THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

August 24, 2017 Minutes

Members present: Morrow, J. (Chair), Aydeniz, M. (Chair Elect), Bedford, S. (GSS President), Bemis, D., Black, C., Boder, E., Bonom, J., Broemmel, A., Cruz-Camara, N., Dzikus, L., Fleming-May, R., Fu, J., Fuller, R., Gordon, K., Greig, J. (GSS Vice-President), Larson, J., Lasater, K., Latham, J., Marshall, S., Martinez, M., McConville, B., Mee, R., Meschke, L., Mohsin, M., Moir-McClean, T., Patterson, D., Seddighi, R., Sickafus, K., Stehle, M., Thompson, P., Waller, S., Wang, H.

Ex-Officio members present: Albrecht, M., Brothers, E., Fairbrother, J., Hendricks, S., Kilpatrick, Y., Moore, T., Palenchar, M., Roman, M. (Past Chair), Sullivan, M., Thompson, D., Cox, C.,

The Graduate Council meeting was called to order by Chair, Jennifer Morrow on Thursday, August 24, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. in the Friesen Black Cultural Center, Multipurpose Room. Jennifer welcomed the new members and returning members to the 2017-18 Graduate Council.

1. Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

The Minutes of the April 27, 2017, meeting were approved by the Graduate Council.

2. Committee Reports

There were no scheduled committee meetings before our meeting; therefore, we have no committee reports. However, I would like each committee chair to stand and introduce themselves and give a brief description of your committee's goals for this academic year.

Academic Policy Committee (Maria Stehle, Chair)

Our first meeting is next Thursday, August 31, at 2:00 p.m. Then at 3:00, we will have a joint meeting with the Credentials Committee. If anyone has an item to go on our Agenda for our September 7 meeting, please email me.

Appeals Committee (Mehmet Aydeniz, Chair)

We have one appeal to review next week.

Credentials Report (Amy Broemmel, Chair)

As mentioned, we have a joint meeting with APC next Thursday. With our first meeting immediately following the joint meeting. We will continue this year to review the credentialing process to determine the most efficient and productive process for faculty to receive approval to direct dissertations.

Curriculum Report (Robert Fuller, Chair)

Our first meeting is September 21st. The curriculum proposals are due to Catherine on September 7.

Student Faculty Research Awards Committee (Dixie Thompson, Chair)

Our first meeting will be sometime in September. We received positive feedback from the students with how the awards changed last year. We had numerous collaborative projects submitted from students and faculty. We will meet and then announce the date that the applications will be due for the fall awards.

3. New Business – There was no new business.

4. Dean's Update

Vice-Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, **Dixie Thompson**

We had a busy summer in the Graduate School.

- Since our last meeting, we had a spring graduation and a summer graduation.
- In addition to certifying all the graduate degrees, we also set academic standing on all graduate students. This means when GPA's are calculated; some students will go on probation, some will come off probation, and sometimes, sadly, some will be dismissed. Some of you were involved in this process, as we sent messages to you to alert you of the students going on probation or those to be dismissed. I thank you for your time, involvement, and collaboration in this important process. We do not want to make decisions about probations and/or dismissals without your interaction. Students going on probation will alert on our departments and faculty to do more mentoring and have more interaction with these students to try to help them to bring them back into good standing. Students cannot graduate if their GPA is below 3.0.
- Currently, we have two active searches in the Graduate School. One is for a Business Manager and the second is for an Assistant Dean and Director of Graduate Student Services. Dr. Ernest Brothers is chairing one of the searches and Dr. Jeff Fairbrother is chairing the other. I look forward to successful hires in both of those searches.
- I met with the Graduate Student Senate President and Vice President over the summer. We just had three successful events: 1) the New Graduate Student Orientation, 2) the New GTA Orientation, and 3) the GSS Social. I would like to introduce the new GSS President Sergio Bedford and the new GSS Vice President Jamie Greig. These two graduate students are passionate about graduate student life and the graduate student experience, both academically and socially. I appreciate the work you have already done and the work you both will do this academic year.
- I want to see a successful launch to the use of iThenticate. We have secured a site license that will allow anyone who has a valid ID and password to access iThenticate. So, in the coming weeks we will be sending out educational information and opening some websites that will allow students, faculty and staff to understand how to use the tool and to receive instructions.
- We are very sensitive to the importance of providing professional development to our graduate students. We are launching this fall, in concert with the University Library, a series called *Best Practices in Publishing*. As you know, for years we have had Best Practices in Teaching with Dr. Ernest Brothers overseeing that project. Sarah Stone, the thesis/dissertation consultant in our office, and I will work alongside the library staff to launch the *Best Practices in Publishing* seminar series. It will address a number of issues that graduate students struggle with. An announcement has already gone out to the students and some have already signed up. We are very excited about this new project.

