

Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

November 9 2020

Unapproved---as of Dec 7 (to be approved at upcoming December meeting)

Enclosures are part of these minutes by reference:

- Chair's meeting slides (including slides for slides for various reports also)
- Dean's meeting slides

Attendance: Racicot, Zide, Yanich, Griffin, Lenhoff, Hutchison, Purciello, Steinbrecher, Ford, Kane, Botello, King, Zurakowski, Miller, Wang, Bell, Maresca, Heyn, Okoye, Tepsuporn, Martin, Watson, Rossi, Dobler, Braun, Kwansa, Corbett, McConnell, Pic, Caplan, Thomas, Healy, Rechsteiner, Chan, Safiyah, Alex, Wei, Johnson, Bais, Salisbury, Silbernagel, Davis, Biswas, Corbett, Perry, Patterson, Sarkar, White, Riodan, Laux

(Attendance is assessed from Zoom screens.)

- Meeting convened at 3:30PM via Zoom.
- Minutes and agenda approved.
- Dean's comments (see his slides, included in these minutes)
 - Committees for strategic plan work mostly set up. Expect to finish on previously announced schedule
 - Covid19 related topics
 - Post-docs are exempt from 5% furloughs, as previously announced
 - Grad College office will be closed on furlough days
 - Some programs are choosing to waive the GRE for admission this year. SLATE can accommodate this choice, and can hide GRE from Committee's if desired by program
 - Program Director monthly meetings are underway (second Fridays). Inventorying peer mentoring efforts on campus is a major thrust right now.
 - College wants to send clear message to take care of grad students now, due to impact of isolation due to the pandemic. Lines of communication and feedback especially important. Please help them pivot on research objectives if needed. Help them consider likely future labor market opportunities. Help them know to pay attention to self-care. Support and leverage faculty advisors. Messages are going out in various ways.
 - Data Dashboard has been rolled out in alpha trial fashion. Comments being collected. One outstanding question: Should all data be viewable by everyone or selectively? What data by whom? The data are available already in other forms, but it is especially easy to view in this form. (Various comments followed from floor, all positive on sharing information among all programs.)
 - Deadlines for graduate awards are posted, several have been moved up in time based on recent comments that early decisions and offers help.

SLATE will be the platform for inputting nominations. UNIDEL Distinguished Scholars deadlines have been changed to reflect the academic year. Nomination limits now scale with program size (2 to 4 students, depending). Departments may now submit their grad student mentoring plan to support nominations.

- A competitive counteroffer program is being launched out of UNIDEL funds, with a possible one-time \$5K award. Will use a rolling process.
 - Update on leaves for grad students. There is a maternity and a bereavement policy, but has not been a vacation policy. One should be developed.
 - Idea of prioritizing competitive counteroffers substantially for diversity candidates arose from floor, and received positive comments. Discussion followed on how to use information from applicants and internally to make this work better. It was noted that current diversity may or may not reflect extent of program efforts for diversity---also reflects funding available, etc.
- Standing Committee Reports
 - Grad students (Famatta Perry) (see her slides, included in these minutes)
 - Problem noted: Increases in fees were poorly communicated—reasons not communicated e.g., for fee breakdown. Repeated questions to College needs to get information. In future, consider to use standalone “priority” email for such key communications, or possibly focused web mechanism with full info. Students need to be well informed about admin decisions that affect their welfare.
 - Question: Could fees be built into fringe rates or some part of an award, so these things don’t fall to students. Answer: It depends on the sponsor and their rules. Dr. Riordan offered to investigate to see if there are some alternatives to help. Dean's Comment: A grad student newsletter goes out every two weeks. Individual emails tend not to be read. Is GSG saying they prefer different?
 - Problem noted: Additional communication concerns. Emails from Departments can be very long. More and less important info is often mixed, making it hard to find the news. Perhaps separate out graduate student “events notifications” from grad student “crucial news,” ie information on decisions that affects students’ lives. Use centralized source for key or urgent info for all grad students. “Straight to the point” is best.
 - Discussion followed about best ways to get essential and ‘of interest’ news out. Dean notes that too many direct emails lead to them not being read. He will work on organizing the newsletter to make these points in a categorized way.
 - Financial concern noted: With students being mainly off-campus, they worry about costs for printing and office supplies. Right now students must cover these personally, will be a bigger issue in the spring

