THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

April 28, 2022

Members present: Ohnesorg, S (Chair), Anderson, D. (proxy for M. Hines), Aydeniz, M., Baxter, T., Chappell, L. (Graduate Student Senate, Vice-President Elect), Dittmann, P., Dodds, G., Dzikus, L., Ekici, K., Finotti, L., Fleming-May, R., Gerhold, R., Griffin, M., Guo, H., Hammock, H. (Graduate Student Senate President), Hewett, K., Kite, R., Kotowski, M., Lang, M., Laursen, S., Lim, J., Mannik, J., Meschke, L. (Chair-Elect), Mohsin, M., Neal, A., Ownley, B., Palies, P. (UTSI), Schmidt, H., Scott, J.

Ex-Officio members present: Ambroziak, K., Bradberry, S., Brothers, E., Gordon, K., Kilic, O., Jakel, N., Kilpatrick, Y., Mercer, H., Thompson, D., Cox, C.

1. Call to Order and Welcome (Stefanie Ohnesorg)

The Graduate Council Zoom meeting was called to order by Chair, Stefanie Ohnesorg on Thursday, April 28, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.

2. Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

The March 24, 2022, Graduate Council Minutes were approved electronically on April 13, 2022.

3. Committee Reports

There were no committee meetings; therefore, there are no committee reports.

- **Academic Policy Committee** (Lars Dzikus, co-chair) – No meeting, no report.

- **Appeals Committee** (Laurie Meschke, chair)

  No appeals to report.

- **Curriculum Committee** (A. Sachs, chair) – No scheduled meeting, no report.

- **Student Faculty Research Awards** (Dixie Thompson, chair)

4. Administrative Reports and Announcements:

Deans Update: (Dixie Thompson)

- Thanks to all members of the Graduate Council for their service this year.
- New staff member – Nick Jakel – GSS Program Coordinator. Nick comes with exceptional passion for and experience working along graduate students to achieve goals. He's already made great progress with several of this year's events, helped with election of incoming leaders, and is assisting with this year's leadership transition. Welcome Nick.
- Spring semester brings opportunities to celebrate our great students. A few examples:
  - GSS Awards reception – April 6
  - 3MT Competition – April 6

- Volunteers of Distinction event – April 12
- Reception for nominees of Jimmy and Ileen Cheek Medal of Excellence – April 25
- Reception to recognize our international students who are graduating – April 26
- Chancellor's Honors Banquet – May 3
- Academic Honors Banquet – May 4

- Major event for end of semester is our Graduate Hooding. It will be held in Thompson-Boling Arena on Friday, May 20 at 8:30AM. Please consider attending even if you aren't hooding a doctoral student. Students value having faculty participation in this important celebration.

- We have awarded just under $250,000 to graduate and professional students through one-time fellowships. Colleges were able to recommend students for this award, and the money is being distributed this week.

- Transition news – Yvonne Kilpatrick, Associate Dean and Director of Graduate Admissions, is going to be retiring this summer. Yvonne has 30 years of service to the UT system with time at both UTC and UTK. Yvonne has done a great job in serving our students and departments over the years and has seen the Office of Graduate Admissions through many changes. We will miss her leadership. We are in the process of launching our search to find someone to fill that role.

Graduate Student Senate Update (Hunter Hammock, GSS President)

- Mohamed and I and all the GSS representatives are so appreciative of your support, leadership, and service. Without Graduate Council, we would not be able to successfully advocate for the students. I am happy to report that we are leaving an impressive legacy for GSS and the graduate and professional students. I am confident the leadership and momentum will continue over to next year. It has been a duty, an honor, and a privilege to serve as the GSS President.

- We concluded our general election. We voted to elect George Fields as the next GSS President and Leighton Chappell as the next GSS Vice President. Both served in GSS this year. I believe that experience will help them in their leadership roles next year.

- GSS transition. The official transition for the new GSS administration will take place on June 1. Mohamed and I still have a few items to finish. We want to review the senate seats and determine if any changes are necessary based on enrollment numbers. If your department or unit currently does not have senators or is in the process of transitioning, please contact us as we want to make sure all our students are represented.

- I want to thank Dean Thompson, Millie Cheatham, and the Graduate School for their support and the critical role they had in the GSS success this year. Dr. Thompson and Millie have been excellent mentors to us this year. It has been a privilege to work and learn from them.

- As Dean Thompson mentioned, a GSS Coordinator was hired, Nick Jakel. We welcome Nick to GSS in this vital role. Nick and I have met and from our meetings, he seems ideal for this position. His professionalism and confidence are outstanding. I wish we could have worked with him this last year.

- I want to share the total hours of work that GSS has contributed to the community this year. We have about 80 GSS senators. These senators work about 6 hours per month between meetings and other obligations. If you do the math (80 times 6, times 10 months) that equates to 4,800 hours that GSS has contributed back to the community. We were thankful to give that service. To go even further. In Tennessee, the value amount of an hour of volunteer time is $24.54. So, in doing that math, 4,800 hours times $24.54, that is almost $120,000.00 that has been donated to the community, the Knoxville campus, and the graduate and professional students on our behalf. We are proud to be Tennessee Volunteers.

