

**Graduate Council Minutes
September 22, 2020
Webex**

Present: Wissam AbbouAlaiwi, Defne Apul, Brian Ashburner, Timothy Brakel, Frank Calzonetti, Saurabh Chattopadhyay, Madeline Clark, Wendy Cochrane, Heather Conti, Christina Fitzgerald, Daniel Georgiev, David Giovannucci, Daniel Hammel, Mohamed Samir Hefzy, Marthe Howard, Gary Insch, Brittany Jones (GSA), Andrea Kalinoski, Kenneth Kilbert, Abraham Lee, Linda Lewin, Sara Lundquist, Michael Mallin, Nagalakshmi Nadiminty, Penny Poplin Gosetti, Geoffrey Rapp, Barry Scheuermann, Beth Schlemper, Rebecca Schneider, Martha Sexton, Zahoor Shah, Ekaterina Shemyakova, Ruslan Slutsky, Susan Sochacki, Steve Sucheck, Varun Vaidya, Jerry Van Hoy, Kandace Williams.

Absent: None.

Excused: Jonathan Bossenbroek.

Guests: Linda Lewandowski, Amy Thompson, Eileen Walsh, Kevin West.

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order and the roll called. The Minutes of the Graduate Council meeting of August 25, 2020 were approved.

Executive Reports

Report of the Executive Committee of the Graduate Council

On behalf of Graduate Council, Chair Dr. Wendy Cochrane, reported:

- *GC Standing Committees*
Mostly populated. Dr. John Bellizzi has agreed to chair the Academic Programs and Regulations Committee. The Short-Term Leave Policy is with the committee to review.
- *Graduate Student Academic Grievance Policy 3364-77-02*
Major revision of existing policy is posted for comment September 21 – October 21, 2020 She (Wendy Cochrane) commented on it and Angela Paprocki sent her an email confirming it will read as follows 'ASC must hold initial hearing The ASC must hold a hearing to consider the appeal no later than thirty (30) working days (Mondays through Fridays, not counting University holidays and breaks) after the date of referral from the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies'.
- *Anti-Racism and Equity Resolution*
Discussed whether to adopt a resolution on anti-racism and equity in light of events over past several months. Faculty Senate has passed such a resolution. We will share with GC at the October 6th meeting for discussion and consideration.

- *Potential Speakers invited to Graduate Council*
Ms. Tracy Hildago from International Services is scheduled to visit October 20th.
Invitations have been sent to:
 - Mr. Matt Shroeder, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration and CFO.
 - Mr. Al Baker, Chair, Board of Trustees
 - Professor Llew Gibbons, Research Integrity Officer, to discuss the Research Misconduct Policy he is working on.
 - Suggestion to invite Dr. Flap Cockrell, Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost to discuss resources across campuses.

- *COVID 19 Operations Team Meetings*
A sign of improvement is that the meetings are occurring once per week instead of twice. The COVID Dashboard <https://www.utoledo.edu/coronavirus/> indicates that there were 46 new cases past week. The Senior Leadership Team is discussing spring semester and whether it will include a spring break. A saliva test, rather than a nasal test is being explored.

- *Graduate Council Report to Board of Trustees*
Report was given to the BOT on September 21, 2020 by GC Vice Chair, Dr. David Giovannucci. It will be posted on GC website for your reference
<https://www.utoledo.edu/graduate/facultystaff/gradcouncil/botsa2020.html>.

Report of the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies

Dr. Barry Scheuermann, Interim Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs and Interim Dean of the College of Graduate Studies provided the following updates:

- *Search for Permanent COGS Dean*
No updates available at this time.

- *Commencement – Fall 2020*
Virtual Commencement, Sunday, December 6 (Livestream). Check the Provost’s website for details. Colleges and programs planning to hold special events commending graduate students, please inform Dean Scheuermann so that COGS can pass along its congratulations and share the event information.