A question was asked about if distance education fees in the future will be considered as "in state" fees. Dr. Thompson's response: we are in the process of submitting a proposal to the Chancellor so she can take it to the Board. In a nutshell, the proposal will be to charge students (regardless of where they reside) in-state maintenance and the distance education fee. Non-relevant fees would not be charged. Then departments will determine if there are any departmental fees that need to be assessed. I think this will provide us a major opportunity in terms of growth. Distance Education is not the term we will use going forward. Distance education will be referred to now as eLearning.

5. Administrative Reports and Announcements

- Please read the Graduate Associate Deans' Minutes to review what we discussed over the summer. The May and June reports are available at http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gcassocdeans/.
- I charged three working groups to tackle some thorny issues over the summer. Not to complete the task but to begin the task.
- One of those groups, chaired by Dr. Ernest Brothers, was charged with the task of looking at our policy on credentialing faculty. They were to ask questions and to begin to think about our current process.
- A second group, chaired by Yvonne Kilpatrick, Assistant Dean of Graduate Admissions, was charged with the task of looking at the language in our catalog related to those students where English is not their native language. This was really a two-part task. First, they had to review how this relates to all graduate students, i.e., if your score is XXX – is this score too low to be admitted, is the score high enough to be admitted but not high enough to be successful, so we recommend some English language, and the third

is your score is high enough to where no additional English is required. The second part is related to our GTA's. For those individuals, there are state mandates related to some certification that verifies they can communicate well in English. I asked this group to look at the problematic situation that we find ourselves in. For those students that do not score well enough on their English Placement Test, we have rules in the catalog indicating they must take English classes. Yet, we have no way to enforce this policy. Then, we often have students who ask for an exception not to take the class or their departments tell them not to register for the class. We have no enforcement of this policy. Therefore, I asked this group to review this policy and determine if we really need it. If we do need a policy, is this the policy we need? And, how can we enforce the policy.

