



The Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

February 24, 2020

The Graduate Council met on Monday, February 24, 2019 at 2:00 P.M. on the 5th floor of the Thomas Cooper Library in the Career Center.

Graduate Council members present: Dr. Jim Mensch, Vice-Chair; Drs. Matt Boylan, Bobby Brame, Maks Chruszcz, Sharon DeWitte, Jean Ellis, Hippokratis Kiaris, Spencer Platt, Nikki Wooten, Songhua Xu and Jennifer Mandelbaum, GSA Representative.

Graduate Council members absent: Drs. Suzanne Adlof, Nate Bell, Ron Benner, Joanna Casey, Rick Creswick, Robin DiPietro, Elise Ince, Tom Regan, and Sirivatch Shimpalee.

Graduate School Representatives: Dr. Cheryl Addy, Dr. Murray Mitchell (Secretary), Dr. Heather Brandt, Dale Moore, and Wanda Barr.

Provost Office Representatives: Trena Houpp.

Guests: Thomas Jones, GSA.

NOTE: These minutes will become final on March 23, 2020 if not challenged.

1. **Call to Order and Approval of Agenda** (Jim Mensch, Vice-Chair for Tom Regan, Chair)
The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm.
2. **Approval of the [Minutes from January 27, 2020](http://app.gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes.asp)**. Approved actions by Graduate Council become effective 30 days after posting. A copy is available on the Graduate School website at:
<http://app.gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes.asp>
3. **Report of the Chair** (Jim Mensch for Tom Regan)
No report.

Dr. Mitchell welcomed and introduced Dr. Sharon DeWitte from the Department of Anthropology as the newest member to the Graduate Council. He also announced that Tom Regan, Chair of the Graduate Council, was not at the meeting because he was hosting President Bob Caslen and giving him a tour of his department.

4. **Report of the Dean of Graduate School** (Cheryl Addy)

Dr. Addy updated the Council on the progression of the Graduate Assistantship policy revision process. While she is updating the ACAF 4.00 GA hire policy, Human Resources is working on the Student Hire Improvement Project. They have been working very hard all semester on improving the aspects of all student hiring across the board. Graduate assistantships may be the most complicated layer of this project. Her major focus is the revision of the Graduate Assistantship policy piece and protecting the benefits of the Graduate Assistants. She has had to repackage ACAF 4.00 and clean up the language to incorporate federal language, FLSA, and FICA. The academic side of the policy is not changing substantially. Most Graduate Assistants cannot be called employees. They can be hired, but they are not actual employees of the university. The biggest change to the policy is the revamping of how we view Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and Instructional Assistants—they are not employees of the UofSC according to federal regulations. Graduate Staff Assistants must now be treated as hourly employees due to the responsibilities of the job code. They are not exempt from FLSA requirements.

There will now be a required written work agreement for each graduate assistant that will explicitly identify the responsibilities, dates of the appointment, the stipend or hourly rate, and the expected work schedule. Graduate Teaching and Instructional assistants should expect some deviations to their work schedules around exam times, and less hours at other times. Some students have been complaining that they have been expected to work outside their standard work hours. Dr. Addy has a template for the work agreement that will be distributed in the coming months. Details are to be determined.

Graduate assistants should receive regular evaluations. Officially, all graduate assistants should have an assigned faculty advisor or a supervisor if working at an outside agency. Graduate assistants should not get to the end of the semester and find out that they will not be reappointed because they did not perform at an acceptable level during the semester. Currently, the only evaluation process in place on paper is the student course evaluation—which is insufficient. We will also need to build in a procedure for grounds of dismissal, as well as, building in a procedure to file a grievance.

One thing that we cannot change is the fact that Graduate Assistants cannot earn leave. With or without the word “employee,” they are treated as temporary employees of the University. They can’t have a benefit that other temporary employees do not have. We would like to create a system of unpaid leave and still protect the GA position and the GA benefits. Hopefully, Graduate Assistants who need to be out for a week or less, the faculty advisor/supervisor can work it out with the student and have them make up the time. For needs above a week to three weeks, with documentation/justification, the student can request leave without pay. Extended periods of leave time will be built in for the birth or adoption of a child.

After much discussion, it was decided the Summer semester will be the pilot for most of these changes in hopes of a smoother transition into the Fall semester. More information on these proposed changes will be forthcoming.

Language revisions for the Faculty Manual surrounding Graduate Faculty and Associate Graduate Faculty status, was discussed. Discussion surrounded eligibility for membership and associated responsibilities along with unit responsibilities for monitoring and assessing performance in these roles. Additional discussion will be addressed at a meeting of the Associate and Assistant Graduate Deans Council prior to ultimately proposing any changes to the Faculty Senate for consideration.

