THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

March 9, 2023

Members present: Meschke, L. (Chair), Alshibli, K., Aydeniz, M., Ayo, A., Bonom, J., Cathey, A., Chaffin, K., Cho, M., Fathy, A., Fields, G. (Graduate Student Senate President), Gao, Y., Geidner, N., Gerhold, R., Guo, H., Hines, M., Jalata, A., Kaplan, G., Laursen, S., Lim, J., Love, A., Mannik, J., Marshall, S., McCord, R., Misawa, M., Mohsin, M., Montgomery, K., Palies, P. (UTSI), Pickart, C., Sachs, A., Schmidt, H., Scott, J., Summers, J., Thompson, P., (Graduate Council Chair-elect), Uzonyi, G, Wang, T.

Ex-Officio members present: Autry, C., Boulet, T., Brothers, E., Cheatham, M., Coldren, B. (University Registrar) Collins, C., Gramling, J., Jakel, N., Kupritz, V., McConville, B., Ohnesorg, S., Schaeffer, S., Steele, J., Sullivan, M., Thompson, D., Cox, C.

1. Call to Order and Welcome (Laurie Meschke)

The Graduate Council Zoom meeting was called to order by Graduate Council Chair, Laurie Meschke on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

2. Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

Meschke reported the February 16, 2023, Graduate Council Minutes were approved electronically on February 23, 2023.

3. Brian Coldren, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Initiative and University Registrar

Provided updates, next steps, and timeline on the Curriculog Curriculum Management Implementation

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4. Committee Reports

- **Academic Policy Committee** (Siris Laursen, chair) – no meeting, no report.
- **Appeals Committee** (Phyllis Thompson, chair) – no appeals.
- **Curriculum Committee** (Avigail Sachs, chair) – no February 23 meeting, no report.
- **Student Faculty Research Awards** (Dixie Thompson, chair)
  - The spring 2023 SFRA applications were due on February 10. The SFRA committee will meet on March 24 to determine the awardees.

5. Administrative Reports and Announcements:

Deans Update: (Dixie Thompson)

It is a really busy semester with lots of opportunities to recognize and support students. Some highlights of things that are happening:

- Graduate applications up ~9% over last year this time. Not all areas are up in applications, but many colleges are up by double digits in terms of graduate applications.
  - Please remember to enter admission decisions in Slate. It is important that we provide decisions to students in a timely manner.
- Record number of students have applied to graduate in May. We are busy processing paperwork and verifying degrees.
- Fellowships process is proceeding.
  - New student awards currently being announced this week.
  - Returning student nominations due March 20.
- Now is the time to update applications for fall 2024. Reach out to Carl Collins or AnnaMaria Murphy to set up a time for your department to make updates to your application(s).
- Graduate Hooding – May 20, 7PM. Please attend.
- GPSAW – March 27 through March 31 (Nick Jakel will provide the update)

New Early Deadline Graduation Process: The current process of second deadline causes confusion about when students will receive their degrees. We are keeping the same concept but renaming as Early Deadline. Additional details were given to describe the process and examples were given.

Nick Jakel, Graduate Student Senate Program Coordinator: Update on GPSAW

Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week (GPSAW) is March 27-March 31. Some highlights for that week include:

- UT Baseball, Tuesday, March 28, 4:30 p.m. – Graduate Student Appreciation Night
- 3 Minutes Thesis (3MT) Final Competition, Wednesday, March 29, 1:30 p.m., 169 Student Union
- Game Night at Hodges Library, Wednesday, March 29, 5:00 – 10:00 p.m.
- Gather in the Gardens for painting, scavenger hunt, and snacks, Thursday, March 30, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- Get to Know GSS, Friday, March 31, 1:00 p.m., 174 Student Union (Student Engagement Suite).
- Tie Die Event at the Pride Center, Friday, March 31, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Graduate Student Senate Update (George Fields, GSS President)

- On Thursday, March 2, the GSS hosted a listening session with the Provost regarding upcoming constructions on campus and how they will affect units and constituent groups on campus. Although only a handful of Senators were able to attend, we were able to make graduate voices heard and to convey concerns we have about how the growing pains of the university will affect graduate students and our academic units. From that meeting we have gained transparency regarding new constructions on campus and how the university administration is promising to be open and communicative with affected units as future projects progress. The GSS is pursuing a resolution to ensure that promise is carried out, and that graduate students are included in the conversation.