- Interdisciplinary Curriculum Committee (Richard Braun) (see his slides, included in these minutes)
 - Met on Oct 19
 - Discussed criteria for interdisciplinary programs. Need to clarify what sorts of program should be on college website.
 - Looking at proposals for both new and moving-to-grad-college programs. Submit deadline is November 20 this year. Earlier submission may be needed given the levels of approval.
 - Several new programs are on path for Graduate College inclusion path (see slides). Graduate College Council should consider these at December meeting. These will be available through Curriculog.
 - Deadlines discussion (see slide). Dates are tight to keep a program on approval schedule. Proposed deadlines may be moved earlier in future, and changes could become part of Graduate Council bylaws.
- Fellowships Committee (Don Watson): Nothing to report
- College Reports: CANR (Harsh Bais)
 - College encompasses agriculture, animal and food science, applied economics and statistics all in college—several departments
 - Various degree program (see list on slides)
 - A current issue: Revenue return for non-thesis programs under new budget model. Faculty teaching loads for such programs are heavy.
 - Each program described in terms of topic, nature of education, and target employment. See slides.
 - Faculty are often members of interdisciplinary and institute programs outside the College
 - Size: 200+ grad students, 800+ undergrads, and 76 faculty
 - Challenges: Administrative support is lacking, support for assessment is not consistent across programs, and oversight and coordination of interdisciplinary programs. Hard to get cohorts of efficient size.
- Old business.
 - Consideration of Mission and Vision Statement as previously proposed by Dean (see text included in these minutes).
 - Brief discussion, including whether grad excellence can be the goal when not all graduate programs in Graduate College or under its control.
 - Vote: 26 yes and 0 no on mission (26-0 in favor). Passed.
 - Consideration of approval of new standing committees as previously proposed by Chairperson.
 - Presence of quorum questioned. Discussion and vote deferred to next meeting.
- Meeting adjourned.

Link to Access Meeting Recording:

https://udel.zoom.us/rec/share/-t7ghOFHSj1_uPLrIEXxBxwkyDg_XZ-Fkyhnx8kjMR2YWWp1tJZLOTGs1BP3RSUp.n3lu0moXMklIsNac

Access Passcode: ^mTr4Uv1



Grad College Council

3rd Meeting of Fall 2020

9 November 2020



Agenda

Agenda Items

1. Call to order
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. Approval of agenda
 - b. Approval of minutes (from October meeting)
3. **Dean's report and questions (Dean Rossi)**
 - a. Update on Mission and Vision Statement (see New Business for vote)
 - b. Strategic plan update
 - c. Any updates on Covid-19 Issues and Policies, Postdoc furlough revision, Q&A period
 - d. Grad Director Meetings (monthly)
 - e. Peer mentoring (current status and new initiatives)
 - f. Data dashboard – in alpha testing (tied in with UD-SIS)
 - g. Updated award announcements (application deadlines and timelines)
 - h. Competitive counter-offer program (in place for 2021 admits) – money for 50
 - i. Vacation, family and bereavement leave policies – via Student Life committee
4. **Standing reports**
 - a. Graduate student report –Famatta Perry, CANR rep
5. **Committee reports**
 - a. Interdisciplinary Curriculum Committee (Richard Braun)
 - b. Graduate Student Life Committee (Amy Griffin)
 - c. Awards and Fellowships Committee (Don Watson update)
6. **College Liaison Reports**
 - a. CANR grad programs
 - b. Activities across Colleges that relate to Grad College mission
7. **Action Items**
 - a. Discussion, motion and vote on changes to the bylaws (addition of Mission and Vision Statements)
 - b. Discussion, motion and vote on the establishment of new standing committees (Parcells proposal)
 - i. Equity and Inclusion¹
 - ii. Data Management and Assessment²
 - iii. Communication and Marketing³
8. **New business**
 - a. Any new business can be raised by a council member or administrator for discussion.
9. **Adjournment**



Call to Order / Secretary's Report

Agenda Items

- Call to order
- Secretary's Report
 1. Approval of agenda
 2. Approval of minutes (from October meeting)

Report of the Graduate College Dean

3. Dean's report and questions (Dean Rossi)

- Update on Mission and Vision Statement (see New Business for vote)
- Strategic plan update
- Any updates on Covid-19 Issues and Policies, Postdoc furlough revision, Q&A period
- Grad Director Meetings (monthly)
- Peer mentoring (current status and new initiatives)
- Data dashboard – in alpha testing (tied in with UD-SIS)
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- Vacation, family and bereavement leave policies – via Student Life committee

Standing Reports

- a. Graduate student report: – Topics of concern to grad student councilors and others (Famatta Perry, GSG, CANR)

Graduate Student Concerns

11-9-2020

Student Fees

Problems:

1. Increase in student fees was poorly communicated.
2. Reasons for the increase (ie. fee breakdown) were not adequately communicated.

