

MINUTES

The Graduate Council

March 19, 2024
Zoom

Members Present: Krista Chronister (*ex officio*), Erik Girvan, Xiangchen Gu, Aaron Gullickson, Bonnie Gutierrez (*ex officio*), Beth Harn, Maile Hutterer, Gabriela Martinez, Ben McMorrان, Kate Mills, Leslie Straka, Frances White (*ex officio*)

Members Absent: Ron Bramhall (*ex officio*), Jason Brown, Nancy Cunningham (*ex officio*), Jaewoo Kim, Annie Liu, Barbara Muraca

Division of Graduate Studies Staff in Attendance: Jered Nagel

The meeting was called to order at 2:05PM.

Satisfactory Progress Policy

This is a follow up discussion on the revision of the Satisfactory Progress Policy which was presented to the Graduate Council during the February meeting. Per the Graduate Council's suggestion, Jered Nagel has restructured the general layout of the written policy and clarified details on Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory Progress, Academic Probation, and Dismissals. The Division of Graduate Studies (DGS) tracks student data relating to these actions, but Jered reiterated the importance of programs maintaining contact with the DGS when it comes to students failing to meet program-specific requirements. Programs should remain in consultation with the DGS to ensure that any probation or dismissal action is backed up by written documentation, and that the student was well informed of the reason for the action. Programs should ensure that their handbooks clearly state any internal unsatisfactory penalties or grace periods. Any exceptions, such as for students facing extenuating circumstances, should also be discussed with the DGS.

Maile Hutterer mentioned an issue surrounding the requirement to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 or higher within the first 18 letter-graded credits after reinstatement, as outlined in the Reinstatement After Dismissal Petition. She explained that depending on where a student is at in their academic career, they may not need to take letter-graded courses, so they cannot raise their GPA. In this case, students may be required to take extra courses to raise their GPA. This extra requirement, and the financial burden it carries, should be made very clear to students being reinstated. Jered welcomes feedback and suggestions on how to better handle this issue.

Frances White suggested a policy be submitted to the Registrar and Scholastic Review Committee (SRC) on how to handle graduate students' academic standing changes so that they have better background knowledge on why a change might be made.

Krista and Jered will continue to rework the language of the policy for more clarity and bring it back to Graduate Council for a vote.

Dissertation Committee Policy

This policy was last reviewed about 10 years ago, and Jered Nagel would like the Graduate Council's guidance on updating it for current relevancy.

The policy states that the Institutional Representative (IR) that serves on a dissertation committee must be a tenured track faculty member, however, students and faculty are often confused as to why a closely related Career Research Faculty member (formerly NTFFs) with expertise in their area cannot serve as an IR. Jered suggested reconsidering this requirement and/or developing better guidance on the IRs role and expectations. Many Council members agree that there is value in having and outside individual serve as an IR. An outside IR

can 1) provide additional expertise in ensuring the rigor/standard of work, 2) be an outside resource in making sure the student/advisor relationship is healthy and positive, and 3) provide objective recommendations for improvement with a lessened potential for repercussions.

The Council continued to discuss how even though Career Research Faculty work closely with doctoral students, they are not allowed to chair committees, but it is possible, however, for a committee to petition for an exception to this rule. The Council suggested including in the policy formal guidelines and instructions on the petitioning process. There was some concern that when Career Research Faculty serve as IRs or chairs, their efforts go beyond their job description, and they are not compensated for it. Additionally, they may feel a sense of obligation to serve on a committee if asked. However, if a Career Research Faculty agrees to serve and is deemed an appropriate choice, they should be allowed to petition.

Another issue that was discussed was the timeline for selecting a committee. Currently, a student's dissertation committee must be on file for at least 6 months prior to their defense date. If a chair or advisor changes, it restarts the 6-month clock; if the IR changes, it starts a 3-month clock; and a core member can change at any point up to applying for defense. The reasoning behind a 6-month timeline is unknown, but Council members believe that to be an adequate time to work with their committee on a dissertation and ensure that solid expertise is informing the research. Restarting the clock however could delay progress, especially if something happens outside the control of the student. Jered noted that there are petitioning processes in place to prevent delays should any sudden changes occur.

The current policy also requires the whole dissertation committee be selected at once, however, it was suggested that a chair be selected as early as possible, even perhaps before the rest of the committee. If a student is struggling to find a chair, one should be appointed by the program.

Krista and Jered will consider feedback and come back with a revised policy.

Military Deployment Accommodation Rights Policy

The Registrar was not involved in the formation of the policy, and it went through for Senate approval without proper review. Julia Pomerenk will be reaching out to the Senate and suggesting revisions that will better align it with current UO policies. More information is forthcoming.

Open Discussion

- Students who are performing field research are required to go "on leave," creating a misperception that they have stepped away from their program, when they are in fact performing research. Reapplying for on-leave status if field work gets extended has also been proven troublesome. Frances White suggested that a new category be created for these types of students to more accurately reflect their registration status.
- There is a requirement that 400/500 level undergraduate courses have a syllabus. However, a syllabus for 600/700 level graduate courses is only recommended. UOCC would like there to be some minimum content specified in a syllabus for graduate level courses. Generic courses do not require a syllabus. Jered says that this topic is in the pipeline to be discussed in the future.

The Council adjourned at 3:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kate Mills, Graduate Council Secretary