- February 2023, because of concerns and questions from graduate students around the restructuring of the College of Arts and Sciences, in February we hosted a listening session with Dr. R.J. Hinde, Interim Executive Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. During this meeting we inquired about the effect of the college's restructuring on specific academic units (especially smaller ones), and on us as graduate students. Although Dr. Hinde ensured that any negative effects, if any, would be minimal, we pushed for graduate representation in the restructuring process, and Dr. Hinde has followed through. He has requested that the GSS provide graduate students from specific academic units to serve on the search committees for the divisional deans in the college. We are working to fill the seats on those search committees ASAP.

- ChatGPT and the Role of AI in the Classroom. The GSS recognizes that AI potentially poses a significant danger and risk to higher education and the classroom. The ability of students to use this in place of hard work and original thought means that the university must take precautionary measures to ensure the quality of our educational, research, and professional outputs. To that end, a university taskforce has been

established to address the use of AI in the classroom, specifically targeting ChatGPT. We have been asked to submit three graduate students to serve on this special task force.

- Update on Resolutions
  - Graduate compensation and benefits. We are tracking data on graduate stipends from HR. Vice Chancellor Bolton has been very helpful in getting this data. Once the GSS has this information, we can move forward with the resolution on graduate compensation and benefits.

  - Space on campus. The last resolution I want to bring to your attention is the use of space on campus and how it is being used by academic units. This resolution will specifically address the growing needs of graduate students regarding workspace and collaboration space, especially as we expand and build new buildings across campus. We are requesting the university conduct a compacity space-oriented study across campus noting underutilized or mis-utilized space on campus.

- Basic Needs Survey. You may have seen a circulated survey being conducted by the Basic Needs Office (in partnership with Temple University and the Hope Center) to better understand what obstacles and insecurities students face. The results of this survey will influence how the limited resources we have will be allocated to address aggregate needs across campus and the community of students. Please encourage all students, undergraduate and graduate, to take the survey. Robust results from this survey will lead to an improvement in how the university uses limited resources to maximize impact in reducing basic needs struggles and insecurities for our students. The deadline to complete the survey is March 31.

- Travel Awards. A timely reminder, the last deadline for GSS Travel Awards is April 1, 2023. This deadline includes all travel during the period of May 1 through August 31. As this is our last deadline, and because we are expecting a flux of applications as graduate students travel more during the summer, please convey this information to your academic units so we can assist as many graduate students as possible in their efforts to travel and present original research on behalf of the university. Questions can be directed to gsstravel@utk.edu.

- Elections. The elections for GSS President and Vice President will take place the first week of April. These positions, though a significant time commitment, are an opportunity to lead this organization and to take the hard conversations and issues facing graduate students to the administration. Please share this information with your academic units so we can garner as much excitement and interested parties as possible. Please contact Nick Jakel, GSS Program Coordinator (njakel@utk.edu) for more information. You can also visit our website at gss.utk.edu for more information.

Graduate Council Chair (Laurie Meschke)

- Meschke shared that our February meeting notes passed without issue in the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate also voted to only vote on approving the reports from the Undergraduate and Graduate Council meeting minutes in the full Faculty Senate. Formerly it was also the practice to vote in the Executive Committee, which meets two weeks prior. This is wonderful news as it will allow us to maintain our current meeting and minutes approval structure.

- Graduate Council Bylaws: *See Attachment 1.*
  Meschke turned the meeting over to former chair Stefanie Ohnesorg who shared the latest draft of the Graduate Council bylaws for discussion. With no discussion, Council chair Meschke asked for the poll to vote to approve the updated and revised Graduate Council Bylaws.

  Vote: Graduate Council voted unanimously to approve the revisions to the Graduate Council Bylaws.

