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Graduate Council Minutes

Graduate Council

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4-16-2015

## **Graduate Council Minutes - April 16, 2015**

Graduate Council

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

April 16, 2015 Minutes

Members Present

Aydeniz, M.; Baek, S.; Behn, B.; Bemis, D.; Boder, E.; Botzakis, S.; Broemmel, A.; Brothers, E.; DeSensi, J.; Desmidt, H.; Fisher, L.; Forrest-Bank, S.; Fu, J.; Galloway, S.; Gao, Y.; Gellert, P.; Griffin, M.; Hatcher, B.; Hodges, C.; Hodges, D.; Kania, S. (Chair-elect); Kilpatrick, Y.; Leach, S.; Luther, C.; Moir-McClean, T.; Mullikin, L.; Nebenfuehr, A.; Ohnesorg, S.; Roman, M.; Stehle, M.; Theriot, M.; Thompson, D.; Wolitz, D.; Zivanovic, S.

The Graduate Council meeting was called to order by chair-elect, Stephen Kania on Thursday, April 16, 2015, at 3:00 p.m. in the University Center, Room 221.

1. Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

The minutes of the January 29, 2015 meeting were approved by the Graduate Council.

2. Committee Reports

Academic Policy Committee

Stefanie Ohnesorg, Chair of the Academic Policy Committee, reported on two sets of Minutes (February 5 and March 12, 2015).

Topics discussed from the February 5, 2015 Minutes (Attachment 1)

- Final examination for non-thesis students.
- Grading scale for graduate students.
- Grade of Incomplete.

No recommendations were forwarded to the Graduate Council for approval at this meeting.

Topics discussed from the March 12, 2015 Minutes (Attachment 2)

- Grading scale for graduate students. APC continued discussion of replacing current graduate grading scale to match the undergraduate grading scale. APC reviewed data collected from other institutions. After review and discussion, APC voted unanimously in favor of adopting the grading scale currently used for undergraduate students for graduate students. APC brings this vote forward to Graduate Council.
- A motion was brought forward and seconded to postpone voting on the grading scale until the next Council meeting (August 2015), in order for the various units to get input from faculty and have broad-based campus discussions. The graduate Deans and Associate Deans will gather input to bring forward at next meeting.

Appeals Committee

No appeals were presented.

Credentials Committee

Amy Brommel, Chair-elect of the Credentials Committee, reported on two reports

- February 12 meeting (Attachment 3) and
- March 12 meeting (Attachment 4)

The Council approved unanimously the recommendations for faculty approval to direct dissertations from both meetings.

Curriculum Committee

Eric Boder, Chair of the Curriculum Committee communicated there was no report because no curriculum proposals were submitted for approval.

3. New Business

There was no new business.

4. Administrative ReportsVice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

Carolyn R. Hodges, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, presented the following information:

- Spring 2015 Graduate Hooding Ceremony is underway for Thursday, May 7 at 9:00a.m. As of today over 500 responded they will be attending with over 900 candidates that have applied to graduate.
- At the beginning of fall semester Hodges will send a memo explaining how the Grade of Incomplete will be enforced.
- Dr. Galloway has set up a graduate student listserv to keep students informed and up to date on Graduate School matters.
- We are in the process of hiring an Information Specialist. Among the responsibilities will be the charge to restructure our website, keep it up to date, and manage communications about UT graduate education.

Graduate Deans' Group

Joy DeSensi, Chair of the Graduate Deans' Group, presented the report of the March 26, 2015 meeting (Attachment 5).

- The grading issue from APC was heavily discussed and it was determined that more input from faculty is needed before a vote should be taken by Council.
- Dr. Hodges will prepare and distribute a memorandum concerning the policy on Grade of Incomplete. The memo will be shared in the fall.
- Assigning advisors to graduate students will be discussed further with OIT to review other options.

