

MINUTES

The Graduate Council

January 9, 2024
Zoom

Members Present: Krista Chronister (*ex officio*), Nancy Cunningham (*ex officio*), Erik Girvan, Xiangchen Gu, Bonnie Gutierrez (*ex officio*), Aaron Gullickson, Beth Harn, Annie Liu, Gabriela Martinez, Ben McMorran, Kate Mills, Leslie Straka, Frances White (*ex officio*)

Members Absent: Ron Bramhall (*ex officio*), Jason Brown, Maile Hutterer, Jaewoo Kim, Barbara Muraca

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

The meeting was called to order at 2:03PM and the November minutes were approved.

Policy Discussion: Dissertation Proposal Requirement

The Division of Graduate Studies (DGS) seeks the Graduate Council's guidance on whether or not to move toward requiring doctoral students to have an approved dissertation proposal before they can advance to candidacy. Currently, some programs require the proposal before advancing to candidacy, whereas others allow students to advance to candidacy via different method (exams, prospectus, etc.), and submit their dissertation proposal sometime after. The idea behind bringing this for Graduate Council review is to standardize procedures and maintain consistency across programs.

A few Council members agree that requiring a proposal before advancing to candidacy does assist with keeping students on track to complete their degree in a timely manner. Not requiring it may result in students seeking extensions which would also impact their GE positions. However, it was also noted that the majority of doctoral programs do not require a proposal before advancing to candidacy, so asking programs to change their requirements would require strong reasoning. The benefit of the other methods of advancing to candidacy is that they are structured in a way that allow students to revisit curriculum and prove their knowledge in their area, which gets them actively thinking about what to do for their dissertation.

Krista Chronister shared that OVPRI data shows that most programs that require proposals before advancing to candidacy have a shorter time to degree than those that do not. Some Graduate Council members may be interested in revising their requirements based on concrete data showing shorter time to degree. The Council is also interested in learning what different programs are doing across campus, as well as if they require students to obtain a master's degree.

Open Discussion as Needed

- Dissertation Formats
 - o Current regulations require a written dissertation, the format of which is under the discretion of the dissertation committee in collaboration with the student, i.e., 5-chapter approach, multiple articles, etc.
 - o The Graduate Council would like to revisit the topic of alternative dissertation mediums, such as digital media, film, etc. The English department had brought this topic to Graduate Council several years ago for discussion, but the Council's concerns were never addressed.
- Application Fee Waivers
 - o The question was raised if the DGS will continue to work with departments to offer application fee waivers to students invited to events such as SACNAS in order to recruit individuals from underrepresented groups.
 - o Krista explained that due to the supreme court ruling related to race-based admissions, providing waivers at those events would be categorized as an opportunity presented to a

- specific group, which is not allowed. She will however consult with the Admissions department on ways to navigate this.
- There are currently general guidelines in place on who qualifies for a fee waiver, and many underrepresented individuals, or those with economic challenges, usually meet these criteria.
- Departments also have the ability to pay for student fee waivers if they choose.
- GTFF Bargaining
 - In regard to a possible strike, there are challenges on how to distinguish between research GEs' paid work and research credit hours. This distinction is unfortunately not clear and is up to the PI to determine which hours are paid work and which are research credit.
 - Krista suggests that faculty review the GTFF Bargaining: Research FAQ located on the HR website, which offers guidance on navigating issues surrounding a strike.
 - Following the bargaining meeting on January 11th, Central Communications will report whether an agreement was made, or if meetings will continue. The first day to officially strike is January 17th.
- Credit Enrollment for GE Advancing to Candidacy
 - There has been no change in the policy that requires GEs advancing to candidacy to enroll in at least 9 credits.
 - The challenge in reducing the number of credits lies in creating a policy that captures the many paths students may take upon advancing to candidacy, such as participation in activities or only working on their dissertation.
 - Additionally, there is no clear benefit to the student in reducing the number of credits.

The Council adjourned at 2:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kate Mills, Graduate Council Secretary