Dr. Heather Brandt will be leaving the University at the end of the Spring Semester, and Dr. Addy proposed two options to the Council as we consider our next steps in replacing Dr. Heather Brandt, Associate Dean for Professional Development. Discussion ensued regarding the most appropriate structure to best fulfill the responsibilities addressing the Graduate School's goal to enhance the graduate student experience.

5. **Report of the Secretary of the Graduate Council** (Murray Mitchell)

Dr. Mitchell informed the Council that the Graduate School is moving ahead with scheduling interviews for our search to replace our Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Coordinator. Temporary coverage, for any who may have thesis or dissertation questions, is being provided by Wright Culpepper.

He is following up with faculty members identified by the Registrar who have so far not been responsive to submitting grades. This means, for one reason or another, some students have received a designation of "NR" that will convert into either an F or U after a semester, and result in a lot of additional paperwork for many of us. Please encourage your colleagues to submit either a grade, or if justified, an Incomplete, rather than submitting nothing.

He is also working through the roster of students who have earned probation or suspension based on finalized grades from the fall semester. Again, encouraging the assistance of your colleagues with monitoring graduate student performance to highlight concerns and potentially intervene before issues rise to the level of probation or suspension would be greatly appreciated.

We will also be scheduling a meeting for graduate directors and support staff for March; information coming very soon.

6. **Report on Professional Development** (Heather Brandt)

Dr. Brandt announced that the Professional Development offerings are in full swing. They can be found on the Graduate School's calendar in addition to our social media. Discover USC will take place on April 17th at the Convention Center. The deadline for Abstract submissions is March 6th. Graduate students can participate in one of two ways: they can submit an abstract for the poster presentation or they can submit an abstract for the three-minute thesis competition. March 6th is a firm deadline this year. No late abstracts will be accepted due to the behind the scenes work associated with assigning them to poster sessions and three-minute thesis heats. Graduate students who have received funding through SPARC and through other programs on campus are required to submit an abstract. Encourage your students to submit by March 6th. March 27th is the deadline for volunteers and reviewers to register in the system. Wright Culpepper in the Graduate School is the main contact for graduate students who might have questions.

We are concerned because no one has received a mass email from the Vice President for Research Office announcing Discover USC. We are not sure if they are waiting to confirm the speaker, but we have been sending emails through the graduate director listserv and through the graduate student listserv. We have been staying in touch with Lauren Clark as March 6th is a few weeks away.

The Graduate Civic Scholars Programs deadline was this past Monday. We had 13 applicants which was a little less than what we've had in the past couple of years. They represent 10 programs including 11 doctoral students and 2 masters students. The Fellowships and Scholarships Committee is meeting on Tuesday, February 25th, to review the applicants.

Dr. Mitchell offered encouragement to program faculty to encourage their students to be involved in this endeavor. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to get some practice on either the poster session or the three-minute thesis. He is afraid that some students might get dissuaded or frightened off from participating by the title of the competition because they have not done their thesis yet. It doesn't matter. This is the perfect opportunity to get some practice speaking in front of a crowd about their work in a short period of time and making understandable what it is they are studying. When these three-minute theses are done well, they are truly fascinating. There are a lot of students doing great work, but it is a well-kept secret. Getting those secrets out would be part of our shared mission. Encouraging your colleagues to encourage their students to present in either of these formats would be highly desirable.

The winner from last year, Otega A. Ejegbavwo, was excellent and will be representing the Graduate School at the Conference of Southern Graduate School's three-minute thesis regional competition next week in Birmingham, Alabama. She has been working with John Edwards, resident expert in this format, on her slide and presentation. We look forward to hearing how she does.

7. **Report of the Graduate Student Association Representative** (Jennifer Mandelbaum)
Jennifer advised there has been some changes in the GSA administration. Their former Vice President, Nick Vera, has stepped down. The former Secretary of Legislative Affairs, Christopher Eddy, is now the Vice President. They are continuing to work on a mental health survey and are currently in talks with Student Health Services to see what they do to assist. They are working with Dr. Heather Brandt on some professional development initiatives for Graduate Student Appreciation Week.

The bigger update is that about two weeks ago, four members of GSA traveled with Dr. Addy to Washington, DC to meet with SC Congressional Delegation. They focused on four main issues that are affecting graduate students (see also handout attached):

1. Student Finance and Loan Repayment
2. Updates to FAFSA
3. Information & Transparency
4. Proposed Amendments to Title IX

8. **Report of the Academic Policy and Practices Committee** (Jim Mensch)
No report.

9. **Report of the 500/600 Level Courses, Distributed Learning and Special Topics Courses**
(Murray Mitchell)

This report is presented to Council for informational purposes only; no action is necessary.