Graduate Student Senate

Jessica Welch, President of the Graduate Student Senate (GSS), was not able to attend the meeting but sent an email to report the following information:

- John Keny will serve as the GSS president.
- The GSS had a successful year with representation from nearly every department.
- We raised \$800.00 for McClung Museum during the Big Orange Adventure.
- We updated the Travel Awards procedures and introduced a new online submission site.
- Created and maintained a new GSS website.
- Passed two bills (Residency and Ombudsperson) that will be given to upper administrators.
- Created an informational packet for all new senators.
- Senators served on nearly all campus committees.
- Hosted two socials, with nearly 100 attendees at each.
- Hosted a Town Hall in cooperation with the SGA.
- Hosted the first Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week.
- Engaged the administrators on the competitiveness of graduate student stipends.

Graduate Council Chair

Stephen Kania, Chair-elect, expressed appreciation to Pat Freeland for serving as chair and thanked Donald Hodges, immediate past-chair, for his service to Graduate Council.

5. New Items from the Floor

There were no items from the floor.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, February 5, 2015, 2:15 – 3:30 P.M.**  
**Graduate School Conference Room**

**Present:** Phuriwat Anusonti-Inthra (UTSI; via speaker phone), Mehmet Aydeniz, Shandra Forrest-Bank, Pat Freeland (Chair, Graduate Council), Stephanie N. Galloway (ex officio, Assistant Dean of Graduate School), Yanfei Gao, Paul Gellert, Carolyn Hodges (ex officio, Dean of Graduate School), Stefanie Ohnesorg (Chair, APC), Marian Roman

The meeting was called to order by Stefanie Ohnesorg, Chair, at 2:15 p.m.

The Minutes from the January 8, 2015, APC meeting were approved unanimously; Mehmed Aydeniz volunteered to take the minutes for today's meeting (February 5, 2015).

**Final Examination for Non-Thesis Students**

APC is working on revisions for adapting this policy in order to accommodate programs with online and/or blended delivery of course content.

**Grading Scale**

APC discussed whether revising the current grading scale by adding minuses would be desirable. We reviewed a table which identified the various grading scales for graduate studies currently used at the Top 25 public universities, and we discussed possible advantages and disadvantages of moving toward a more refined grading scale for graduate studies at UT. APC will continue this discussion in March where we will also look at research that focuses on the advantages and disadvantages of different grading scales.

**How to Handle Incompletes during a Student's Leave of Absence**

If a grade of Incomplete is not replaced by a letter grade within a year, it will automatically convert into a grade of "F". This also applies to students who are on an approved Leave of Absence. However, in situations where extenuating circumstances make it impossible for a graduate student on an LOA to complete the work within a year, the instructor must petition the Dean of the Graduate School for approval to change the Incomplete to a grade.

The next APC meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2015, and is the last APC meeting for the 2014-15 academic year.

*Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.*

**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, March 12, 2015, 2:15 – 3:30 P.M.**  
**Graduate School Conference Room**

**Present:** Phuriwat Anusonti-Inthra (UTSI; via speaker phone), Mehmet Aydeniz, Shandra Forrest-Bank, Stephanie Galloway (ex officio, Asst. Dean of Graduate School), Paul Gellert, Carolyn Hodges (ex officio, Dean of Graduate School), Stefanie Ohnesorg (Chair, APC), Joan Rentsch, Marian Roman, Jessica Welch (Graduate Student Senate President)

The meeting was called to order by Stefanie Ohnesorg, Chair, at 2:15 p.m.

There were only two items discussed at this meeting. Both were ongoing business from previous meeting.

**1. Current grading scale for graduate students and possible alternatives**

APC continued its discussion of the pros and cons of various possible alternative grading scales for graduate studies at UT. This discussion was informed by data collected from other institutions, including a spreadsheet detailing what grading scales are used at other institutions and studies that analyze the consequences of refining grading scales by adding PLUS and/or MINUS grades (see attachments).

Pros and cons were reviewed before APC voted whether the current grading scale for graduate studies at UT should be replaced by the current grading scale for undergraduate studies at UT. There was a unanimous vote in favor of adopting the grading scale currently used for undergraduate studies at UT for graduate studies. This would result in having identical grading scales for graduate and undergraduate studies at UT. This item will be presented as a voting item at the next Graduate Council meeting.