- *Update on COVID-19*
 - An email was sent out to the members of the University community on September 21st announcing that Fall Commencement will be held virtually on December 6, 2020, the original scheduled date.
 - A live streaming event is planned and information will be updated on the Provost’s website as details become available; <https://www.utoledo.edu/commencement/>.
 - If your college or programs in your college are planning events for your graduate students, please send me an email letting me know of your plans so we can update our website as well.

- *Meeting with Interim President Postel*
 - Met with Dr. Postel on September 14th to discuss issues related to and impacting the College of Graduate Studies, graduate programs and graduate students.

- Graduate enrollments and recruitment; the President, along with members of the Finance office and Enrollment Management are meeting with each College to review their enrollment trends and recruitment strategies
 - We discussed the three operational areas of the COGS including, admissions, finance and onboarding and student and academic affairs.
 - Spring 2020 there was some discussion of implementing centralized admission systems but implementation was impacted by COVID-19.
 - Implementation of EngineeringCAS and BusinessCAS has been discussed with an expected start date of Fall 2021.
 - Graduate Assistantship budget for AY 2021-22 and the allocation of funding to the Colleges, which in turn, would allocate the funds to the students.
 - COGS Council of Associate Deans are meeting September 24 and will continue to discuss the allocation as well as the onboarding process. My intent is to bring the proposal to GC for discussion during our October 20 meeting.
 - Graduate student funding for Spring 2021 was discussed but no funding has been allocated for students who were deferred to the Spring 2021 semester.
- *Policy Updates*
- Revised policy “Principal Investigator’s Responsibilities on Sponsored Projects” (3364-70-22) was posted for the 30-day comment period.
 - Revised policy “Graduate Student Academic Grievance” (3364-77-02) was posted for 30-day comment period.
 - Policy “Research Data and Responsible Conduct of Scholarship and Research” is currently under revision. The revised policy states that “The University handles disputes regarding authorship as an academic issue” which may require each College to develop a policy to resolve authorship disputes, including the COGS. I will be bringing this to the GCEC for discussion at the next meeting.
 - Over the last two weeks, we have been asked if we have been asked if we have a policy or document that provides some guidance for assigning graduate student workload.
 - This could involve either the expectations placed on a research assistant working on a project or the instructional load assigned to a teaching assistant. I will also be bringing this to the GCEC for discussion at the next meeting.
- *Incomplete Grading from Spring Semester*
- There were 59 incomplete grades submitted for graduate students during Spring semester 2020, which we would like to see resolved before the end of the Fall semester. Please note graduate students cannot graduate with a PR or Incomplete grade.
- Proposed by the Retention Council that Spring 2020 Incomplete (IE) grades be resolved by:
 - a) Strongly encouraging students to resolve their incomplete (IE) grades from Spring 2020 by the end of the Fall 2020 term, by reviewing their transcripts and contacting the instructor who provided the incomplete.
 - b) If necessary, students will have until the end of the Spring 2021 term to resolve their spring 2020 incomplete (IE) grades.

- c) If the requirements for course completion are not met by the end of the spring 2021 term, the course will lapse into an F or the default grade identified by the instructor when assigning the IE grade, if not an F.
- d) Letter grades that result from the resolution of Spring 2020 incomplete (IE) grades can be petitioned for conversion to the special credit/no credit grading options available for Spring 2020 grades. There is some discussion of bring back the PASS/NO CREDIT Grade Option form that was used in Spring 2020.
- e) Remind faculty members to complete the Incomplete Grade Documentation Form ([Incomplete Grade Documentation Form](#)) and to submit the form to the Office of the Registrar.