- The third group, chair by Dr. Mary Albrecht, was charged to look at our academic policies and procedures in the Graduate Catalog. To begin to think how we can frame the catalog in a more user-friendly language and to look at policies that may need to be revised and/or updated.
- The past chair, current chair, and chair-elect of Graduate Council were invited to attend those working groups so that representation from Graduate Council would be involved in the discussions.
- I have asked the chairs of these working groups to give a brief update of how they progressed over the summer with these tasks.
    - Dr. Brothers: Credentialing
      We looked at the language of the Bylaws and we looked at the language in the catalog, what was teased out more than anything else was the role of tenure-track faculty. From a report we reviewed listing tenure track and non-tenure track faculty, it was discovered, the percentage of our non-tenure track faculty is increasing. Because of this increase in non-tenure tack faculty, Dr. Thompson asked us to discuss and review if non-tenure track faculty can chair dissertation committees. In addition, do we need to revise the language in the number of faculty on a committee and/or the number that have approval to direct? Because we wanted to look at data to help in our review and discussion, we looked at data that Dr. Todd Moore had already compiled last year concerning the credentialing process. His data also compared top 25 institutions. Therefore, our next step is to review all the data and then address the questions that Dean Thompson brought forward.
    - Dr. Thompson: Next week there is a joint meeting with APC and the Credentials Committee. In that meeting, we will discuss how to move forward with credentialing. Do we want to turn this over to APC or the Credentials Committee? Do we want the working group to continue to review the process? Do we want to add some members of Graduate Council to the working group? Or, do we want to disband the working group and turn the discussion over to Graduate Council? How do we want to move forward in this process? Campus wants change. I am all for good change – if changing the process makes it a better process, But, the change has to be purposeful and one that will give us a better outcome than what we have now.
    - Yvonne Kilpatrick: English Language Working Group
      We reviewed all the language in the catalog for English Language Proficiency. This included 1) the English Language Proficiency Exams for admission for those students where their native language is not English and 2) the English Language Placement Exam after admission. Currently, the language in the catalog does not match with our practice. We have been using a pilot program for the last several years that does not match with the language in the catalog. The difference is the catalog language indicates that any student whose native language is not English must take a placement test in their first semester. However, a pilot program, approved several years ago, began to utilize the English Proficiency Exam scores to place students. Students still have the option to take the placement exam once they are on campus. This process occurs in the English Department. Both of these methods cause difficulty with the student's registration. Our group is reviewing these policies and getting feedback. We also looked at an environmental scan of both our peer institutions and our aspirational peer institutions to review the methods they are using. We still need to review the GTA testing done prior to them teaching.
    - Dr. Mary Albrecht – Graduate Catalog review
      My group met and we discussed 1) what should be in the Graduate Catalog, and 2) how should the information be organized? We came to an agreement that the catalog should be organized in the manner in which the student goes through the process of being a graduate student. Such as, admissions, registration, graduation, etc. We are trying to make it to where the students can use it in a logical sequence. We will bring some simple catalog revisions and clarifications to APC, along with some proposals.

- I received a report this morning indicating we have 1,691 new first-time graduate students. We are up about 100 students. However, the number reflects that we are down about 25 international students.
- We have a recruiter's network available with Dr. Ernest Brothers and Dr. Sean Hendricks. If your unit does not have anyone attending those meetings, we welcome all newcomers. The group provides support and encouragement and can provide some infrastructure support to networking opportunities.
- In late spring, we had a successful Recruitment Funding Project (RFP) for departments that needed money from the Graduate School for recruiting. I am going to ask for some carry-over money so that I can hopefully do the same thing again. However, instead of doing it in the spring, I am going to do it for this fall.

6. <u>Graduate Student Senate</u> (Sergio Bedford – GSS President)

We have been working to revitalize and reenergize the Graduate Student Senate. One of the first things we did was to redesign our website. Please check it out.

- The Travel Awards Application is on the new website.
- We created a brown-bag series once a month during the lunch hour in conjunction with the Center of Career Development. We will have a capstone event of this brown bag series in November with author, Karen Kelsky. A former tenured professor, she wrote *The Professor Is In.* A great book for graduate students, adjuncts, and post-docs. This book gives great advice on publishing, grant writing, designing your CV, academic hiring, getting tenure and more. We will announce this event when we get all the details.
- Orientation pizza social. We had about 95 graduate students attend this event.
- We meet on a regular basis with Dean Thompson to maintain good communication between GSS and the Graduate School.
- Our first GSS meeting is September 6, where we will establish the executive team for GSS.
- A priority we have for this year is to revitalize the spirits about GSS. We want to be a network for graduate students. We want graduate students to be interdisciplinary in their contacts - to come together and meet other graduate students in other areas of disciplines.
- Jamie Greig, GSS Vice President: Another goal is to have a graduate student from every department represented in GSS. We encourage you to get the word out that we would like each department to submit the name of at least one student to come and sit on the Graduate Senate. This would be a useful communication tool and great networking for graduate students. Please ask if your department has a graduate student on GSS. If not, encourage them to attend a meeting.

7. <u>Graduate Council Chair – Jennifer Morrow</u>

- I look forward to working with Graduate Council this year and with the Working Groups that Dean Thompson established.
- The meeting dates for all our meetings are on the Graduate Council's webpage. Please add those dates to your calendar. Our next meeting is September 28.
- With no further business, committees may now meet to discuss this year's plan of action.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox
Graduate Council Liaison