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Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes

Graduate Council

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4-13-2017

## Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes - April 13, 2017

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# MINUTES

## Graduate Associate Deans

**April 13, 2017**

AHT 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

2:00 – 3:30PM

**Members Attending:** **Dixie Thompson** (Vice-Provost & Dean), **Katherine Ambroziak** (School of Architecture), **Jeffrey Fairbrother** (Education, Health, & Human Sciences), **Mary Gunther** (Nursing), **Bruce Behn** (Haslam Business), **Charlie Charles Noble** (Haslam Business), **Todd Moore** (Arts & Sciences), **John Stier** (Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources), **Alex Long** (Law), **Joan Rentsch** (Communication & Information), **Holly Mercer** (Library), **Sherry Cummings** (Social Work)

**Ex Officio:** **Yvonne Kilpatrick** (Graduate School), **Stephanie Galloway** (Graduate School), **Sean Hendricks** (Graduate School)

1. **Welcome & call to order** at 2 p.m. by Dixie Thompson.
2. **Minutes of the March 9, 2017 meeting were amended and approved.**
3. **Announcements**
  - Graduate & Professional Student Appreciation Week was a success. The students had a great time and the events were well attended.
  - 3MT Finals – thanks to everyone. It was a great event, and could not have come together without the group effort.
  - Graduate Student Senate held an awards breakfast this morning. Several hundred people there; lots of students and they had a great time. It was a wonderful event, completely student-run. Questions about the event can be directed to GSS.
  - End of the term is here! As we prepare, there may be graduate students with questions or in need of our assistance. Feel free to direct them to the Graduate School if we can help. Hooding plans are coming along; our speaker will be Michelle Harding from the Haslam College of Business. (Hooding is at 7 p.m. on May 11.)
  - Our next meeting is May 4 (not the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, which is hooding). Just a reminder that this group does meet in the summer.

#### **4. Process for awarding fellowships – Thompson**

Recently the accounts that funded top-off fellowships have transitioned into the Graduate School and have morphed into what is now the Tennessee Fellowship for Graduate Excellence. In that process, some changes needed to be made that would allow us to:

- continue to provide recourses to departments
- provide a level of accountability in the process and
- be in compliance with the law

Formerly the payments were being issued by the tower through payroll and being taxed. This process needed to be revised, so we developed a plan and met with business officers across campus this past Monday to walk through it. (See handout, “Tennessee Fellowship for Graduate Excellence.”)

These “top-off funds” will now be processed through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (instead of Payroll), and students will be awarded the money twice a year ( $\frac{1}{2}$  in fall and  $\frac{1}{2}$  in spring). It was noted that while most of these students are doctoral students, there are some recipients who are Master’s students (when that is the terminal degree in their program).

In the future, business officers will send the Graduate School the student names, then we will review the information, approve it, and send it to the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships. Dr. Thompson asked that colleges help us to encourage these students to register for courses on time; if they don’t register, they won’t get their funds.

Dr. Thompson answered questions from the group about the process and changes that have been made.

The Graduate School will host a gathering for these students in the Fall; we will consider having their faculty mentors join them for that event to set them both up for success. We do want to make sure these students are getting information about all that is available to them.

#### **5. Process for applying for certificates – Galloway**

Last fall Graduate Council voted to change the way we manage and view our graduate certificates. Effective Fall 2017, Graduate Certificates will be stand-alone programs. Also, students will now need to complete three hours for the certificate that are not being counted toward their degree program. (Note that students will apply to the graduate certificate program on the front end through Graduate Admissions, and then complete a form when the requirements are met in order to be awarded the certificate when they receive their degree.)

Because of the catalog revisions, we began to look at our processes and how we will implement the change in the coming months. We have drafted an email for the directors of graduate studies to provide them with information to help students understand this process, and would like to receive feedback before we send it out.

The following handouts were distributed:

- Current Application for Graduate Certificate
- New Process for Graduate Certificates

The following suggestions were made:

- Remove the word “New” from the top of the form.
- Clean up the language to make it clear they will “apply” to the certificate program on the front end.
- Revise the terminology on the form students use to list completed requirements for the certificate so that the word “application” is not being used. It is confusing to call both the front-end and completion requirements “applications.”
- We need to give advisors a “heads up” on these issues, as well.
- As the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph of the process document is revised, include the new language from the approved catalog revision.
- We need additional fields on the Certificate form; some certificates require more than 12 hours.
- Include a reference on the candidacy form to the policy that indicates three hours must be taken that are not part of their degree program. Help make it clear which course meets that requirement.
- We may need another line that says if you also receiving another degree; which of these courses will not be counted towards that degree?
- Let’s be sure that there will not be a fee for graduate certificates application or awarding. If they are already paying a graduation fee, they shouldn’t pay for a certificate.
- Create language that says “if you are earning a certificate as you are also earning a degree, complete steps 2 and 3 in the same semester.”
- We need to make sure the students can apply for both the degree program and certificate at the same time.
- Include information about subsequent steps in the admission letter (which comes from Graduate Admissions).

Thanks to everyone for the feedback. We will take these ideas back and see how we can improve our process.

## **6. Issues related to English proficiency – Kilpatrick**

Yvonne Kilpatrick provided a handout, “Graduate Catalog Policies Associated with English Language Assessment” and walked through the current policy on assessment and the supporting data. At the heart of the issue is that we have policies in our Graduate catalog related to ESL that we cannot enforce. We will talk about this more next time, but Dr. Thompson will ask that a working group be formed from this group to find a solution to the problems in this area and make recommendations that can be taken to Graduate Council.

With no additional items for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.  
Next meeting: May 4 at 2 p.m. in AHT 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room.