

**USA Graduate Council Meeting Minutes**  
**3/24/22 @ 3 PM**  
**Faculty Club & Zoom**



**Members Present:** Elizabeth Adams, Eric Loomis, Mark Taylor, Gwendolyn Pennywell, Debra Chapman, Robert Cloutier, Leigh Minchew, Ben Lee, Ryon McDermott, Timothy Sherman, Joyce Pittman, Alexandria Green, Todd Andel, Delwar Hossain, Harold Pardue, DeAnna Cobb, Lorene Flanders, Norma Jean Tanner, Kelly Osterbind, Heather Nix, Brittany Seals, Kelly Osterbind

**Absent:** James Stefurak, Marie Migaud, Blair Saale, Kevin West

**Guests:** Ashley Gibson, Angie O'Neal, Nancy Rice, Madhuri Mulekar, Avery Robinson

*Agenda and materials distributed prior to the meeting.*

1. **Approval Process of New Programs** (Ashley Gibson) – A handout was disbursed on new programs added in 2021 and 2022. The program review process was discussed. New programs must be reviewed internally by Academic Affairs and the relevant curriculum committee, as well as the Graduate Council, before being submitted to ACHE for approval. ACHE is now on social media and offers an online portal for program submissions.
2. **Dean's Report** (Harold Pardue)-An overview of the Graduate School budget was presented. Enrollment for the Graduate School is doing very well with increases noted in several programs. Angie O'Neal was introduced. She is interning with the Graduate School for her research on Graduate Student Services. She noted that many graduate students are unaware of the services we currently offer. A survey on graduate student service needs is being completed. She will meet with a graduate student representative from the Graduate Student Association, and the results will be shared with the Graduate Council. Dr. Hossain brought up that he is encountering students who would rather work for minimum wage than work as a Graduate Assistant due to the wage disparity. Dr. Pardue responded that some solutions are currently available such as decreasing the total number of GA positions per program to increase individual stipends, as well as including GA positions in grant proposals, and agreed that our GA stipends do need to be more competitive.
3. **Webadmit/Slate** (Eric Loomis and Harold Pardue)-Slate is already in place and there would be no cost involved in switching the graduate programs over to Slate. We would lose the Webadmit marketing function, but Sal Liberto agreed to take over marketing for graduate programs and we would hire additional marketing personnel. We would save approximately \$6,000.00 per month by not renewing the contract with Webadmit. This change would not affect Nursing or Allied Health who have their own CAS systems in place. Another advantage is there would no longer be separate yearly admission cycles in Slate. The migration over to Slate is projected to happen in the Spring semester of next year.
4. **Graduate Certificate in Applied Statistics** (Madhuri Mulekar)-There is an increased need across disciplines for knowledge of statistics. This program is the first step in accessing the need for a master's program in this subject area. Could be geared towards specific disciplines. Nationwide, there is an increase in statistics related jobs which offer a desirable salary. Local industry has expressed interest in sending employees to the certificate program to enhance their job performance/knowledge base. The certificate program would offer 4 courses for completion and take 2-4 semesters to complete based on the student's needs. Motioned, seconded, approved.

5. **Graduate Biomedical Sciences Master's Program** (Nancy Rice)-This program fills the need of the gap year experience by students pursuing advanced degrees in Medicine, Allied Health, and related Educational fields. There is a demonstrated regional and student need. Would increase employment opportunities for graduates, and they would be more competitive applicants as well. Gray and Associates was involved in the program process. Admissions would be on a rolling basis to better fit student needs. Would only involve 3 new courses, the rest would be cross listed. A research project would be required. Eric Loomis mentioned curriculum hours would need to be reviewed by the curriculum committee. Motioned, seconded, approved.
6. **Minutes from prior meeting** (Harold Pardue)- Motioned, seconded, approved.
7. **English Proficiency Institution Letters/International Student Admissions** (Heather Nix)-On an undergraduate level South accepts English Proficiency letters from the institution the student attended attesting that English was the primary language of instruction. Several students have inquired if this is available at the graduate level. No council members were in favor of adopting this policy and Dr. Chapman brought up that Duolingo was not proving to be a good indicator of English proficiency. Heather offered that the minimum Duolingo score could be increased for admission to interested programs. This policy will not be adopted at the graduate level.
8. **Number of Graduate Faculty required for dissertation committees** (Gwen Pennywell)-The motion was made to decrease the number of graduate faculty on dissertation committees from the majority to  $\frac{1}{2}$ . Reasoning is that the additional member required for a majority is the least value added member and takes a member away from another student's committee. Also, the student is having to work with more committee members. With the Chair as a full member and one additional graduate faculty member, that should provide needed oversight for the committee. MCOB dissertation committees usually involve outside members from other institutions. Note: In a prior meeting a few years ago, it was decided that the outside member could also function as the member from outside the relevant program as required by the Graduate School. Motioned, seconded, approved.
9. **Admission of Graduate Students Previously Dismissed** (Harold Pardue)-Current policy is permanent dismissal from the specific program once the student is dismissed. However, sometimes drastic life events arise that lead to the student being dismissed when otherwise they would be very successful. Some are already in high demand careers and as part time students are unable to get off probation before being dismissed. Dean Pardue provided a draft policy for the bulletin. With discussion, the policy was forwarded for approval. Motioned, seconded, approved.
10. **Bulletin Review as a Graduate Council function** (Harold Pardue)-In past years, the Graduate Council as a whole met and reviewed the Graduate School bulletin pages for updates to the annual Bulletin. It was decided this would restart for next year's Bulletin cycle.
11. **Faculty Handbook** (Harold Pardue)-Should there be a time limit on scholarly activity in the handbook? Full membership requirements could be raised. Also mentioned was that the base knowledge stays the same regardless. Staying up to date on recent developments is important, however the impact to smaller programs would be felt. No action on this agenda item. Should defining the role of Graduate Directors and Coordinators be added? Would be very useful for new GD/GC. Current stipends vary widely and a standard stipend was suggested.

12. **New Business?** None

13. **Meeting adjourned.**