- Chair-elect nomination. Meschke shared that the nomination slate for the next chair-elect of the Graduate Council has been set. Mischke turned the meeting over to the current chair-elect Phyllis Thompson, to introduce the candidate, Dr. Siris Laursen.

Phyllis Thompson, nomination committee
I would like to introduce Dr. Siris Laursen as our nominee for the next chair-elect. Dr. Laursen is an associate professor in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering in the Tickle College of Engineering and has been with UTK since 2012. Dr. Laursen is the current chair of our Academic Policy Committee. In

2018, he received the NSF CAREER award and the UTK Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Teacher of the Year award. Dr. Laursen has agreed to the nomination.

Meschke: Are there any nominations from the floor? With none coming forward, a vote was called for.

Vote: Graduate Council voted, and the majority of members approved for Dr. Siris Laursen to serve as our next Graduate Council chair-elect. Congratulations, Dr. Laursen.

Meschke: Are there any items from the floor for consideration?

With no items coming forward, may I have a motion to adjourn our meeting? Second? Thank you everyone for attending our meeting. Our next and last Graduate Council meeting of the year will be on April 13 at 3:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox
Graduate Council Liaison

Attachment 1

DRAFT of the Graduate Council Bylaws

Ad-hoc Committee in Charge of Revisions and Updates of the Bylaws for Graduate Council:

Members: Siris Laursen, Laurie Meschke, Stefanie Ohnesorg (Chair) Avigail Sachs, Phyllis Thompson

Document below is the Graduate Council Bylaws Draft that incorporates all input received at the February 16, 2023 Graduate Council Meeting (Discussion and Poll voting).

Draft Graduate Council Bylaws Based on the Input Received at the February 16, 2023 Graduate Council Meeting
Bylaws of the Graduate Council of the University of Tennessee Approved by Graduate Council: March 9, 22023 Graduate Council Minutes: March 9, 2023
Article 1. Graduate Council Mission Statement
The mission of the Graduate Council is to promote excellence in graduate education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The Graduate Council establishes standards for admission, retention, and graduation; assesses curricular revisions and new proposals for graduate programs; evaluates interdisciplinary, intercollegiate and international programs; sets qualification standards for those who direct doctoral dissertations; and considers new initiatives and other matters of policy pertaining to graduate programs. Graduate Council is a special committee of the Faculty Senate that works closely with the Graduate School and a variety of other campus bodies to fulfill its mission.
Article II. Organizational Structure
Part A. Committee Organization
Section 1. The Executive Committee This standing committee is comprised of the Council Chair, Council Chair-Elect, Chairs of all standing committees of Council, and the past Chair of Council. The Council Chair, Chair-Elect, and past Chair, along with the chairs of all standing committees, serve as voting members of the Executive Committee. The Dean of the Graduate School and/or the Dean's designee serve as ex-officio non-voting members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee serves in an advisory role to the Chair and Council on matters concerning the mission of Council.
Section 2. Academic Policy Committee This committee serves as a standing committee of the Graduate Council to consider, investigate, and give detailed attention to policies, and forward recommendations for change to the policies contained in the Graduate Catalog that relate to general requirements for admission to graduate programs, enrollment of students, offering of graduate credit, and awarding of graduate degrees at the Knoxville campus of The University of Tennessee.
Section 3. Curriculum Committee This standing committee makes recommendations to the Graduate Council for the approval or denial of all curricular requests submitted to the Council and ensures the quality, consistency, and accuracy in the advertisement of the University's graduate programs.

Section 4. Appeals Committee
This standing committee serves the Graduate Council by considering appeals from graduate students concerning a grievance that is unresolved at the department and college level. Appeals may involve (1) grievances concerning the interpretation of and adherence to university, college, and department policies and procedures; (2) grievances concerning grades; and (3) grievances concerning academic penalties imposed for academic and/or research misconduct. This committee does not consider grievances related to race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or veteran status. Students with such complaints have the right to file a formal complaint with the Office of Equity and Diversity, 1840 Melrose Avenue.

Section 5. Student-Faculty Research Awards Committee
This committee, chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School, solicits proposals for Student-Faculty Research Awards. A subcommittee of the Graduate Council, along with the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research (or designee), evaluates proposals and makes awards.