Proposed Solutions to Limited Information Concerning Student Fees

Provide all students with a documented list or breakdown of fees and rationale behind increase.

Provide better ways to disseminate important information, such as:

1. Stand alone “priority” email that addresses this concern,
2. List or spreadsheet made available to students and email notifications to access the list

Why?

Students should be well informed about decisions made by the administration that affect their welfare.

Communication

Problem 1: Very long emails, a lot of information embedded in these emails.

Problem 2: Lack of distribution of urgent information. For example, building closures and Covid outbreaks.

Problem 3: Concerns or reality of overwhelming students with emails/information.

Proposed Solutions to Issues with Communication

Direct/stand alone emails: not emails containing multiple levels of buried or nested information.

Create an effective line of communication that is not dependent on respective college staff sending out information, i.e. **Centralized** means of communication for distributing important and urgent information to graduate students.

If emails or information sent out to students were more focused and to the point, they would be less overwhelming.

Why?

Because important information that directly affects graduate students work, education or welfare should be made easily accessible and available in a timely manner.

Coming Soon

Financial and Stationery Concerns

Not being on campus

Stationery supplies are expensive

Committee Reports

5. Committee reports

- Interdisciplinary Curriculum Committee (Richard Braun, chair)
- Graduate Student Life Committee (Amy Griffin, chair)
 - No report from Committee, Amy is on NIH Study Section
- Awards and Fellowships Committee (Don Watson or new chair)

ICC Report (slide 1 of 3)

- The ICC met on Monday Oct 19th virtually (upcoming: 11/16, 12/7)
- Review criteria for interdisciplinary programs were discussed and accepted; to be posted on the grad college website
- Proposals for interdisciplinary programs due by November 20, 2020:
 - de novo interdisciplinary programs to be founded in Grad College, Pathway B
 - existing programs to move to Grad College, Pathway A
- In future years, we expect to have these deadlines:
 - Pathway A proposals: October 31 (same as CAS and CHS deadline)
 - Pathway B proposals: November 15
- Especially for Pathway A, there can be many levels of approval.

ICC Report (slide 2 of 3)

- These programs are expected in ICC this fall (in [curriculog](#) already):
 - [MS in Data Science](#)
 - [MA/PhD in Education and Social Policy](#)
 - MS/PhD in Microbiology
 - MS/PhD in Water Science and Policy
 - PhD in Neuroscience
- The proposals approved by the ICC will be presented to the Graduate Council at the December meeting



ICC Report (slide 3 of 3)

- The deadlines for programs take into account:
 - CAS and CHS college deadlines (Oct 29, 2020)
 - Registrar deadline for new courses (Dec 7, 2020)
 - Challenge period (Feb 18-28, 2021)
 - March meeting of the Faculty Senate's Graduate Studies Committee (3/2021)
- The proposed deadlines may end up in the Grad Council bylaws.
- The ICC plans to produce a summary of necessary ingredients for developing interdisciplinary programs

College Liaison Reports

- a. College Program Reports:
 - College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR)
 - Presented by Dr. Harsh Bais, PLSC

- b. Activities across Colleges that relate to Grad College mission

7. Action Items

A. Discussion, motion, and vote on changes to the bylaws (addition of Mission and Vision Statements)

B. Discussion, motion and vote on the establishment of new standing committees

1. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion¹
2. Data Management and Assessment²
3. Communication and Marketing³

8. Introduction of any Additional New Business

- All Councilors have the right to introduce New Business items



Closing business

Timing of next meeting

- Monday, December 14, 2020, 3:30 PM

9. Adjournment

Graduate College Council

Dean's Remarks

9 Nov 2020

Update: Mission and Vision Statement

We will advocate for our graduate students' **and postdoctoral fellows'** success and well-being in all parts of their lives on and off campus.

providing opportunities for professional development so that graduate students **and postdoctoral fellows** can achieve their career aspirations,

supporting, developing and enhancing opportunities for graduate **and postdoctoral** research, scholarship and creative expression.

