



The Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

August 24, 2015

The Graduate Council met on Monday, August 24, 2015 at 2:00 P.M. in room 311 of the Byrnes Building.

Graduate Council members present: Dr. Julia Lopez-Robertson, Chair; Drs. Swann Adams, Drucilla Barker, Heather Brandt, Matt Brown, Kay Edwards, Jerry Hilbish, Lorne Hofseth, Dirk den Ouden, Caryn Outten, David Tedeschi, Scott White, Susan Yeargin; Brittany Walter, GSA Representative

Graduate Council members absent: Drs. Jennifer Arns, Alex Beecroft, Nancy Brown, James Ritter

Graduate School Representatives: Dr. Jessica Elfenbein, Dr. Murray Mitchell, Dale Moore and Teresa Smith

Provost Office Representative: Dr. Kristia Finnigan

Guests: None

NOTE: *These minutes will become final on September 28, 2015, if not challenged.*

1. **Call to Order and Approval of Agenda** (Julia Lopez-Robertson, Chair)

Dr. Lopez-Robertson called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M., and received approval of the agenda.

2. **Approval of Minutes for the meeting on [May 26, 2015](#).**

The minutes were reviewed electronically and approved by the Council. Minutes are on file at The Graduate School website at:
<http://app.gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes.asp>

3. **Report of the Chair** (Julia Lopez-Robertson)

Welcome back!

4. **Report of the Dean of The Graduate School** (Jessica Elfenbein for Lacy Ford)

Dr. Elfenbein reported Travel Grant applications will be accepted on September 1. This is for travel from October 1 through to December 31, 2015. She stated that there is not enough funding to grant all travel requests, but the procedure has been changed to include four rounds of applications a year. The awards are up to \$500 for domestic travel and up to \$800 for International travel. The department is expected to match the amount awarded by the

Graduate School.

There is a lifetime limit of two travel grants per graduate student. If a person has already received two, they are not eligible to apply. In addition, the graduate school has changed the procedure to allow first time applicants to receive preference. The goal is to allocate funding to as many new eligible students as possible. Please let students know in your departments that they only get two lifetime awards for travel, and if this is not the most important opportunity to present at a conference, then it would be wise to wait for the best opportunity to present.

The application portal is open for one week. The students who apply at the beginning of the open cycle are more likely to receive funding. Once all of the funding is allocated the fund is depleted.

Dr. Brandt asked if information will be submitted to the departments regarding the number of applicants from their area and who was awarded funding for travel. Dr. Eifenbein responded that this type of information can be collected and distributed this year.

Dr. Tedeschi asked for clarification of the eligibility requirements. Dr. Eifenbein responded that the Graduate Program Directors vet the students for eligibility and rank them at the department level, and The Graduate School verifies the enrollment status of each student who applies

Dr. Loren Hofseth asked about the amount of the department's contribution to the student's award. Dr. Eifenbein restated that the maximum contribution from The Graduate School is up to \$500 for domestic travel and up to \$800 for International travel with receipts to support travel expenses.

Dr. Eifenbien asked Brittany if there was funding available from the GSA for travel. Brittany responded that there is some funding available. If the department has a student organization that is registered with the GSA, they can request funding from the GSA to attend a conference.

GSA funding can cover the registration and additional funding may be available. At this time, the GSA only provides 'one-time' funding per student per conference. Information regarding eligibility and the application process is available on the GSA website.

Dr. Eifenbein announced that health insurance subsidies have increased this year from \$375 per student to \$425. It is a sizable increase, but unfortunately, there are some issues with IRS compliance. There was an article published in The Chronicle and this issue aired on NPR this past weekend. The Council of Graduate Schools is also working on this issue. It started at the University of Missouri and they pulled their subsidy funding. USC has not pulled subsidy funding. The University's Legal Counsel is currently reviewing the issue and implications to USC students, and the University may take no action until Legal Counsel receives input from the IRS. The findings will be discussed at a later date. Currently, eligible students will receive a \$200 subsidy in the Fall and an additional \$225 in the Spring.

5. Report of the Associate Dean / Secretary of the Graduate Council (Murray Mitchell)

Dr. Mitchell reported that two Graduate Council members have had professional opportunities that interfered with their ability to complete their Graduate Council terms. Two well-qualified colleagues have agreed to participate and serve. Completing the terms of former members means that new members are eligible to serve their own three-year term upon completion of the term they are covering. Carolyn Nagle from Geography is now a former member and replacing her will be Caryn Outten from Chemistry and BioChemistry. Elena Osokina from History is now a former member and Kay Edwards from History will be her replacement.

Dr. Mitchell asked all members to introduce themselves and state the department they represent, and each member did so.

Dr. Mitchell announced that Graduate Council recently shifted from a paper-based proposal submission system to an electronic-based submission system (APPS), and that he and Dr. Kristia Finnigan will do their best to assist and answer questions about the new system.

