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Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes

Graduate Council

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MINUTES

Graduate Associate Deans

December 15, 2016
402 Communications Building
2:00 – 3:30PM

Members Attending: **Dixie Thompson** (Vice-Provost & Dean), **Jeffrey Fairbrother** (Education, Health, & Human Sciences), **Mary Gunther** (Nursing), **Katherine Ambroziak** (Architecture and Design), **Claudia Kirk** (Veterinary Medicine), **Masood Parang** (Tickle Engineering), **John Stier** (CASNR), **Bruce Behn** (Haslam Business), **Alex Long** (Law), **Stephen Kania** (Vet Med), **Joan Rentsch** (Communication & Information), **Sherry Cummings** (Social Work),

Ex Officio: **Holly Mercer** (University Libraries), **Sean Hendricks** (Graduate School), **Sarah Stone** (Graduate School); **Ernest Brothers** (Graduate School)

1. **Welcome & meeting called to order** at 2 p.m. by Dixie Thompson. She thanked everyone for adjusting their schedules to accommodate the meeting this week since hooding was last Thursday. Thanks to everyone who participated, it was a wonderful event.
2. **Minutes of the November 10, 2016 meeting were approved.**
3. **Graduate School Updates**

A. Fellowship information has been posted. New this year:

- Dr. Thompson went through original documents regarding these endowments to make sure we were being true to them; we also looked at the amounts so that we can maximize our gifts to students.
- Campus had asked for earlier decisions, so we had to have earlier deadlines. While the new deadline (Feb. 8) may complicate things for some, it also really helps many to be able to have those outcomes earlier. It is important to point out that all department decisions do not have to be made by February 8; however, if there are really great students that you are trying to attract, then departments can accept them, nominate them for these awards, and then they can be “at the front of the class,” so to speak.
- Spivey Award in Arts & Humanities has been adjusted. Instead of \$15,000 for 1 year, it is \$5,000 spread over three years.

- There has been a desire to see more available for returning students, and some of our awards did have language about retention. Therefore, we have converted a couple of these awards for returning students.
- You will notice in the call for nominations, there are two deadlines: one geared towards new students (recruitment), and others geared toward retention of returning students.
- Please reach out to us if you have questions or need additional information on these awards. Also, please keep in mind that we are going to need you as reviewers. We anticipate getting a lot of nominations, and we will need to deploy multiple reviewers to keep it manageable. We don't want to make it a burden on anyone, we would rather have teams with several people working to review these applications.

The review process itself is quite a bit different this year. Dr. Thompson asked Sean Hendricks and Ernest Brothers to speak with the group regarding those changes.

- Sean Hendricks shared that there will a “how to” distributed a little later on, but one thing to know is that the process this time is being handled through ADMIT. The person(s) in the department responsible for submitting the nominations will need to have access to the ADMIT program, and we can help with that, if needed. When reviewing the student file, there will be a “fellowships” tab, and under that will be listed each of the fellowships and a place to upload the letter of endorsement. That is the only thing that will need to be uploaded at this time, except for returning students, where there is also an option for including a revised CV. Everything else can be pulled from their application in ADMIT
- Regarding the review process, the reviewers will log on and have access to the files they are to review with the rubric they need to complete next to it.
- Dr. Thompson noted that because Vet Med and Law admit students through their own mechanisms, they can contact Sean if they would like to nominate any of their students for these awards and he can help with that process.
- Ernest Brothers shared that this information has been shared with the Directors of Graduate Studies to ensure that they were able to convey information regarding the change in process. So far there has not been an overwhelming number of questions; still a few students have called to find out how they can apply for fellowships. We have had to reiterate that students will not be able to apply, but rather they are nominated.
- We are excited about the new process. Things are progressing well, we are right on the timeline we set forth, and as mentioned, we will be reaching out

soon about reviewers. Last year the reviewers were having to cover a large number of files, and we want to encourage folks that the process is improved and that will not be the case this year.

- Dr. Thompson mentioned that it will be important to communicate to your units that for every department, only 1 student can be nominated for each award, and each student can only be nominated for 1 award. This is a change...last year a student could be nominated for a multitude of awards. This way, every student has a way to get access to some kind of nomination, but not multiples. Faculty will need to negotiate a bit within the department, but we feel this will be a more fair process. Keep in mind that this is our Beta run on this procedure and we can tweak it next year if needed, but we are excited as we kick off the new process!