Update: Strategic planning

~~October 30~~ November 17: Working groups charged.

~~November 30~~ December 15: Working groups deliver recommendations objectives, metrics, action items and reasoning.

December through January ~~15~~ 22: Graduate College coordinates working group recommendations.

January 15 through February ~~15~~ 22: Draft of integrated strategic plan released to working groups for revision and polishing.

February ~~15~~ 22-March ~~15~~ 22: Draft strategic plan released to Graduate Council for comment.

March 30: Release of Graduate College Strategic Plan.

Update: COVID 19

- Postdoctoral fellows and researchers are exempt from the furlough program.
- Graduate College closed Nov 23-25 and Dec 21-23.
- GRE: Some programs are choosing to waive their GRE requirement for this year.

Update: Program Directors' meetings

- The Graduate College team is working with Program Directors and Coordinators directly on the second Friday of every month.
- Topics include fellowships, marketing, sharing best practices, and discussion of operational issues related to our graduate programs.
- One major thrust for this year is to inventory, evaluate and support peer mentoring across campus.

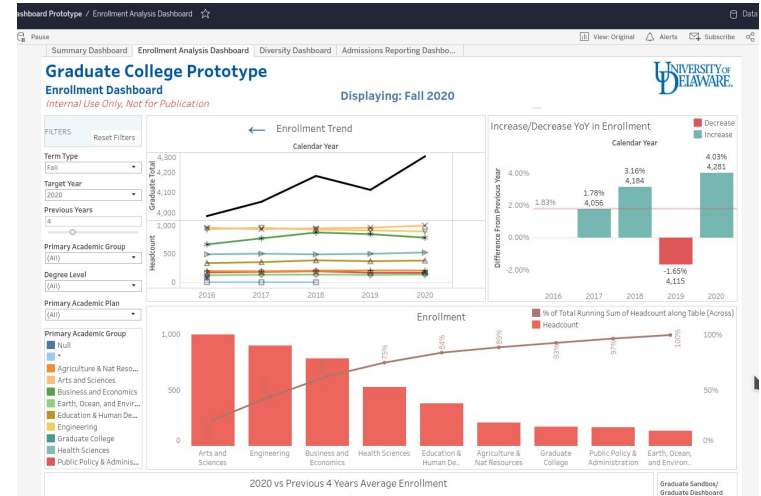
For Program Directors:

Let's take care of our graduate students.

1. Keep lines of communication open with every individual graduate student.
2. Provide feedback to every individual graduate student.
3. Help graduate students pivot on different research goals and objectives.
4. Help graduate students chart their courses to completion and into careers.
Encourage flexibility.
5. Emphasize self-care. Encourage graduate students to seek help.
6. Support and leverage the faculty advisers.

Update: Data dashboard

- Currently being tested by 3 Deans' offices and 2 graduate program directors to identify problems with features and deployment.
- It presents enrollment, diversity and admissions summary and trend information.
- We will gradually expand the trial after resolving any problems.
- Outstanding question: Should data for all programs be viewable by everyone?



Update: Award deadlines

- Calls for nominations for Graduate Scholars, Doctoral Fellows, Dissertation Fellows and Unidel Distinguished Graduate Scholars are posted on the website.
- New: Nominations will be submitted through Slate.
- New: Unidel Distinguished Graduate Scholars dates have been aligned to the academic year.
- New: Nomination limits scale with program size.
- New: Departments may submit their graduate program mentoring plan.

Update: Unidel Competitive Counteroffer Program

- Objective: Attract students to UD who would otherwise have chosen to go elsewhere.
- Process: If an admitted student shares an offer from a competitive institution, the program director may nominate that student for a competitive counteroffer from the Graduate College.
- When: Rolling process.
- What: The Graduate College will supplement the UD offer with a one-time, \$5000 award.

Update: Vacation leave for graduate students

- UD has a maternity, paternity policy for graduate students.
- UD has a leave of absence/bereavement policy for graduate students.
- UD does not have a vacation policy for graduate students.
- The Graduate College has drafted a proposal and submitted to the GCC Student Life Committee.

Questions?