Dr. Mitchell mentioned that there are five committees that need Chairs. The Chairs must be Council members. However, members of these committees can be qualified graduate faculty. The five committees are:

- 1) Academic Policies and Practices. Meetings are called as needed. The committee reviews new, changes or additions to existing policies and practices. The committee is usually chaired by the Council's Vice Chair or Chair-elect and is comprised of four members. Matt Brown is Vice Chair/Chair-elect. There is currently an issue pending that will be considered by this committee. It is regarding eligibility for Special Enrollment Privileges. This special enrollment privilege is often referred to as Z-Status. It allows students who have finished all but their dissertation to be considered as a fulltime student while taking less than six hours of graduate courses. There is presently an opportunity for students to be approved for up to four semesters. Currently, there are a number of students who are seeking more than that. The committee will research the issue and decide on limits. Student financial aid is affected by this status, and the concern is for students is their need to finish academic pursuits and move on rather than endlessly extending their Z-Status from semester to semester. The committee will draft a policy to address this issue.
- 2) Fellowships and Scholarships. This committee will review student applicants for funding in the Spring and Fall. The committee meets for two hours in January, two (2-hour) meetings in February and March, and one (2-hour) meeting in April. The committee is comprised of six members and receives the support of the Graduate School, Dr. Jessica Elfenbein and Wright Culpepper, who coordinate materials from student applicants for committee consideration. If there are any questions or an interest in who is eligible for receiving Fellowships and Scholarships and the amount of awards, and other eligibility issues, consider participating on this committee. The participant will be active in the decision making process and offer better funding advice to students going forward.

- 3) Science, Math, and Related Professional Programs Committee is chaired this year by David Tedeschi. Susan Yeargin will be a continuing member. This committee handles new course proposals and course and curricula change proposals. This is a steady committee with the majority of work done at the end of the Fall semester when programs are trying to get changes to curriculum approved to appear in the Graduate Bulletin. Changes have to be approved by December to appear in the Bulletin for the next academic year. New courses, however, can appear immediately. The committee is staffed with four members. If there is interest in being on that committee, contact Dr. Mitchell.
- 4) Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs Committee is presently chaired by Matt Brown. Matt is also Vice Chair. Rather than retire from Graduate Council at the end of this academic year, he will Chair the Council in the following year. Matt has kindly agreed to start off the year as Chair for the Humanities committee, but a replacement is needed that he can train to fill that role. Jennifer Arns is the only other member returning to that committee. Four members are required to staff that committee.
- 5) The final group is the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions committee. This group meets infrequently. Committee meetings depend upon submissions from students. Submissions that rise to this level of consideration have dropped markedly since the Graduate School has benefited from the service of Assistant Dean Dale Moore who serves in the capacity of Ombudsman. He offers guidance to students regarding opportunities to address their issues and leaves the final decision to the student. Dr. Mitchell clarified that Mr. Moore does not tell the student what to do. He provides insight into the issue and points out the available alternatives and probable outcomes, leaving the student to make an informed decision. This committee usually has one student representative which is typically filled by the Graduate Student Representative. This year Brittany Walter is reprising her role as the GSA Representative. She will be a member along with three other faculty members. If interested in serving on this committee, please contact Dr. Mitchell at MMitchel@mailbox.sc.edu to self-nominate or to nominate a qualified colleague. Members would benefit from the opportunity to participate in governance of graduate school related issues. The participant will benefit from being aware of advocacy for students in graduate education.

Graduate students comprise of approximately 25% of the student enrollment at the University of South Carolina. Given that information, the Graduate Council hopes to leverage additional services for Graduate Students.

Governance of this size of the population is no small contribution to the operation of this institution. For those of you who are already serving, your service is greatly appreciated and will benefit the graduate programs you will impact.

Dr. Hofseth asked Dr. Mitchell if he would provide Council with a list of the committees and the charges for each. Dr. Mitchell responded that the Committee information will appear in the minutes, but that he will provide the information via email as well.

Dr. Mitchell distributed a Graduate School Fact Sheet regarding university enrollment information showing specific statistics of graduate student versus undergraduate student representation at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Brandt asked if the information on the flyer included student information University-wide or only on the Columbia campus. She also asked if the information included students from the School of Medicine. Dr. Elfenbein responded that the information included statistics regarding the Columbia student population and it includes the professional colleges such as the School of Law, the School of Medicine and the College of Pharmacy. Dr. Brandt also asked if this information has been distributed to graduate directors on campus. Dr. Elfenbein responded that has been distributed to the Deans.

