

# MINUTES

## The Graduate Council

February 13, 2024  
Zoom

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

**Members Absent:** Aaron Gullickson, 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 2:06PM and the January minutes will be voted on and approved via email since quorum was not reached at the start of the meeting.

### Satisfactory Progress Policy

Jered Nagel, on behalf of the Division of Graduate Studies (DGS), presented a proposal to the Graduate Council to simplify the current Satisfactory Progress Policy. Currently, the DGS tracks graduate students' satisfactory progress and informs their program if certain criteria are not being met. The DGS may work with the department and decide to place the student into one of the following categories: (1) No Action, such as for students who may not be meeting one of the requirements and are reminded of the policy; (2) Academic Warning, for minor deficiencies or GPA below 3.0; (3) Academic Probation, such as for a significantly low GPA or failure to correct other issues. The programs are then responsible for taking steps to ensure the student regains satisfactory progress by developing an academic improvement plan and issuing a probation letter when necessary. The current policy offers no concrete guidelines on what violations warrant which action and has therefore resulted in confusion and inequity across programs. Additionally, there have been cases where programs failed to accurately inform the student of their status, resulting in a sudden and surprising dismissal. In revising the current policy, the DGS hopes to simplify the guidelines and prevent future miscommunications.

Under the proposed revised policy, (1) No Action and (2) Academic Warning will be eliminated. The DGS will continue to track students' satisfactory progress and work with programs to correct any issues, but if certain criteria are routinely not met the DGS will issue a notice of Academic Probation directly to the student. Should this happen, the program must work with the student to develop an academic improvement plan, and they will have a deadline of 2 terms to regain satisfactory progress, otherwise it may result in a dismissal. The new policy also lays out a formal process for probation and dismissal, as well as how to reinstate a student if they have been dismissed. The DGS will not issue a probation or dismissal without consulting the program.

Concerns and suggestions offered by the Graduate Council were as follows:

- Concurrent JD students are typically flagged for not maintaining continuous enrollment because Banner does not recognize Law classes as graduate classes, and it would be worrisome if students were wrongly placed on probation because of this. Jered assures however that proper tracking of these cases will ensure that notices are not wrongfully sent.
- Programs may have their own written guidelines on what constitutes probation or immediate dismissal that the DGS may not be able to track. In these cases, if a program issues probation or dismissal of a student, they should notify the DGS.
- Guidelines on how to develop and implement an academic improvement plan should be included in the proposal.
- Request for structural changes to the policy:
  - o Include "Unsatisfactory Academic Progress" header, and list reasons why a student may be placed on probation, followed by "Academic Probation" header.

The Graduate Council are generally on board with the policy, but text and information needs to be more streamlined for clarity. The DGS will take the Graduate Council's suggestions and restructure the policy to illustrate the guidelines in a more cohesive manner and vote in the next meeting.

### **Registration Holds Policy**

Julia Pomerenk from the UO Registrar joined the Graduate Council meeting to follow up on the Registration Holds Policy (previously discussed in May 2023) which outlines the required criteria for proposing a registration hold. The policy has been approved by the Undergraduate Council, and if approved by the Graduate Council will continue to the University Senate.

The Registrar intends to work with the units across campus to review all reasons why they may propose a registration hold and develop a clear process for implementing it. This will ensure that best practices are being followed, communication with the student is accurate and timely, and that the hold can be removed promptly once the students meets the necessary criteria. The Registrar will review the units' holds policies annually.

The Graduate Council wondered if guidance will be available on how to advise students on getting their holds removed. Julia stated that if the policy is approved, Jessie Nelson will likely release formal information and guidelines so that faculty can properly advise students.

Beth Harn motioned to approve the policy. Gabriella Martinez seconded the motion and the Graduate Council unanimously approved.

### **Open Discussion as Needed**

The Graduate Council discussed an issue regarding a recent dismissal appeal, where it was found that though the department's policies and procedures were followed, there were some accommodation gaps, and the student was not provided with adequate support or offered proper resources to remedy their probation before being dismissed. Erik Girvan suggested that to prevent future occurrences such as these, it would be beneficial to create a checklist to ensure that resources and support are being offered to the student prior to dismissal. A checklist would also allow the department to have record of such action taking place.

To ensure that programs have proper guidance and that their handbooks contain all the relevant steps for probation and dismissals, the DGS could develop a checklist for programs to follow. Members of the Graduate Council offered to gather information from their own departments to share with the DGS. Frances White also mentioned that several years ago, there was a GTFF group that actively focused on accessible education access for graduate students that may worth researching.

The Council adjourned at 3:09pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kate Mills", is written over a horizontal line.

Kate Mills, Graduate Council Secretary