Research and Sponsored Programs Update

Dr. Frank Calzonetti, Vice President of Research reported:

- *National Labs*
UT Toledo continues to work with national labs on a number of projects. If you have interactions with labs, let us know. You may have student placed in one of the labs.
- *Research Misconduct Policy*
Is being revised to include more definitions and references (federal code) and define research misconduct including destruction of records and assessment process. Another major revision is to eliminate a separate standing committee for the assessment process. Given the small size of the university it can be difficult to identify experts without conflicts. (The assessment committee looks at the allegation. If the allegation has merit, it goes to the inquiry committee to determine if a formal investigation is warranted or whether it should be dismissed.)
- *Responsible Conduct of Research Policy*
This policy is being divided into two policies. The authorship policy will be initiated out of academic affairs and the research data section will be under the Office of Research.
- *Principal Investigator's Responsibilities on Sponsored Projects - Policy 3364-70-22*
Minor revisions to an existing policy. Comment period is September 9 – October 9, 2020. It allows scientists at national labs to serve as a PI when they have presence on campus.
- *Research Council*
Research Council meets on September 25th and will continue review of institutes and centers.

Report of the Graduate Student Association

Ms. Brittany Jones, President of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) reported:

GSA held its first general meeting on September 16, 2020 via WebEx with almost 40 attendees. Presentations included Dr. Amy Thompson (COVID-19 Operations Team), Leanna Glick (Student Insurance Liaison), Interim Dean of COGS, Dr. Barry Scheuermann (COGS), and Dr. Daryl Moorhead (University mentoring project).

We notified our general body of the upcoming special election to fill the vacant seats of Vice President and Main Campus and Health Science Campus Secretaries, in addition to requesting interested students to apply for College Representative positions. On September 17, 2020, Provost Bjorkman arranged a student leader advisory group meeting to bring attention to current concerns and issues. We discussed our thoughts on Spring semester 2021 and the idea of substituting non-institutional days for spring break, in addition to the early start date proposal. GSA reported on recent activity and initiatives and extended the offer of being part of the COGS Dean and University President searches.

As the semester progresses, GSA plans to execute priority items highlighted by the outgoing executive board, along with creating incentives to increase active membership.

Information and Discussion Items

Professional Challenges for Graduate Faculty – Dean Linda Lewandowski and Mr. Kevin West

Dr. Linda Lewandowski, Vice Provost for Health Affairs for Interprofessional and Community Partnerships, Dean of the College of Nursing and Mr. Kevin West, Senior Director, Faculty Labor Relations and Academic Inclusion Officer Faculty Labor Relations presented for discussion, scenarios of personal interactions between graduate faculty and graduate students. We have to be mindful of how interactions impact students:

- Power Differential
Think about vulnerable populations: Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Residents, Post Docs, Untenured Faculty
- Relationships – Personal or Professional
Think about the impact personal relationships have on the entire class
- Confidentiality
Think about the impact of sharing personal information
- Consistent Expectation of Professional Conduct
Expectation to communicate in civil manner that does not bully or berate
- Violation of Rule or Policy vs Seeking Best Practice
Continuous improvement strives to implement best practices

A presentation was given to the Academic Leadership Team this past spring 2020, as a reminder of challenges being a faculty member some of which come to the Faculty/Labor Relations office. As a result, there was thought to have similar presentation to other groups, such as Graduate Council, to get your feedback and other training on faculty conduct and how that impacts graduate students. This is a conversation with you. The presentation serves as a way of talking about issues and dilemmas that have come up of and presents scenarios to get people to think about things have come up. It is important to be purposeful and thoughtful in our interactions with students and to be mindful how interactions impact students.

Mr. Kevin West brought example situations for thought and discussion that deal with the following topics:

Power Differential

Faculty experience with graduate assistants should be meaningful. Times have changed. Some things may not be as appropriate. The threshold for a student to raise a complaint has decreased significantly. Students raise complaints more frequently and bring issues about the power differential, if asked to do favors or actions in support of their advisors. It may be difficult for a student/GA to say no to the person who can approve their dissertation.

Graduate Council: What about the direction of ask of being in the home? What if the student asks?

The issue is the ask, because it puts the GA in the position to say no but maintain the relationship. It might be okay, but there are considerations. Is there a sense of impropriety? Who is asking? Can they say no?