Documents reviewed and discussed:

- Evaluation of Effect of the Plus/Minus Grading System: A Computer Model  
[http://users.wfu.edu/matthews/plus\\_minus/plus\\_minus.html](http://users.wfu.edu/matthews/plus_minus/plus_minus.html)
- Spreadsheet on grading scales ([attachment](#))

**2. Current policy on Incompletes**

Following some discussion in past APC meetings regarding any possible changes with regard to the one-year-deadline for removal of an "Incomplete" grade for students on a Leave of Absence, Dr. Hodges stated that it is essential to honor the policy on Incompletes as written, that is, the incomplete will convert to an F if no grade change is submitted within a year. The policy does not imply changes will be made after that point. She further stated that in cases where a student is on an approved Leave of Absence and unable to complete the work for courses for which s/he received the grade of Incomplete within the one-year-period during his/her approved LOA, the instructor must file a petition with justification and supporting documentation to request the Graduate School consider allowing a change of grade.

*Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.*

**ATTACHMENT 3**  
**Credentials Committee Report**  
**February 12, 2015**  
**111 Student Services Building**

Present: Stephen Kania (Chair), Chad Autry, Amy Broemmel, John Nolt, Lawrence Townsend, Svetlana Zivanovic, (Joshua Fu, voted electronically).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Current Department</b>	<b>Type Of Request</b>	<b>Approval</b>
Ash, Stephen	Emeritus Professor	History	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 3-1-2025
Bharadwaj, Neeraj	Assistant Professor	Marketing and Supply Chain Management	Probationary	Until tenure
Daves, Phillip	Associate Professor	Finance	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 3-1-2025
Dmowski, Wojciech	Research Associate Professor	Materials Science and Engineering	Non-Tenure Track, Initial	5 years, 3-1-2020
Feller, Daniel	Professor	History	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 3-1-2025
Kelley, Eric	Associate Professor	Finance	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 3-1-2025
Lofaro, Michael	Professor	English	Tenured, continuing	10 years, 3-1-2025
Nieh, Tai-Gang	Professor	Materials Science and Engineering	Tenured Continuing	10 years, 3-1-2025
Steen, Andrew	Assistant Professor	Earth and Planetary Sciences	Probationary	Until tenure
Vakili, Ahmad	Professor	Mechanical, Aerospace, and Biomedical Engineering	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 3-1-2025

**ATTACHMENT 4**  
**Credentials Committee Report**  
**March 12, 2015**  
**111 Student Services Building**

Present: Stephen Kania (Chair), Joshua Fu, John Nolt, Lawrence Townsend, Svetlana Zivanovic.

Amy Brommel was elected to serve as the new committee chair.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Current Department</b>	<b>Type Of Request</b>	<b>Approval</b>
Alexiades, Vasilios	Professor	Mathematics	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Brockett, Ralph	Professor	Educational Psychology and Counseling	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Cruz-Camara, Nuria	Associate Professor	Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Dadmun, Mark	Professor	Chemistry	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Darko, Ampofo	Assistant Professor	Chemistry	Probationary	Until tenure
Dunn, Karee	Assistant Professor	Educational Psychology and Counseling	Probationary	Until tenure
Dydak, Jerzy	Professor	Mathematics	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Feng, Xiaobing	Professor	Mathematics	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Jonsson, Colleen	Professor	Microbiology	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Karakashian, Ohannes	Professor	Mathematics	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Kohl, Markus	Assistant Professor	Philosophy	Probationary	Until tenure



Kwit, Charles	Assistant Professor	Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries	Probationary	Until tenure
McCurdy, Merilee	Associate Professor	Educational Psychology and Counseling	Probationary	Until tenure
McKay, Larry	Professor	Earth and Planetary Sciences	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Mulay, Shashikant	Professor	Mathematics	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Richter, Stefan	Professor	Mathematics	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Rosinski, Jane	Professor	Mathematics	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Roy, Sharani	Assistant Professor	Chemistry	Probationary	Until tenure
Sundberg, Carl	Professor	Mathematics	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Thistlethwaite, Morwen	Professor	Mathematics	Tenured, Continuing	10 years, 4-1-2025
Umberger, Reba	Assistant Professor	Nursing	Probationary	Until tenure

