

GRADUATE COUNCIL Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 10:00am – 11:30am, Maryland Room

Attendance: Steve Fetter, Jeff Franke, Ryan Long, Elizabeth Beise, Sara Grun, Kevin McIver, Min Xie, proxy for Annie Rappeport, Martin Rabenhorst, Michael Dougherty, Kerry Green, Jessica Fernandez, Larry Washington, Christopher Hanson, Liana Sayer, Wayne Slater, Sheung Lu

- I. Welcome
 - a. Meeting began at 10:03 am

- II. Approval of the minutes for February 18, 2019 meeting
 - a. Approved 10:04

- III. Announcements
 - a. Grad SERU Survey - Being done with a several other universities including some other Big 10 universities.
 - b. Encourage students to nominate themselves for a position in GSG

- IV. Policy Decisions
 - a. Professional Practice Doctorate Policy:
 - i. Policy not yet approved. It was suggested to have Graduate PCC look at the policy before the Council votes on approving the policy. Associate Dean Ryan Long will schedule time at the next Grad PCC meeting on April 1.
 - ii. Approval of policy is deferred to the next Grad Council Meeting on Tuesday, April 23, 2019.
 - b. Leave of Absence Policy revisions. Policy accommodates for mental health conditions and addresses a path for the return to campus. It helps to ensure students are not placed into the same situation that led to the mental health condition. This policy has been vetted across campus, including General Counsel. Suggestion to begin this policy at the start of the Fall 2019 semester. Grad Council did not engage in further discussion. Policy approved at 10:14 am.

- V. Discussion Topics
 - a. English Proficiency Standards (Dean Fetter presented a PowerPoint)

Graduate Council is responsible for setting standards for English proficiency standards for admission to the Graduate School. Looking at our own students and determining the relationship between TOEFL test scores and student success will help us determine whether our current standards are set appropriately.

Our minimum TOEFL score is now 100, and programs can have higher standards. Some measures of student success—GPA, percent master’s students completing in three years, percent doctoral students advancing to candidacy in four years—are correlated with TOEFL score. In general, negative effects are apparent for

students with TOEFL scores of below 95, and particularly for scores below 90. Lowering the minimum would likely result in more applications as shown in the slide presentation. Also, the data show that the enrollment yield is higher for students with lower TOEFL scores.

Dean Fetter invited the Graduate Council to comment on whether or not the Graduate School should investigate lowering the minimum score, and he suggested that the Grad Council create a working group for this.

Comments from Council Members:

- The analysis presented was for all graduate students, but Grad Council members would like to see the difference between PhD and Masters.
- MEI is required if you are a TA and MEI costs the program money. If we begin admitting students with lower TOEFL scores, there could be more MEI costs.
- F1 visa requirements required that students need to be fully admitted not provisionally admitted. Other tools for English proficiency include the Bridge Program and VOXY.
- Lowering the Grad School minimum requirement would allow programs more flexibility to admit students fully.
- GS waives the TOEFL requirement if the student has a master's from an US English speaking program. This could be another matter that needs to be addressed.
- Council members want to understand why we are looking into this. The analysis shows higher TOEFL scores create better success. Why should we consider lowering the score? Do we want to increase the number of applications? Do we want to increase enrollment in the MEI classes? It's not clear why we want to reconsider the standard. Dean Fetter explained the importance of doing this analysis so the data can speak for itself. Determining the relationship between TOEFL and student success will help us determine whether or not our minimum levels are good as is or if they should change.
- Student member of Graduate Council indicated that graduate student success is related to more things than just the TOEFL score. There are other factors that come into play.
- Dean Fetter explained that there is more analysis that we can do – PhD vs. masters, professional masters vs. academic masters. Do we see similar patterns with GRE scores? Discussion on this matter will be on the agenda at a future meeting.

VI. New Business

- a. None

VII. Adjourn at 11:36 am

(Next meeting, Tuesday, April 23, 2019 from 9:30-11am in the Maryland Room, MMH)