TN Fellowships for Graduate Excellence

- Tennessee Fellowships for Graduate Excellence are also part of the spring fellowship process. These are the \$10,000 top offs as colleges build packages for their best students. Dr. Thompson has met with several colleges upon their request to talk about how it will be implemented. She will distribute a spreadsheet in January that colleges will return with the list of people to whom they will be awarding these. Each college has its allotment, and so we will need to have a tracking mechanism for who those students are receiving the awards and what their total package is. This will not be as time sensitive as the other awards; we will need it early enough to begin publicity around it, but it is not as much of a crunch as the other fellowships.
- Also coming to you in January will be some information you can send the students when you are putting together these offers; something that relays that they are part of a special group of students getting some of the most prestigious and financially lucrative packages we can offer. We want you to really be able to get these students to say “yes” to The University of Tennessee. Sean is helping us look at creating a trifold that you can send out to the students and share information regarding the awards.
- We will be announcing who these students are by the late spring and into the summer; gathering stories of who they are, what they will be doing, creating events and opportunities for them to allow them to network and gel as a group. We want to create good support for them in terms of mentoring and guidance.
- Dr. Brothers shared that some have asked about intermingling these fellowship awards with the other graduate fellowships, so it is important to note they are not the same types of awards. Please help us to relay information to those in your departments about the various fellowships as

we introduce these new processes and opportunities, including distinguishing the differences among them.

Standards of Performance for Fellowship Recipients

- Dr. Thompson was asked to address the standards of performance for students receiving these fellowships, and she agreed that the standards should be higher. They should be the leaders of the class, setting the bar. These are not forever promises, and we have no problem with colleges having language about expectations.
- These “top-offs” are only available to the top students as selected by their departments who will also have additional support from the academic unit. As such, they will be expected to carry out those responsibilities, as well. In most cases the departments will be providing a 50% assistantship in addition to the fellowship funds.

Please feel free to contact our office if additional information is needed about the fellowship process.

B. 3MT Competition – Ernest Brothers

The 3MT was a concept originated by the University of Queensland. The idea is that Masters and PhD students present their research in three minutes with one slide. Last year we had a competition during the Graduate and Professional Student Awareness Week, and while it was successful, it was pulled together rather quickly! This year we want to provide more structure as we head into it and truly make it a special event. We recently pulled together a team of Associate Deans to discuss how we might organize it for 2017.

One challenge we faced was how to make it “even” among the colleges represented at the competition. Dr. Parang provided information regarding the number of Master’s and PhD students in each college, and came up with 3 – 15 students per college who may participate.

Dr. Brothers contacted other institutions to see what approach they have used with the competitions held there (North Carolina State, University of Texas at San Antonio, and Clemson). Some of the variations we found included:

1. A campus wide call for participants in the competition, with a series of heats to determine finalists, and then a final competition of the top 10. (Gives an opportunity for all colleges to compete; doesn’t seem quite as complex.)
2. A competition held completely during Graduate & Professional Student Awareness Week. (What if you are not able to complete the heats by the final date? Seems like it may be a challenge to have it all during the one week.)

3. Graduate Student Organization hosted and Graduate School provides assistance with organizing the venue. (Not sure that is the best plan for us – very open in terms of what we may end up with!)

The next step is to decide which competition format from the three is best for our situation. Sean Hendricks and Dr. Brothers met with those responsible for the communication for this event. That communication would be dependent on which competition/venue we decide. January would be the time to get the word out, regardless of the approach we go with. (That gives us February to set up the heats, with the venue/events in March).

Dr. Thompson explained that the competition we have in mind will require assistance from all of the colleges in terms of participating, helping get information to the students, finding judges, hosting space, etc. There is a lot that goes into this event. If we put out a call to find we have 150 students who want to participate and we have to set up four heats to determine our final pool, we might get a few colleges to each host a heat so that we get some coordination with it.

Dr. Thompson introduced Sarah Stone, our thesis and dissertation consultant. She is the person behind the scenes who helps every graduate student get across that stage! Because of her experience and interaction with these students, she will be a valuable part of this team.

Discussion followed regarding how we may want to organize the event for this year:

- The concept is single elimination rounds, with the final competition during our Graduate and Professional Student Awareness Week. Dates will need to be set accordingly.
- There are several models we can follow, one would be to handle it like a regional completion that then moves on to the finals.
- There will be a formal mechanism for registration; we can put out the call for participants in January after we decide how the competition will be structured.
- The original 3MT is very restrictive to thesis and dissertation; but we felt we want to be more inclusive so we want to have some wiggle room to allow for case studies or a research project that may not necessarily be a thesis.
- We do not need experts when selecting judges. Looking historically at the 3MT, the students who do well are those able to communicate in such a way that you are talking about something complicated and technical, but in a way that demonstrates the importance of it, the uniqueness of it, so that it is interesting to people across the board. They are able to engage their audience without them having to be experts in the field of study.