- To highlight some of our accomplishments.
    - Countless hours of lobbying and advocating for our graduate and professional students.
    - Improving the graduate student well-being. This includes – mental, physical, emotional, social, financial.
    - Lobbying behind the scenes and publicly to help improve our student's financial situation to increase stipends.

  - Social reconnections – removing barriers from minority, international, and non-Tennessee students.
  - Overhauling the GSS Constitution and Bylaws.
  - Constantly advocating for our graduate student body to highlight their accomplishments.
  - We distributed almost $350,000.00 in academic support and travel awards.

- The academic support fund is still open and available until the middle of May. Please remind your students to apply for this money. All the details and information are on our website.

- The Constitution was successfully voted in with an overwhelming majority. I want to say thank you and congratulate all the senators who worked so hard on revamping that document and bringing it up to the year 2022.

- We advised George and Leighton and all the GSS, that we perceive the biggest issues for next year to be: stipends, improve the standard of living, food and housing insecurity, and improving the GSS name and recognition on the UT campus.

- On May 5, at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom, we are hosting a Town Hall in the Student Union, room 169. We want to gather feedback and get information from the students on the needs and desire going into next year.

- Lastly, I want to thank each of you for your time, support, and dedication to the graduate and professional students. That has meant a lot to me personally and I know that the graduate and professional students feel the same. Again, I wish George and Leighton much success next year.

- I would like to end with a quote from Warren Buffet “Someone in sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.” The work we have done this year in both GSS and the Graduate Council will serve graduate and professional students in many years to come. I am honored to have played a part in planting these seeds across campus, leaving something behind that will continue to grow, flourish, spread deep roots, and cultivate expertise for generations to come. I am proud of all the trees we have planted across campus and the shade that it will provide one day. And I can’t wait when one day, very soon, I will visit campus as Dr. Hammock and sit in the shade of some of those trees. Any questions?

S. Ohnesorg:
Thank you, Hunter, for your service and leadership this year as the GSS president and sharing all the accomplishments of GSS this year. I thank you for communicating the GSS work hours during this year. You and Mohamed have done excellent work for GSS and for the graduate and professional students.

Graduate Council Chair (Stefanie Ohnesorg)

At our last Graduate Council meeting, an election occurred for our next chair elect. You elected someone who are very interested to serve in this role. However, sometimes life is unpredictable. I invite Laurie Meschke, to explain our voting again today.

L. Meschke
Nathan Preuss, who we elected last month, had to regretfully withdraw his nomination. We wish him well. With Nathan’s withdrawal, I bring forward today another candidate for consideration as the next chair elect. I am very pleased to report that Dr. Phyllis Thompson, from the College of Social Work, has agreed to be the nominee for our next char elect. I did not receive any other names for consideration.

At this time, we will launch a poll to vote Dr. Phyllis Thompson as our next Graduate Council chair elect.

Vote is unanimous to elect Dr. Phyllis Thompson as our next chair elect. Thank you, Phyllis. We look forward to working with you.

S. Ohnesorg
Thank you again, Laurie, for your work on the selection process. We welcome you, Phyllis, to this leadership role of Graduate Council.

Are there any items from the floor? With no items from the floor. I will share my closing remarks.

I begin my remarks by thanking each of you for your commitment and work on Graduate Council.

To APC, I express my appreciation for their work this year. They brought forward a proposal to revise the master's committee for students in the coursework only option. And, a proposal came forward to include the EdS students for the Proficiency Exam.

To the Curriculum Committee, my appreciation to you for reviewing all the proposals that came forward. As we are aware, curriculum proposals will look different next year with Curriculog coming on board. With this new process our Council calendar will look different next year. We will have six opportunities to submit curriculum proposals, which we hope will avoid long meetings.

To the Appeals Committee, I appreciate the work and review of the appeals when they come forward.

I express my appreciation to Catherine Cox for all the work she does behind the scenes.

I want to especially thank Dean Thompson. My work as Council Chair was more efficient and more informative because we met before each council meeting to coordinate what was coming forward to Council.

Now to look forward to next year. With Curriculog and how approvals will need to flow and move forward for approval, the calendar for both Undergraduate and Graduate Council will look different next year to get six cycles in. I share with you how the Graduate Council Calendar will look for next year.

Faculty Senate was involved in the calendar revision and as an adjustment and pilot change for next year, the Graduate Council Minutes and Curriculum Report will not have to be approved by the Senate Executive Committee first before moving forward to Faculty Senate for approval. Removing this approval step will help move the six cycles forward.

Before we adjourn, we would like to launch a poll to see your thoughts next year about how to meet. Do you prefer to meet in-person or meet by Zoom? The majority of those that voted chose to meet by Zoom.

For those rotating off Graduate Council, we thank you for your service. And, I wish everyone a good summer.

Dean Thompson:
Thank you, Stefanie, for your work and leadership this year. You represented the Graduate Council well.

With no further business, do we have a motion to adjourn? And a second? Thank you. Meeting is adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox
Graduate Council Liaison