500/600 Courses for January 2020 Grad Council

(CCP = Course Change Proposal; NCP=New Course Proposal; STC=Special Topics Course)

CRJU 591 (3) Criminological Case Studies (STC: Fall 2020)

CRJU 591 (3) Miscarriages of Justice (STC: Fall 2020)

EDUC 635 (3) Anne and Emmett: Confronting Antisemitism, Racism and Otherness through Pedagogy
(STC: Fall 2020)

ENHS 592 (3) Disasters, Catastrophes, and their Management (STC: SU 2020)
JOUR 531 (3) Public Relations Campaigns (CCP: Fall 2021)
LING 527 (3) Introduction to Mathematical Methods in Linguistics (NCP: Fall 2021)
MART 590 (3) Action Cinema Production (STC: Fall 2020)
MATH 525 (3) Mathematical Game Theory (CCP: Fall 2020)
MATH 541 (3) Algebraic Coding Theory (CCP: Fall 2020)
MATH 546 (3) Algebraic Structures I (CCP: Fall 2020)
MSCI 599 (3) Organic Geochemistry (STC: Fall 2020)
MUED 554 (3) MUED, Special Needs, Label Free (STC: SU 2020)
MUSC 582 (3) Music and Money (CCCP: Fall 2021)
MUSC 590 (3) Seminar in Music Entrepreneurship (CCP: Fall 2021)
SPAN 518 (3) Introduction to Spanish Medieval Literature (CCP: Fall 2021)
SPAN 524 (3) Renaissance and Golden Age Literature (CCP: Fall 2021)
SPAN 534 (3) Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literature (CCP: Fall 2021)
THEA 599 (3) Makeup Design for Graduate Design/Performance (STC: Spring 2020)

Distributed Learning Proposals

CRJU 591 (3) Criminological Case Studies (STC: Fall 2020)

Special Topics Course Proposals

BADM 790 (3) Global Profitability Frameworks (STC: Summer 2020)
BADM 790 (3) Strategic Deal-making Frameworks (STC: Summer 2020)
CPLT 800 (3) Bodies in Cross-Cultural Perspectives (STC: Fall 2020; cross list with WGST 796)
CRJU 591 (3) Criminological Case Studies (STC: Fall 2020)
CRJU 591 (3) Miscarriages of Justice (STC: Fall 2020)
EDRD 824 (3) Discourse Analysis (STC: Summer 2020)
EDUC 635 (3) Anne and Emmett: Confronting Antisemitism, Racism and Otherness through Pedagogy (STC: Fall 2020)
ENHS 592 (3) Disasters, Catastrophes, and their Management (STC: SU 2020)
MART 590 (3) Action Cinema Production (STC: Fall 2020)
MATH 728 (3) Variational Methods for PDEs and Model Reduction (STC Fall 2020)
MATH 748 (3) Computational Algebra (STC: Fall 2020)
MKTG 712 (3) Marketing Analytics (STC: Summer 2020)
MSCI 599 (3) Organic Geochemistry (STC: Fall 2020)
MUED 554 (3) MUED, Special Needs, Label Free (STC: SU 2020)
THEA 599 (3) Makeup Design for Graduate Design/Performance (STC: Spring 2020)
WGST 796 (3) Bodies in Cross-Cultural Perspectives (STC: Fall 2020; cross list with CPLT 800)

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

None at this time.

11. **Fellowships and Scholarships Committee** (Jean Ellis)

Dr. Ellis reported that her committee has met twice since our last Graduate Council meeting. They have

reviewed 50 Presidential Fellowships for Rounds 1 and 2 and 22 Grace Jordan McFadden Fellowships.

As of today, 2 have accepted the Presidential Fellowship offer, and 6 offers are still outstanding. The students that have been denied or waitlisted have been notified - not directly but through the DGS.

As far as the Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program (GJMPP) (\$6000 per year for four years) – they were excited because the number of applicants went up this year. Our committee recommends a short list and then we forward it to the McFadden Program committee. They are aware that the program has already made their offers and one has accepted.

In the short term:

- Round 3 of the Presidential Fellows is due March 6 and these will be reviewed the week after Spring Break. The trustee recruiting fellowships will also be reviewed at that time.
- The continuing student fellowships are due on April 1 and April 3 - please see the website and nominate your students.

12. **Report of Science, Math, and Related Professional Programs Committee** (Murray Mitchell for Rick Creswick)

Below is a list of proposals reviewed by the Committee. Each curricular action can be viewed at this Public Agenda review site:

<https://www.sc.edu/programproposal/agenda/?id=82&code=GCO>

At this Public Agenda link, the individual proposals are not live-linked, but agenda items are listed in alphabetical order. To view the full proposals, GC members and Committee Chairs still need to go to the Committee Review site, and filter for “Committees”, then for the “Committee” called “Added to Grad Council agenda.”

- **ENHS Academic Certificate**, Environmental Nanoscience and Risk Certificate, Public Health, New Program: Fall 2020
- **PHRB Major / Degree Program**, Pharmaceutical Sciences, M.S., Pharmacy, Change to Existing Program: Fall 2020

These proposals were unanimously approved by Graduate Council.