**ATTACHMENT 5**  
**Graduate Deans' Group**  
**Thursday, March 26, 2015, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.**  
**University Center, Room 220**

Attending:

Kate Atchley (for Bruce Behn), Sherry Cummings, Joy DeSensi (Chair), Patricia Freeland, Mary Gunther, Carolyn Hodges, Stephen Kania, Yvonne Kilpatrick, Sandra Leach, Catherine Luther, Brent Mallinckrodt, Lisa Mullikin, Stefanie Ohnesorg, John Stier, Dixie Thompson

The meeting was called to order by Joy DeSensi at 2:00 p.m.

1. The Minutes of February 12, 2015 were approved.
2. Updates – Carolyn Hodges
  - a. The Graduate School had its annual Planning/Budget with the Provost. A primary focus of the budget is funding for graduate students. Over the last few years, the number of NSF graduate research fellowships has increased from 5 to 13, for which the Graduate School has not received additional funding. Hodges requested that the tuition for the NSF fellows be waived, so that existing funds can be used to support more new students admitted to programs. She also requested an increase in the Diversity Fellowship funding we receive from the State.
  - b. Hodges is preparing a memorandum about the policy on *Grade of Incomplete* to indicate that the policy allowing up to one year to remove the Incomplete will be strictly enforced. The memorandum will support the intent of the policy by clarifying policy guidelines, that is, the appropriate context for an incomplete and how it should be managed between the instructor and the student. Instructors and graduate students would be aware that:
    - i. A grade of Incomplete is a temporary grade indicating that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course, but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all requirements.
    - ii. The student should have completed at least 50% of the class (preferably more).
    - iii. If the student hasn't completed 50% of the class, then the instructor and student should consider the option of withdrawal from the class.
    - iv. If a grade of Incomplete is given, the instructor and student should meet and the instructor and student agree in writing about the work required to remove the Incomplete and a date when the work must be submitted.
    - v. For students on an approved LOA, if the work is not completed within a year, the instructor may submit to the dean of the Graduate School a request for an extension of time to submit the grade, outlining the proposed date and reason and including supporting justification.
3. Assigning of Advisors to Graduate Students – Dixie Thompson

The Graduate School requested that OIT insert the names of the Graduate Associate Deans as the students' default advisors because Dr. Hodges was previously listed as the default advisor for all graduate students. The associate deans expressed concerns about issues associated with their managing the requests at the college level.

- a. After discussion with the associate deans about how to assign default advisors most effectively, Dr. Hodges indicated that she would review options with the Office of Information Technology.

4. Grading Scale for Graduate Students – Stefanie Ohnesorg

A report from the Academic Policy Committee (APC) was presented regarding a proposal to revise the grading scale for graduate students. Following review of data from other universities and a discussion among APC members a vote revealed unanimous support to recommend to Graduate Council that the undergraduate and graduate grading scale be the same. The associate deans offered perspectives and comments and strongly recommended that prior to bringing the proposal forward to the Graduate Council that it be reviewed and discussed among the faculty within the departments and programs in order to secure feedback from the instructional faculty.

5. Joy DeSensi

- a. The Director of Graduate Studies Workshop is Tuesday, March 31, from 9-11a.m. in the Shiloh Room. We have a full agenda and it should be a very informative meeting.
- b. Fellowships:
  - The fellowships are currently being evaluated. We will post the names of the recipients on the Graduate School website on April 9.
  - The Associate Deans were strongly encouraged to have the departments post the name of their Director of Graduate Studies prominently on their websites.

Dr. DeSensi reminded everyone this is the last meeting for this academic year. Dr. DeSensi expressed her appreciation to all the Associate Deans for their work and commitment to the graduate students and to the Graduate School. Dr. DeSensi communicated that she is retiring May 31, 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.