Additionally, Dr. Mitchell mentioned business of interest to the Administrators in departments that hire, Graduate assistants, Teaching assistants, Instructional assistants, Research assistants, and Program assistants. There are several different object codes being misused on a regular basis, and the process is far more complex than it should be. Dr. Mitchell was successfully able to meet with representatives from the Bursar's Office, Financial Aid, Human Resources, and the Provost's Office to discuss operational changes and simplifying the process. The impact on the Graduate Students is significant. If the paperwork submitted to hire the GA is wrong, the paperwork is returned and may languish throughout the correction process. What this means to the Graduate Student is a delay in pay. This presents a problem when GAs need to buy food or have financial obligations such as tuition, rent and credit card bills. More information will follow as progress is made on this issue.

Dr. Mitchell mentioned that occasionally the Council may go into Closed Session. Closed Session will occur when the Council discusses Grievances, Appeals and Petitions. All issues discussed in closed session are confidential. All information discussed in open session is placed in the Graduate Council minutes as public information.

6. Report of the Graduate Student Association Representative (Brittany Walter)

Brittany reported that the GSA will be holding a "Welcome Back" event for Graduate Students at the River Rat Brewery on September 2. She asked Council representatives to please notify their graduate student's that they can find details about the event on Facebook and Twitter.

The GSA has several cabinet positions open. Every graduate student is a member of the GSA, and there is a Leadership Team called the Cabinet. The Cabinet works with the GSA President. They help the graduate student population and assist with student advocacy, educational seminars, and social events. It is good to get involved, and applications for the positions is published on the GSA website.

The Graduate Student space in the Library is nearly complete. The space is strictly for graduate students. It includes a study space and a white board for meetings. The GSA hopes to have a 'launch' event in September.

7. Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee (Murray Mitchell)

Dr. Mitchell stated that a Chair and members will soon be selected for this committee.

8. **Report of the Committee on 500/600 Level Courses, Distance Education and Special Courses** (Murray Mitchell)

A listing of 500/600 Level and Distance Education Courses was presented to Council for informational purposes only.

500/600 Level Courses

Dr. Mitchell mentioned that there are two other committees that he attends, EX OFFICIO, to address issues that impact the Graduate School. The Instructional Development Committee deals with distance delivery classes 500 and 600 levels classes. The Courses and Curriculum Committee reviews changes and approves courses to be reviewed by Faculty Senate. These courses are primarily undergraduate courses. Occasionally, there are 500-600 level classes that potentially serve undergraduates and graduate students. Dr. Mitchell sits on those committees to make sure that requirements of the courses serve graduate level students. This month, those committees met after the Graduate Council agenda was published. The Courses and Curriculum Committee has two courses that will go forward for consideration by the Faculty Senate. Dr. Mitchell's responsibility is to review them and then report to Graduate Council. These courses should be added to the agenda: GEOL 548, Environmental Geophysics. This course has been approved and is awaiting review by the Faculty Senate. The change is from 3 hours to 4 hours. Also LING 521, Advanced English Grammar, has been approved by the Courses and Curriculum Committee and is awaiting Faculty Senate approval. The proposal is to add an integrated course designation for the BA in English. It is part of the Carolina Core requirements.

These Committees are charged with issues of course information duplication and overlap. In this case, a letter of concurrence is required for approve of these courses. The committees are committed to assure appropriate academic boundaries. There is no report for distance delivery courses.

Dr. Mitchell asked Dr. Finnigan if Graduate Council members can review these documents in the new Electronic Proposal Reporting System. Dr. Finnigan responded that the courses can be reviewed at the Committee Review website: <http://www.sc.edu/programproposal/>. Generic log-in information can be obtained to review the proposals. For more information regarding logging into the system, please inquire at 803-777-6727 or via email at acadprog@mailbox.sc.edu.

9. **Associate Graduate Faculty Nominations** (Murray Mitchell)

Name: None
Program:
Term:

Dr. Mitchell reported that this is a third category of graduate faculty. The regular term faculty is for tenure and tenure-track professors. Generally, with a nomination, department new hires are approved to be regular term appointed faculty. Term appointments are for three years and are appropriate for professors who are not regular college graduate faculty. Many

are involved in research. Many term appointments are adjunct professors who have an expertise and teach or supervise interns at the 500 level.

The graduate associate faculty category was added in Spring 2015. It is an opportunity for faculty members to have a six year appointment that is renewable. The term appointment is renewable as well. Term appointments are for three years. Associate Graduate Faculty is six years and affords more privileges appropriate for research faculty who are not on the tenure track, but have been here for many years and have the academic credentials to chair theses and dissertations. In some cases, they have more credibility than some tenured, tenure-track faculty members. There have been four nominations since the program began.

Dr. den Ouden asked if a PhD is required for Associate Graduate Faculty status. Dr. Mitchell responded that the CV is submitted and the faculty member must be supported by the graduate faculty in the program. With the term appointment, they can chair masters' theses. Chairing dissertations for doctoral students must be either a regular or associate graduate faculty member.

