

**MINUTES**  
The Graduate Council  
May 8, 2023  
Zoom

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**Members Present:** Ron Bramhall (*ex officio*), Christopher Chavez, Krista Chronister (*ex officio*), Katherine Donaldson (*ex officio*), Erik Girvan, Aaron Gullickson, Bonnie Gutierrez (*ex officio*), Beth Harn, Martin Klebes, Gyoung-Ah Lee, Barbara Muraca, Raghuv eer Parthasarathy, Hatsue Sato, Leslie Straka, Annie Zemper

**Members Absent:** Jaewoo Kim, Rebecca Lewis, Keya Saxena, Frances White (*ex officio*)

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

The meeting was called to order at 12:03PM and the April meeting minutes were approved.

**Holds Policy**

Jesse Nelson, Assistant Vice Provost for Advising and Accessibility, Julia Pomerenk, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and University Registrar, and Grant Schoonover, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Success joined the Graduate Council meeting to propose a new policy to govern the use of registration holds at the UO. They explained to the Council that registration holds can have a significant impact on student experience, and that historically, there hasn't been a formal governing structure on when to appropriately apply them.

This proposal involves the formation of a Registration Hold Governance Committee (RHGC) that will:

- 1) Review a department's request for a new hold type.
- 2) Review the impact of currently existing holds (data which can be pulled from Banner).
- 3) Work with the Division of Graduate Studies to publish an annual document on the currently approved registration holds with applicable information such as which office holds it and details on how to get it resolved.
  - a. The RHGC may reach out to individual units to discuss these holds to determine their impact and ensure it's meeting the guiding principles and best practices.

The proposal states that registration holds may be proposed for one of the following reasons:

- 1) To enforce policy, laws or regulations
- 2) To guide or compel student action, including action to meet financial and/or compliance obligations.

It was noted that reason number 2 is to cover anything that may not point to a vetted policy or regulation. However, the Graduate Council found this worrisome because it implies that a hold could potentially be placed for any reason. There must always be a policy that the action points to, and a hold should only be applied when an official university, administrative, or departmental policy was violated. The consequences of those violations must also be transparent to students.

Some minor language amendments suggested by the Council included:

- Clarifying that the two reasons for applying a hold are the "defined objectives," that are referred to later in the proposal.
- Clarifying the use of the word "hold," in that, it applies to the hold type itself, not an individual hold for each student.
- Idea to insert an alternative, less restrictive option in place of reason number 2, that would allow for departments to avoid placing a hold altogether.

Some examples of the types of holds that may be put in place for graduate students could be in regard to immunizations, transcripts, satisfactory progress, finance, or conduct.

### **Educational Leadership – Revisions to M.Ed. and D.Ed. programs**

The March vote on this proposal was postponed due to pending UOCC approval of courses. All pending courses have now received preliminary UOCC review and deemed approvable for purposes of voting.

Christopher Chavez motioned to approve the proposals. Erik Girvan seconded the motion, and it passed with majority approval.

### **Revisions to Master's Programs in French, Italian, Spanish, and Romance Languages**

Last year, the Graduate Council passed a policy regarding the way generic courses can be used as course requirements, and this proposal is the first case under the new policy in which 601 is being used as a required course. Leah Middlebrook joined the Graduate Council meeting to give a presentation on the proposed changes to these programs.

The revisions aim to address various problems that the department had been facing, and were outlined by Leah as follows:

- 1) Reduce the 4-period requirement in coursework to 2 periods.
  - a. Strict historical periodization is out of step with the program's disciplines and not how academic study, research, and teaching works anymore across many different levels.
  - b. Faculty were teaching in period-specific ways to prepare students for the MA Exam, but most courses dealt with themes and topics.
- 2) Standardize all required course credits to 4 credits, for a total of 52 credits for the MA.
  - a. Previously, these courses could be taken as 2 or 4 credits and varied across the different sectors of Romance Languages.
- 3) Add a linguistics requirement for Spanish.
- 4) Eliminate the MA exam.
  - a. Prepping for this exam distracts students from investing meaningful and appropriate time into the MA essay.
  - b. Many universities no longer require an MA exam.
- 5) Make the requirements for the MA essay more rigorous and include mentoring and systematic guidance allowing for the development of a meaningful capstone project.

The Graduate Council asked how the MA essay structure will work under these new guidelines and how the 601 research course will come into play. Leah explained that better structuring the MA essay and allowing students to receive credit for research formalizes what had previously been an informal process. Currently, students developing their final MA project team up with faculty for coaching as needed, but it isn't explicitly clear on what they should be accomplishing nor how faculty should be guiding them. Under the new process, faculty will work with the graduate committee to develop protocols and finalize the guidelines of the essay. When a student signs up for 601 credits, they will be required to work with their advisor to develop an approved plan of study.

The Graduate Council noted the below concerns, and would like additional clarity before voting to approve this proposal:

- The MA essay is directed and approved by one faculty member rather than a committee, and approved additionally by a second reader. The Council would like to know how the main advisor interacts with the second reader, and to have these details incorporated into the proposal.
- Concern if the one advising faculty member were to depart the institution.
- Having students take 4 credits of 601 in fall of second year is unusual because usually those credits are taken during the term in which the essay is complete.

- Leah says that fall of the second year is when students will begin working with a faculty member to prepare for their essay and determine how they'll integrate their research into the essay throughout the year.
- However, this results in research credits not being captured in the following terms.
- Leah will check with her committee and report back with more information on this.
- The proposal does not include grading criteria for the 601.
  - Does the Graduate Council want to require that level of detail in proposals, or leave to programs to describe it in their handbooks?
  - Idea to require a copy of program's handbook with new course proposals.

### **Updated Guidance Document for New Council Members**

Krista Chronister and Jered Nagel have incorporated the Graduate Council's feedback on the guidance document for new members, including adding a line to clarify that the Graduate Council is part of the faculty governance process for proposals, as well as other minor abbreviations to more clearly highlight key areas. Krista also announced that an orientation will be held for new Graduate Council members at the beginning of their service.

Beth Harn brought up the topic of providing additional feedback to departments to ensure their handbooks have sufficient evaluation criteria, etc. to avoid grievances. However, Krista states that this will be a task more suited for the Division of Graduate Studies rather than the Graduate Council. The Division will begin to evaluate how handbooks can be audited, and perhaps develop a template for departments to use.

Erik Girvan suggested that in addition to asking programs if they've considered all aspects of what they're proposing, the Graduate Council should also ensure that the department's policies and practices associated with proposals are well-developed and transparent to students.

The Council adjourned at 1:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Leslie Straka  
Graduate Council Secretary