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Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes

Graduate Council

October 2017

Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes - August 10, 2017

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MINUTES
Graduate Associate Deans

August 10, 2017
SSB 405 2:00 – 3:30PM

Members Attending: **Dixie Thompson** (Vice-Provost & Dean), **Katherine Ambroziak** (Architecture & Design), **Jeffrey Fairbrother** (Education, Health, & Human Sciences), **Kate Atchley** (for Bruce Behn, Haslam Business), **Todd Moore** (Arts & Sciences), **Alex Long** (Law), **Claudia Kirk** (Veterinary Medicine), **Kevin Kit** (for Masood Parang, Engineering)

Ex Officio: **Yvonne Kilpatrick** (Graduate School), **Ernest Brothers** (Graduate School), **Mary Albrecht** (Provost's Office/Graduate School), **Sean Hendricks** (Graduate School)

1. **Welcome & call to order at 2 p.m. by Dixie Thompson.**
2. **Minutes of the June 8, 2017 meeting were approved without revision. (No meeting in July.)**
3. **Graduate School Updates – Dixie Thompson**
 - Things are gearing up for the Fall, and the Graduate School has been involved in several events this week, all with great turnouts. Our students received lots of good information to get them off to a great start, and lots of offices from across campus helped us as we welcomed these new students to campus:

August 8 – New Graduate Student Orientation (approximately 400 students attended the event at the Holiday Inn World's Fair Site)

August 9 – Graduate Student Senate Social (attended by approximately 100 graduate students)

August 10 – New GTA Orientation (approximately 300 new teaching assistants and associates attended our presentation)
 - The Graduate School will receive the new academic standings list next week on August 17. Sean will be sending out correspondence this week to let your Directors of Graduate Studies know the review dates & process. We will once again be asking them to review the lists (which we will distribute on August 18) and communicate with departments, providing us with feedback by August 22 at Noon. Classes will begin on August 23, and it is especially important to have the dismissals and probationary lists in place before classes begin.
 - Two Searches are underway in the Graduate School:
 1. Assistant Dean and Director of Student Services
 2. Business Manager

Dixie and OED will be meeting with the committees tomorrow to issue the charge and kick off the review. When the search begins, the Associate Deans will be asked to participate in the process, especially with the Assistant Dean position. It is important that we hire an individual who communicates well with our partners across campus.

Dixie asked Sean to send the job descriptions of both positions out to the Associate Deans.

- If you have not already, send names to profile for our TN Fellows for Graduate Excellence
- We are asking for your help since we have a staffing change and a new fellowship process: if students do not receive their money, make sure they know that we will make it right and get it to them ASAP, then contact us to let us know.
- Ernest Brothers is the President of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools, and they have a couple of awards that we want to give attention to. They have a thesis award and an electronic digital technology to scholarship award. We need to get our students nominated! We will send the links for the various awards and their list of requirements. The winners will receive \$1000 and travel to 2018 CSGS meeting in Fayetteville, AR. The deadline is approaching (Nov. 16), but we can only submit 1 nominee per award per university, so we will need to determine as a group which nominees we would like to send forward.

We will need to set a deadline for the colleges to submit a recommendation and then time for us to review. Dixie asked Ernest to pull out a little more information on the obligation of the students at the conference and send that out, as well as more information on the Application of Digital Technology to Scholarship award. In the meantime, discuss this with your colleges. We would probably need recommendations by mid-October.

They also have some faculty awards, we may want to consider those as well.

Ernest shared that in 2019 we will be hosting the CSGS meeting in Knoxville, so we want to take these opportunities to showcase our students and faculty. There will also be a 3MT competition at CSGS that we may want to consider.

- Speaking of the 3MT, our students really enjoyed that last year. At our next meeting we will begin to discuss what that may look like for the coming year and how we may improve upon our beta version last year (although last year was really good).
- Yvonne Kilpatrick gave an update for Graduate Admissions. We are excited about the new applications for Fall 2018 (Spring and Summer 2018, as well). We will soon receive the module to test from College Net; but we anticipate it will be up before August is out. We'll let you know as soon as that is available.

- Ernest has been leading our Best Practices in Teaching workshop for the last several years and now we are launching a new series, “Best Practices in Publishing.” We will partner with University Libraries to deliver a 6 – 7 week experience where they will learn about issues related to getting work published. It will be another great professional development opportunity for our students, and we’ll share more information about this ahead.
- We will have a reception in September for our Graduate School Fellows. You will hear more about that in the weeks ahead.

4. Report of Summer Working Groups

- **English Proficiency Working Group** led by Yvonne Kilpatrick: tasked with looking at the policies in the graduate catalog related to English proficiencies. To date, that group has not met face to face, but they have had preliminary discussions in which several questions were raised regarding our policies and procedures. Yvonne shared some of these topics that she has been researching over the summer, gathering what various schools are doing (those in our aspirational schools, our peer group, and our own requirements/ outcomes). Also looking at the testing required for GTAs.

Discussion by the associate deans followed. When the members of this working group return to campus, they will set a meeting to look at the data more closely and see how we compare and the areas we may want to examine in greater detail. There are some good things we can look into that can perhaps allow us more flexibility in the ways we are approaching this.

Following the discussion, Dr. Thompson asked that this working group meet, continue to talk and determine what the issues are and suggest possible solutions that can then be taken to Graduate Council.

- **Credentials Committee** led by Ernest Brothers met last week. Todd has already collected some data from department head polls and also from Top 25 comparisons. This committee is charged with looking at eliminating the review of tenure track faculty holding a doctorate in their field; and whether or not to keep the existing structure for non-tenure track faculty. The number of non-tenure track faculty is increasing, centers are filling more adjunct roles, and we have to explore and examine how that will look in the future. As we look at this data, we know that mentoring plays a role in the success of our graduate students, but how does that look as part of the credentialing process? We plan to filter through the information that has been gathered, meet and discuss these issues and make recommendations about moving forward.

Following a group discussion, Dixie asked that this committee look at two more items in addition to these that they have already begun:

- 1) Can non-tenure track faculty chair dissertations?
- 2) Do we need to reconsider the language of how many people should be on a committee and how many need to be approved to direct?

- Graduate Catalog Committee led by Mary Albrecht has met 2-3 times. Some of the discussion they have had involves:

Looking at the organization of the academic policies section of the catalog. Right now it is alphabetical and can be difficult to navigate for specific policies. They have discussed organizing it in the way a student goes through the process (admission, enrollment, academic standing, grades, graduation, etc.).

Another guiding principle was to remove large sections of text that do not reflect Graduate School policy, but rather are found in other places on campus. The catalog is still laid out as a hard copy text, rather than an online document that can provide links without going into a lot of unnecessary detail. For example, policies related to inclement weather, FERPA, campus safety, etc. are not Graduate School policies. We can mention it for the sake of information that it exists, but then give a link where information can be found rather than trying to keep those sections of text up to date.

They are aligning the catalog with the style manual in terms of how it refers to the university. That is an easy one, but there are so many differences in how it is listed in the catalog! They also discussed changing some terminology. For example in the Master's programs, the use of the more positive term "project" instead of "problem" in lieu of thesis.

Cleaning up the descriptions of the Master's and Doctoral degrees to help students understand the process and requirements. Currently there are paragraphs that even confuse us! We are hoping to make these sections more clear, add definitions, and provide more detail to help students understand our programs and how they will matriculate through them.

Following these discussions, the meeting adjourned. Our next meeting will be Sept 21 @ 2 p.m. in AHT 4th Floor Conference Room.