Dr. Adams asked if this associate faculty status is applicable for faculty with practical experience to teach master's level students. Dr. Mitchell responded that the Term appointment would be most appropriate for that type of appointment. He pointed out that the main difference between the two appointments is that the term is 3 year renewable and associate is six years. Additionally, Associate Graduate Faculty can serve on Graduate Council. Term appointed faculty cannot. Associate Graduate Faculty allows more opportunity for input and contribution to the guidance of how graduate programs unfold. The resistance in the past has been the desire to have people who are fully committed to the University's graduate program so that fulltime faculty cannot be overruled in your programs. It allows input wherever it is desirable and the graduate faculty in each program gives input on eligibility. Dr. Mitchell advised all to share this information with Graduate Directors.

Dr. Hofseth asked if the Associate Graduate Faculty is appropriate for associate professors and research assistants. Dr. Mitchell responded that it is appropriate for associate professors, but not for research assistants. The nominations must come from faculty in the program. Nominees should be faculty who will make solid recommendations to the program.

Dr. Hofseth asked if post-doctoral student would be appropriate for this status. Dr. Mitchell responded that post-doctoral students are still in student status and are not eligible.

Dr. Mitchell mentioned that last year the NIH instituted a requirement for Individual Development Plans for any student funded by a grant. There is a Post-doc Association with a similar plan. The intention is that these students are assigned a mentor who is responsible for offering guidance to developing a professional path to establish goals as the student works toward a career.

Dr. Elfenbein added that the Post-doc Association launched this past year at USC. If there are post-docs in Council members departments, who are not participating, please make them aware of it. It is organized by Lauren Clark, Office of the Vice President for Research. They were excited about organizing and working together. They have Officers and are

making great contributions to the University. The Graduate School met with the Officers, and they were terrific. They are a major resource for students on campus who are thinking about being post-docs.

10. **Fellowships and Scholarships Committee** (Murray Mitchell)

Dr. Mitchell stated that a Chair and members will soon be selected for this committee.

11. **Report of Science, Math, and Related Professional Programs Committee** (David Tedeschi)

Dr. Tedeschi reported that two more members are needed. There are proposals to discuss on the Electronic Proposal system. If anyone is interested on being on this committee, please contact Dr. Mitchell.

12. **Report of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs Committee** (Matt Brown)

Dr. Brown reported that there are proposals to discuss on the Electronic Proposal system. If anyone is interested on being on this committee, please contact Dr. Mitchell.

13. **Report of the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee** (Murray Mitchell)

Dr. Mitchell stated that a Chair and members will soon be selected for this committee.

He identified that there is one submission to be considered by the committee once it convenes. Typically what happens is that the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee group hears the student's concern. The student may request to appear before the group. We make that opportunity available to the student. Once heard, that committee will make a decision and then make a recommendation to full council giving the reason for their decision. The committee will request support of council or the Council may request additional information. Currently, there is only one petition pending.

Dr. Brandt asked about the timeline for resolution. Dr. Mitchell responded that the committee is notified as soon as a petition is submitted. The committee will discuss the submission at a scheduled meeting and then the case is presented to Graduate Council at the next scheduled meeting. The student is notified of this procedure.

Dr. Mitchell further explained that he initially reviews the submissions, and if it is an issue that clearly violates University academic policy, he has the authority to process the submission with no need for review by the Committee.

14. **Other Committee Reports**

No report. Dr. Mitchell stated that this category of reporting is for any Ad Hoc committee that may be developed over the academic year.

15. **Old Business**

No report.

16. **New Business**

Dr. Elfenbein reported that Dr. Ford has charged The Graduate School and Graduate Council to research the current status of graduate assistantships on the USC campus and how much the graduate assistants are earning. The Graduate School is aware that the minimum stipend is \$1200 for a 14 week semester working 10 hours per week. That equates to \$8.57 per hour. However, The Graduate School and Graduate Council wants to work with the GSA in order to get data. The Council's assistance is needed to find out what the range of stipends are in each department. An Ad Hoc committee may be commissioned to investigate this issue. However, the Graduate School is committed to taking on this task for report to the Provost.

17. **Good of the Order**

Dr. Mitchell confirmed that he will follow up by sending out information regarding committee membership and information on the Associate Graduate Faculty Status.

Dr. Mitchell asked all attendees to sign the member roster to account for accurate meeting attendance.

The next Graduate Council Meeting will be on Monday, September 28, 2015 at 2:00 P. M. in the Byrnes building, room 311.

18. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 P.M.

Murray Mitchell, Secretary

cc:
President Harris Pastides
Provost Joan Gabel
Senior Vice Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies Lacy Ford
Deans
Department Chairs
Graduate Directors
Aaron Marterer, University Registrar
Jodie Morris, Office of the Registrar
Andrew Graves, Office of the Registrar
Nancy Floyd, Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance