MINUTES
The Graduate Council
May 26, 2022
Zoom

Members Present: Ron Bramhall (ex officio), Christopher Chavez, Krista Chronister (ex officio), Katherine Donaldson (ex officio), Ihab Elzeyadi, Aaron Gullickson, Stephen Hallmark (ex officio), Beth Harn, Volya Kapatsinski, Jaewoo Kim, Julia Pomerenk (ex officio), Leslie Straka, Frances White (ex officio)

Members Absent: Andre Djiffack, Alexis Garcia, Isaac Gomez, Gyoung-Ah Lee

Division of Graduate Studies Staff in Attendance: Tara Kaiser, Jered Nagel

The meeting was called to order at 3:34pm.

Computer Science AMP

From Computer Science, Professor Allen Malony and Director of Undergraduate Studies, Kathleen Freeman, joined the Graduate Council meeting to provide clarification on their proposal and to answer any questions. They explained that the Computer Science program currently has a process in place that allows undergraduate students to waive up to 8 credits of graduate work if they have received an A- or higher in 400-level electives that have a 500-level equivalent. This proposal for an AMP includes that structure as an option and also proposes to allow 16 shared credits for both the bachelors and master’s degrees. Because the Computer Science masters requires 54 credits of graduate level coursework (instead of 45), students who do not waive the 8 credits of graduate work will still be able to meet the degree requirement.

Several Council members voiced concern that (1) the graduate level electives are too varied, (2) students may end up using up elective credits before they become a master’s student, and (3) students may become locked into a specific track. The proposal should include specifics about how students will be advised and how the electives contribute to different areas of interest. Professor Maloney explained that courses taken may satisfy either “breadth,” “depth,” or elective requirements, and it is assumed that the credits taken as an undergraduate will count toward electives, so that they can continue more in-depth studies as a graduate student.

Professor Aaron Gullickson motioned to approve this proposal pending clarification on breadth, depth, and electives courses. Professor Christopher Chavez seconded the motion, and the Council approved.

Electrochemistry AMP

This proposal was discussed in the last Graduate Council meeting, and adjustments have since been made. The main point of clarification is that the AMP credit limit is 24 but may be 25 if a student decides to take an optional 1-credit professional development course. Therefore, 16 or 17 credits would be shared for both the bachelor’s and master’s degree, and 8 credits would be reserved for the masters.

The Graduate Council noted that the conditions for admission and the learning outcomes in this proposal are very vague. There needs to be an explanation on how students will be evaluated, to ensure they are completing what is required of them.

Professor Volya Kapatsinski motioned to approve the proposal. Professor Christopher Chavez seconded the motion, and the Council approved.
ReThinking the Dissertation

English Professors Mary Wood and Heidi Kaufman joined the Graduate Council meeting to present a proposal that would broaden the language of dissertation descriptions, allowing either a traditional dissertation or a hybrid format that includes both a scholarly paper and a digital project.

The Graduate Council voiced the following questions and concerns that should be addressed in the proposal:

- What constitutes a digital project?
  - In this proposal, “digital” is referring to anything that is dynamic such as a timeline or dynamic map, and not fixed like a PDF
  - Some traditional dissertations already include a digital component, such as data sets or scholarly archives. SOJC allows documentaries or film-making projects for the dissertation.
    - This proposal aims to unify the writing piece and the digital piece, so that they work together, rather than one component accompanying the other.
- Departments should have the authority to clarify what types of digital projects are allowed.
  - There is a reference in the proposal that students need to develop a digital project based on current methods in their field with consultation with the department and dissertation committee. Selecting an appropriate project will help students develop professional skills that expand their expertise in areas both inside and outside academia.
  - It is a challenge to keep the proposal vague enough to be flexible across disciplines, but also specific enough to define everything clearly.
  - Terms may mean different things across departments.
  - Need clear guidance on how the written and digital projects will be equivalent, and how it will be evaluated by faculty.
- The proposal references capstone projects, but these are usually associated with a master’s degree.
  - The language should be updated so that capstones are not associated with a PhD.
  - There should also be assurances as to how the hybrid dissertation model is of PhD level work and unlike a capstone.
- The digital project platform may become unavailable or obsolete in the distant future

Jered will work Mary and Heidi to refine the proposal and bring it back for discussion in the fall.

Open Discussion/Year-End Wrap-Up

Jered Nagel shared a document outlining the accomplishments of the Graduate Council in the 2021-22 academic year and thanked all members for their continued support and service to the overall improvement of graduate education at the University of Oregon.

The Council adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Straka
Graduate Council Secretary