

## UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL

### MINUTES

April 17, 2024

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Romney 102

#### Council in Attendance:

Marc Giullian (Business)  
Scott Powell (Agriculture)  
Catherine Dunlop (Letters)  
Stephanie McCalla (Faculty Senate)  
Amy Reines (Sciences)  
Rollin Beamish (Arts)  
Stephan Warnat (Engineering)  
Wade Hill (Nursing)  
Christopher Livingston (Architecture)  
Heidi Koenig (Student Representative)  
Craig Ogilvie (Dean of The Graduate School)

#### Also in Attendance:

Emily Peters (Graduate School)  
Lauren Cerretti (Graduate School)

#### Absent

Sweeney Windchief (Education)  
Katey Franklin (Health & Human Development)  
Brennan Reeves (Office of International Programs)  
Brian Rossmann (Library)

#### Meeting started at 10:31 a.m.

#### **March 20, 2024 minutes**

- Motion to approve by Giullian, Beamish 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstention

#### **Announcements**

- Faculty Senate update (McCalla)
  - Two graduate policies passed at last meeting: academic standing and eligibility for assistantships
    - GS will send email to departments with all the policy updates for 24-25 catalog
- Update from the Dean
  - Thank you to Lauren Cerretti and Emily Peters for GradCat Summit last week
  - Three-minute thesis competition on Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>

- Current degree candidates for spring: 285 master's, 86 doctoral, 37 certificates
- Graduate School taskforce reviewing the graduate experience from 3 months before starting through the end of their first year
- Discussion on travel awards and how to make applying for funds easier for students

### Old Business

- Appeals policy: review updated draft from policy subcommittee
  - Background: Currently students can appeal an academic decision, but it's not obvious to the student. Trying to make the process clear for students.
  - Discussed standing subcommittee of graduate council (2 UGC members, student rep, add a faculty rep from department) instead of an ad hoc committee
    - Could be difficult in small departments to find a faculty rep that isn't involved
    - Suggest including MSU lawyer
  - Is it a recommendation to the GS Dean, or is the committee making the final decision?
    - Consistent with other parts of graduate policy that the GS Dean is the final authority; committee could forward recommendation to the GS Dean for a final decision
    - The student could still appeal this decision to the Provost or President
  - Seems like the committee should meet with department to find a solution; best if faculty have buy-in with the decision
    - Current mechanism is an action plan. The department must sign off on the proposed action plan.
      - Move action plan paragraph earlier in the current draft
  - Subcommittee to reiterate the policy draft for fall semester

### New Business

- 4xx and 5xx policy review
  - Inconsistency between no more than 9 credits of 4xx-level and number of 5xx-level course credits must be equal to 2/3s
  - Suggest removing the 5xx level course piece
  - Council members to get feedback from colleges before 5/1 meeting
  
- Graduate Fresh Start policy discussion
  - Undergraduate fresh start policy was recently updated. There has never been a graduate level fresh start. Allows students to return and appeal to start fresh with their cumulative GPA. Grades prior to the fresh start stay on the transcript but are not included in the GPA.
    - New version allows courses from before the fresh start to be used toward degree requirements. Previously the courses wiped from GPA could not be used toward graduation.
  - Drafted a graduate level policy based on the new undergraduate version. Suggest adding a limit on the number of courses that can be excluded from GPA.

- Proposed because GS works with students that are trying to return and have failing coursework that makes it difficult or impossible to get their GPA up to 3.0; examples of situations where a fresh start would be beneficial
- Process to apply for this?
  - Current draft requires the student to be absent for 2 years, submit an intent to register to return to graduate school, complete 6 credits with a 3.0 GPA, then submit a GARC appeal to request a fresh start, GARC appeal will be reviewed on case-by-case basis
- Could the readmit decision be a committee of graduate faculty?
  - Department does review allowing the student to return in the intent to return process
- Discussion on fairness for students
  - Students that have had to retake courses
  - A fresh start could allow a student to come back and do well in a few classes and technically graduate with a 4.0
  - The fresh start is clearly documented on the transcript and the grades are still shown, but the cumulative GPA would only show the new (“fresh”) GPA
- Graduate level coursework is separate than undergraduate, so this would only be applicable to graduate work
  - May not be needed at the graduate level
  - Could reassess the retroactive withdrawal process
- Could be beneficial for nontraditional graduate students
- Incentivizes students to return, recruiting mechanism
  - Is the goal to reach out to these students?
  - Yes, GS started return to learn program to reach out to graduate students that have stepped away from their education and encourage to finish
- Could address the 3.0 GPA requirement for graduation instead of changing the official cumulative GPA
  - Example: look at PoS GPA instead of cumulative, or allow an appeal for cumulative GPA requirement
  - GS has never graduated a student with below a 3.0 GPA; this may be a slippery slope
- Seems that courses too old to count toward your degree should not still impact your GPA
- Need some solution to help students with historical GPA that otherwise don’t even consider coming back, need to be fair to students, honor grades that faculty assigned
- Revisit discussion in the fall semester
  - Council would like to review analogous policies (retro withdrawal, academic standing policy, etc.) and how they interact with this proposed policy

## **Updates from subcommittees**

## **Public comment**

Adjourned at 12:00 pm

Next scheduled meeting – May 1 in Romney Hall 102