Section 6. Nominating Committee
This special committee is chaired by the current Graduate Council Chair-Elect who, in collaboration with the Graduate Council Chair and the Graduate Council Past Chair, is responsible for identifying and soliciting candidates for the next Graduate Council Chair-Elect of Council. The committee reports to the Graduate Council at the next to the last meeting of the spring semester.

Section 7. Additional Standing/Special Committees
These committees may be established by the Chair of Graduate Council. Depending on specific charge of such standing/special committees, this may be done in cooperation with the Executive Committee. The Chair of Graduate Council or a designee from the Executive Committee will serve as ex-officio non-voting member of all additional standing/special committees.

Section 8. Standing Committee Bylaws
All standing committees will maintain bylaws to govern their operations. These committee bylaws must be approved by Graduate Council and must conform to Council and Faculty Senate bylaws. Committee bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of committee members and subsequent approval by Graduate Council.

Part B. Graduate Council Linkages

Section 1. Faculty Senate
Graduate Council is a special committee of the Faculty Senate and the Chair of Graduate Council serves as ex-officio voting member of the Faculty Senate Executive Council. Faculty Senate approves implementation of actions taken by Council as stated in Council minutes.

Section 2. Graduate School and Dean of Graduate School
The Graduate School has responsibility for implementation of policies and procedures adopted by the Graduate Council. The Dean of the Graduate School makes recommendations to Council regarding graduate programs and support for graduate students. The Graduate School provides administrative support for the activities of the Council and its committees.

Section 3. Graduate Associate Deans
The Graduate Associate Deans provide advice to the Graduate Council and shares information on Council activities and actions with their respective units.

Section 4. Graduate Student Senate
The Graduate Student Senate provides the students' perspective to the Graduate Council and its committees through their representatives. The Graduate Student Senate representatives to Council serve as an avenue of communication to the graduate student body on Council activities and actions.

Section 5. Other Campus Bodies
To fulfill its mission, the Graduate Council interacts regularly with other campus entities, including the Office of the Provost, the Center for Global Engagement, the Office of the University Registrar, the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development, and the Undergraduate Council.

Article III. Membership and Officers

Section 1. Membership

The membership of the Graduate Council consists of faculty representatives, two graduate students, and a series of ex-officio (non-voting) members. Faculty members are elected for three-year terms by the schools and colleges of the university engaged in graduate work. They must regularly teach graduate courses or supervise graduate study and must (1) hold full-time or continuing part-time appointment with the rank of assistant professor or higher, and (2) perform academic duties consisting of at least half-time teaching, research, service or departmental administration. The two graduate students who serve one-year terms are appointed by the Graduate Student Senate. Ex-officio members are the Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of Libraries, the Vice Provost of International Affairs, and the Chair of the Research Council or their designees. In addition, the administrative officers with primary responsibility for graduate curriculum in each college or for oversight of all intercollegiate programs serve as ex-officio members of the Graduate Council if they are not college or intercollegiate program representatives.

Faculty representatives are elected in the spring semester for appointments to commence at the start of the following fall semester. The schools and colleges of the university engaged in graduate work will notify the Graduate School of the election results for new Council members by no later than April 15. All schools and colleges of the university engaged in graduate work together will have established guidelines to govern the election of Graduate Council members.

The number of Council members apportioned to each school, intercollegiate program. and college is based on the number of graduate students enrolled in the unit in the previous fall term, using the following table:

Graduate Students Total	Graduate Council Representatives
1–300	1
301–500	2
501–700, etc.	3

Section 2. Proxies

Proxy members of Graduate Council are elected by colleges and intercollegiate programs using the same procedures and timing that are followed to elect regular members of Council. Proxies serve when regular Council members cannot fulfill their responsibilities due to a leave of absence, travel or other scheduling conflicts. The proxy shall have all the privileges and power of the absentee member.

Section 3. Graduate Council Chair

The Chair of the Graduate Council is a faculty member from Council who serves for a one-year term, following a one-year term as Chair-Elect. This one-year term as Chair of Graduate Council is followed by a one-year term as Past Chair.

