses and they are concerned that they problem is only going to get worse if we allow more people to participate remotely.
 2. If now the core faculty that are part of the dissertation committee don't have to present, then there are concerns with the integrity of the dissertation defense.

3. Questions arose around FERPA compliance and storage of the videos. We noted that this is something that would need to be explored before the policy can be approved.
 4. Councilors stated that they are not in support of recording the audio and video for the dissertation. Some suggested there are other ways to capture if someone was on the call for the entire time.
 5. There were issues with the remote-participation and that this may now allow people to not come in because they aren't usually on campus during the day of the dissertation.
 6. We discussed the dean's representative and concerns with that role. Many councilors mentioned that the dean's representative and faculty are not always well versed on the policies of the defense. Adding this policy might contribute to issues or confusion with the representatives and faculty. We discussed that ways to overcome this are to have a 'best practices' document that is given to dean's representatives when they are asked to participate in the defense. Also, there could be language in the form the dean's representative uses to sign off on the defense.
 7. Councilors asked how the remote participants would sign off on the defense. We talked about adding something about digital signatures. We will look into the UMD policy regarding digital signatures.
- v. The Councilors also voiced support for this policy:
1. There are often many faculty in a department that are travelling for the semester of the defense, which would usually exclude them from participating. However, with this new policy, more faculty will be available to participate in committees. This benefits students and the diverse perspectives these faculty can bring to their defense.
 2. This also allows students to include experts who might be further away from the University to now participate.
 3. One councilor noted that this policy is in line with the real world and how people are not participating in meetings, events, etc in remote ways.
- b. Graduate Council structure
- i. In the internal review of the GC, we considered about strategic thinking of the GC. The structure of the GC is large and unwieldy. The structure has changed and we are thinking of how the GC can be most effective when considering graduate education on campus and to get the buy in from faculty on campus.
 - ii. We are considering a new plan of organization of the GC with different structures. This plan would be brought to Senate. We want to form a

subcommittee to look at the plan of organization, so please email Dean Fetter if you would like to be a part of that.

V. New Business

VI. Closing Remarks and Thanks

a. Dean Fetter thanked all of the councilors that terms were ended.

VII. Adjourn

a. We adjourned at 1:33pm.