13. **Report of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Related Professional Programs Committee** (Murray Mitchell for Robin DiPietro)

Below is a list of proposals reviewed by the Committee. Each curricular action can be viewed at this Public Agenda review site:

<https://www.sc.edu/programproposal/agenda/?id=82&code=GCO>

At this Public Agenda link, the individual proposals are not live-linked, but agenda items are listed in alphabetical order. To view the full proposals, GC members and Committee Chairs still need to go to the Committee Review site, and filter for “Committees”, then for the “Committee” called “Added to Grad Council agenda.”

- **MGSC 790** (3) Data Resource Management, Business, CCP: Summer 2020
- **ZZBA Academic Certificate**, Business Analytics, Business, Change to Existing Program: Fall 2020

These proposals were unanimously approved by Graduate Council.

14. **Report of the Grievances, Appeals and Petitions Committee** (Bobby Brame)
No report.

15. **Other Committee Reports**

16. **Old Business**

17. **New Business**

18. **Good of the Order**

Dr. Mitchell thanked Council members for participating in the discussion of issues at today’s meeting. The unfortunate aspect of bringing substantive issues forward for discussion is that our meetings may take longer than the 60 minutes we have grown accustomed to scheduling. This is the appropriate body to consider possible changes to policies and procedures that impact graduate education at this institution—it is the correct path for making improvements to what we do. So, please continue to request input from your departmental and college colleagues for any graduate issues that may warrant further consideration. And thank you to those of you who have been able to ensure that your schedule will allow you to stay for longer than 60 minutes in the event that discussion extends for longer than one hour.

As ever, please sign in on the attendance sheet to allow us to report an accurate record of this meeting.

19. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:18pm.

Murray Mitchell, Secretary

CC:

Bob Caslen, President

Tayloe Harding, Interim Provost

Cheryl Addy, Vice Provost & Dean of the Graduate School

Deans

Department Chairs

Graduate Directors

Aaron Marterer, University Registrar

Elaine Belesky, Office of the Registrar

Malia Kiehl, Office of the Registrar

Tara George, Office of the Registrar

Relevant Legislative Issues Affecting Graduate Students

Prepared by the University of South Carolina Graduate Student Association

Student Finance and Loan Repayment

Support:

- **H.R. 3334** – Expanding Access to Graduate Education Act of 2019
- **H.R. 4545** – Private Loan Disability Discharge Act
- **H.R. 4670** – Simplifying Student Loans Act
- **H.R. 4674** – College Affordability Act
- **H.R. 4749** – Student Loan Relief Act of 2019
- **H.R. 4869** – Student Loan Default Reduction Program Act
- **H.R. 5287** – Fair Student Loan Debt Collection Practices Act
- **H.R. 5294** – Student Borrower Protections Act
- **S.3055** – Student Loan Repayment Freedom Act

To ensure that student loan borrowers have strong protections from harmful lending and collection practices.

Updates to FAFSA

Support:

- **S.2667** – FAFSA Simplification Act of 2019
- **H. R. 4567** – FAFSA Translation Act

To decrease the length and complexity of the FAFSA.

Information & Transparency

Support:

- **H.R. 4648** – Transparency in Off-Campus Housing Act
- **H.R. 4587** – Truth in Tuition Act of 2019
- **H.R. 4596** – Student Loan Advocacy Act
- **H.R. 4662** – Accountability in Student Loan Data Act
- **H.R. 4968** – Basic Assistance for Students in College (BASIC) Act
- **H.R. 5148** – Higher Education Standards Improvement Act
- **H.R. 5528** – Congressional Advisory Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics Act (CACIA) of 2019
- **S. 3095** – Accessible Instructional Materials in Higher Education (AIM HIGH) Act

To provide accountability and transparency across a variety of issues directly affecting graduate students

Proposed Amendments to Title IX

Support:

- **H.R. 5388** Prohibition on Regulations That Weaken the Enforcement of The Prohibition Of Sex Discrimination

To provide that the Secretary of Education may not issue or enforce certain rules that weaken the enforcement of the prohibition of sex discrimination applicable under title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

International Students

Crucial Goals:

- Maintain duration of status for international students with F, M, and J visas.
- Ensure timely processing of student visas to minimize interruption of a student's academic progression.
- Allow international students who obtain advanced degrees to qualify for immigrant visas so that they may remain in the U.S. and work.
- Stabilize and end DHS's fee hikes for international students

Commendations

Recent Achievements:

- **H.R. 5363** – Passage of the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE)
- **H.J.Res.76** – House Passage, providing for congressional disapproval of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to "Borrower Defense Institutional Accountability"

Please feel free to contact us at sogsa@mailbox.sc.edu.