Perceived Preferential Treatment

Showing/discussing other topics with students that are not part of the class and encouraging discussions with students who share that interest. Other students may feel that only certain students are special and have extra interactions with the professor/instructor. Other students may question the propriety. Be clear when singling out one student or making opportunities for only a few students. Maybe ask the whole class about a topic for fun.

Graduate Council: It opens doors to issues. It may seem innocent, but it creates a weird dynamic. Even with best intentions things can go wrong.

Teaching Assistants Tasks

Check with the department chair and the contract with the student. May unknowingly be asking them to do additional things and they may feel they cannot say no. Not always total right or wrong, but there are important considerations.

Dr. Marthe Howard stated that faculty have to be responsible for their own workload.

Impact of Sharing Personal Information about Students

Student's information should be protected. Have to think about how you interact with others in looking out for the best interest of the student.

If a student displays a behavioral concern or expresses personal harm, a RocketCare form could be completed that alerts the Counseling Center. A great resource is the Behavior Response Guide <https://www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/counseling/pdfs/behavior-response-guide.pdf>. UToledo website include 'Report a Concern' at the bottom of each webpage.

Party/COVID Example:

There is contact tracing, but it is protected information. If faculty have concerns, they are contacting Faculty/Labor Relations and are receiving accommodations.

Professional Conduct

With all of the challenges including COVID 19, people may have shorter fuses, but we need to remember to be professional. Unprofessional behavior is not okay because you are upset. Additional stress may cause faculty who have worked well together, now react in a way they haven't before. Respect and collegiality are expected.

Communication and Best Practices

Resources are given to faculty to help communicate with students whether it is email or Blackboard or other. The commitment is to your students.

Dean Lewandowski posed the question: Does a professor get to decide that they do not want to use tools in Blackboard? Where can they make these decisions and where do best practices decisions come into play?

Dean Scheuermann noted that graduate students are trying to complete their work, but they want feedback and edits. He asked how to encourage faculty members to interact in a timely manner.

Dean Lewandowski questioned how we best support student success when faculty refuse to use certain resources. She noted that it is important to think about issues and take opportunities to reflect on some issues. We hear new faculty need this information, however, experienced faculty who have been around, started out when things were different. Times have changed and we need to stay up with best practices. As a college dean, the most frequent emails received from students are that they have been trying to reach Dr. X and are in need of feedback, etc. That is most problematic.

Dr. Wendy Cochrane noted that graduate students sometimes think their email should be responded to within hours in the same day, otherwise they think your response is delayed. It is a good idea to state what the expectation is. It goes both ways.

Dean Lewandowski agreed.

Dr. Samir Hefzy thanked Dean Lewandowski and Kevin West for the interactive presentation and asked of there a way they could present to the faculty in general at the college level.

Dean Lewandowski replied that they have made an offer to department chairs but are willing to speak to other groups as well. If invited, they would entertain the idea.

Dr. Amy Thompson added that people are sensitive as evidenced by the abundance of emails from Student Affairs.

Linda – we have to take care of ourselves and practice self-care. Reminder to take care of yourselves.

Dean Linda Lewandowski thanked Council for inviting her and Kevin West. She asked Council to share any other situations or thoughts that she and Kevin West should address. She asked if there are things we can do to provide more resources for faculty, such as support groups, or stress de-escalating sessions.

She is interested in hearing how we can support our faculty and asked that idea and comments be sent to her and Kevin West. She encouraged Council to stay healthy, functional, and at their best.

Standing Committee Reports

Report of the Curriculum Committee

None.

Report of the Membership Committee

None.

Old Business

Chair Cochrane stated that she is working with Dean Scheuermann putting together information about GAs so that graduate faculty have better understanding and can participate more actively. Will bring to GC for discussion. Graduate programs may want to include this information in their handbooks.

Additionally, the President and Provost will be attending Graduate Council on October 6. Questions for them should be sent to Chair Cochrane by September 29th.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Council adjourned at 1:55 pm.