The Chair assumes responsibility for Council activities on August 1st and presides over all Council meetings for that academic year. In cooperation with the Dean of the Graduate School, the Chair makes assignments to all standing committees and prepares an agenda for all Council meetings. The Chair may make assignments to ad hoc special committees as needed. The Chair casts the deciding vote on Council matters that result in a tie vote. The Chair serves as an ex-officio non-voting member of all committees of Council. The Chair has Faculty Senate responsibilities as outlined in the Faculty Senate bylaws.

The Faculty Senate bylaws specify that the Chair of Graduate Council will be a faculty member from Graduate Council, elected to a one-year term by voting members of the Council.

Section 4. Graduate Council Chair-Elect

Any current faculty member of Council is eligible to be a candidate for Chair-Elect. The Nominating Committee of Council will identify and solicit candidates for this post and will report its results during the next to the last meeting of the spring semester. Nominations may also be submitted from the floor at that time. A summary of the credentials for the candidates for Chair-Elect will be provided to Graduate Council members to aid in their decision. Election of the Chair-Elect will occur by secret ballot. The Chair-Elect of Graduate Council serves as the non-voting Chair of the Appeals Committee for a term of one year, commencing on August 1st after election at the end of the previous Spring Semester. The Chair-Elect may participate as ex-officio non-voting member of all standing and special committees of Council. This experience assists the Chair-Elect in preparation for assumption of the Chair position in the following academic year.

The Chair-Elect will assume the responsibilities of Chair on August 1st in the second academic year after being elected to the position of Chair-Elect. The Chair-Elect is automatically granted an extension of their appointment to Graduate Council for a period of up to three years so as to include membership on Council through one year past their term as Chair, serving in the capacity of past Chair. Since the Chair-Elect serves the entire university and not one constituency, the Chair-Elect does not count as part of a school's or college's apportionment of representatives to Council.

Section 5. Graduate Council Past Chair

Upon completion of a one-year term as Graduate Council Chair, the Chair assumes the position of Past Chair. The Past Chair provides the Council with continuity and experience. Since the Past Chair serves the entire university and not one constituency, the Past Chair does not count as part of a school's or college's apportionment of representatives to the Council.

Section 6. Graduate Council Committee Chairs

With exception of Appeals Committee and Student-Faculty Research Awards Committee, all committee chairs are determined by each committee’s membership during the first scheduled committee meeting. Usually, this meeting follows immediately after the first Graduate Council at the beginning of the academic year. Committee chairs will typically be individuals who have served on Graduate Council and have experience with committee matters. The Appeals Committee is chaired by the Chair-Elect of Graduate Council, and the Student-Faculty Research Awards Committee is chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Article IV. Meetings, Decision-making and Reporting

The calendar for regular meetings of the Graduate Council and its committees will be set by the Executive Committee of Graduate Council in consultation with the Dean of the Graduate School. Council and Committee meetings will typically take place on Thursday afternoons. Special meetings of the Graduate Council or any of its committees may be called by the Council Chair, the Council Executive Committee, or a majority of the Council membership who hold regular voting rights. Committee Chairs may call special meetings of their committees as needed. Except in the case of emergency, one week's notice will be provided for any called meeting. The schedule of regular meetings for Council and its committees will be published on the Council website and distributed to the membership at the beginning of the Fall semester.

A majority of Graduate Council voting members or committee members constitutes a quorum. Majority voting will guide all decision-making. Secret ballots will be used for decision-making when requested by a majority of Council or committee members. Committee chairs and Council Chair will provide reports at each meeting of Graduate Council. The Graduate Council Chair reports to the Faculty Senate which, through its approval of curricular or academic policy changes reflected in the Council minutes, implements actions taken by Council with regard to such changes.

All meetings of Council and its committees will be governed by the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Article V. Amendment of Bylaws

The Graduate Council may amend and repeal bylaws by a two-thirds majority of voting members, provided that any proposed changes have been reviewed at the prior meeting of Council. All bylaw changes must be ratified by the Faculty Senate.