- NC State went to local celebrities, alumni boards, media, donors, friends in the university etc. that came and sat as judges. It immediately gives PR and taps into the alumni base. For our finals, we need to use that model. For the heats, we may just need to set up some non-biased folks and then have more of the celebrity judges for the finals.
- 3MT judges look at two major considerations: comprehension/content and engagement (For example, did they make the audience want to know more? Did the orator help the audience to understand the research?)
- 3MT already has a listing of general criteria that we can adopt and/or modify. They also have a rubric that they will share with us, as well.
- Additional discussion regarding how colleges will determine students to send forward to the semi-finals and finals, how brackets could be structured, the number of students we can handle, space and venues, and the role of the Graduate School and colleges to encourage and motivate participation as well as provide support. While the preliminary competition can be an open call, the finals are not. Participants will advance to the semi-finals and finals as part of the competition.
- There are incentives to students to participate: the top three would receive a monetary award of \$2000 each, and the other participants in the finals would receive around \$300.
- The competition will not be segmented by content or category; and it is not limited to students in their final year. Students involved in team research/collaborative efforts will need to choose one person be the presenter, or each person can present a different aspect of the research and the team would be counted as multiple presenters. Some of these things we may need to deal with as they come up.
- Discussed students in distance education. If those students want to travel to Knoxville and participate, that would be fine. Traveling to semifinals would potentially be difficult for some; perhaps the colleges could help support their travel if they are semi-finalists.
- We will research how others have handled distance students. Traditional students should not be allowed to participate by Zoom, but if there are those far away, perhaps that is an option in the preliminary rounds. They would have to be on-campus for the semi-finals and finals, though.
- The beginning point of competition between colleges would be the semi-finals. The colleges would determine who would participate. The top contenders from those two heats will go on to the finals.

Dr. Thompson suggested that perhaps she could say to the colleges, “send us X number of students, and we work those so that the totals are enough for 2 semi-final heats and the final during the professional student appreciation week.”

We would put out the call, have our semi-finals the end of February, and then have our finals during the Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week (April). That would give colleges a few weeks to determine which students they will nominate for the semi-finals, and we can host information sessions for the students so that they can learn more about it.

We'll have to work the numbers. Sarah will help set up workshops and training sessions to help students get started. We will put a draft out to everyone so that colleges can give us some feedback.

4. Minors (see handout)

Dr. Thompson discussed the legacy sections of our catalog: sometimes we don't always have a clear understanding why it is the way it is, or how policy was originally intended. We have to re-write big sections of the catalog (1) in order to implement U-achieve and (2) to give clarity for our students. During this time, we are finding things that need to be clarified or at least looked at more closely. Graduate Minors is one of those items that we have found to be a challenge. Two issues/questions based on the current language:

- a. Should doctoral students be eligible for a minor (or should it be limited to Master's students)? Should a minor, defined as 6 – 12 semester hours, be the same for a doctoral student as for a masters?

The current language reads in such a way that it seems only a Master's student can earn a minor. Sometimes in the past that is how it has been implemented. That is not how it is being implemented now. Currently, if a student wants to earn a minor and they have the right credits, and they are working on a doctoral degree, we can make that happen; however, we need to clean it up in the catalog.

- b. Should minors be defined? At this time, the catalog is being interpreted so that any discipline with a major also has a minor. If someone takes 2 courses and has someone from that department on their committee, they can have a minor in English.

Following discussion, the consensus of the group is:

- 1) we do want to have defined minors
- 2) we do want the language to reflect that doctoral students can get graduate minors

If there are particular concerns or questions related to this in your college please contact Dr. Thompson in early January. She will plan to take this to the Academic Program Committee in the spring.

Dr. Thompson thanked everyone for their support during 2016 and her time of transition into her new position. She thanked everyone for their work in 2016. We are looking forward to great things in 2017!

With no additional items, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting is January 12 at 2 p.m. in the AHT 4th floor conference room

Minors

For the master's degree at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, a minor is defined as 6-12 semester credit hours in one field outside the major. Usually, the minor courses are within a single teaching discipline that also offers a major.

Four interdisciplinary minors are available: computational science, environmental policy, statistics, and watershed.

The minor area must be approved by the major and minor academic units and a member from the minor unit must serve on the graduate committee.

- *Agricultural and Resource Economics Minor*
- *Art History Minor*
- *Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Science*
- *Computer Science Minor*
- *Entomology Minor*
- *Environmental Policy Minor*
- *Epidemiology Minor*
- *Exercise Physiology Minor*
- *Forestry Minor*
- *Intercollegiate Graduate Statistics Program, Minor*
- *Nursing Education Minor*
- *Nutrition Minor*
- *Plant Pathology Minor*
- *Plant Sciences Minor*
- *Watershed Minor*
- *Wildlife and Fisheries Science Minor*