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Graduate Council Minutes

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October 2017

## Graduate Council Minutes - September 28, 2017

Graduate Council

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

September 28, 2017 Minutes

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

Ex-Officio members present: Albrecht, M., Behn, B., Beyl, C., Lyons, B. (Faculty Senate President), Mercer, H., Palenchar, M., Parang, M., Roman, M. (Past Chair), Cox, C.,

The Graduate Council meeting was called to order by Chair, Jennifer Morrow on Thursday, September 28, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. in the Friesen Black Cultural Center, Multipurpose Room.

**1. Minutes of the Preceding Meeting**

The Minutes of the August 24, 2017, meeting were approved by the Graduate Council.

**2. Committee Reports****Academic Policy Committee (Maria Stehle, Chair), presented 2 reports**

I have two reports: August 31 meeting (**Attachment 1**) and our September 7 meeting (**Attachment 2**).

August 31, 2017 meeting (has 2 reports. One from our meeting and the second from a joint meeting with the Credentials Committee)

*Report from the APC Meeting:* This was an informational meeting. Dr. Dixie Thompson explained the 3 working groups she chaired over the summer. One working group, chaired by Yvonne Kilpatrick, is looking at issues related to students for whom English is not their primary language. A second working group, chaired by Ernest Brothers, is reviewing the credentialing process. The third working group, chaired by Mary Albrecht, is reviewing the layout and content of the Academic Policies and Procedures section of the Graduate Catalog.

*Report from the Joint Meeting with the Credentials Committee:* Dr. Thompson described the efforts of the summer working group that is reviewing our credentialing process. The complexity of the issues were discussed. The information collected from the summer working group will be crafted and presented to both APC and the Credentials Committee for consideration. Prior to any changes coming forward, campus-wide listening sessions will be held to vet proposed changes.

September 7, 2017 meeting

- ▶ The majority of this meeting was a discussion with Yvonne Kilpatrick (chair of the Working Group reviewing issues related to students for whom English is not the primary language. This working group is reviewing two issues: 1) the English language certification (standardized testing required at time of admission), and 2) English proficiency (English placement testing after matriculation). Yvonne provided handouts for our review. We had a good discussion with various questions and ideas. We asked Yvonne to go back to her working group and 1) clarify those students for whom an exception for the English certification might be available and to bring that information back as a proposal; and 2) collect more data and have input from across campus concerning the English 121 requirement. Our current practice is not in alignment with our policy in the catalog. This issue and review may take a while. But, we want good data and we want a policy that truly is good for our graduate students and helps them succeed.
- ▶ Mary Albrecht communicated that the catalog working group is ready to send some catalog realignments to APC. These are not policy changes but simply rearranging some catalog text. Any text that will involve policy changes will come to APC as a proposal for approval.
- ▶ Jens Gregor, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science submitted a proposal to revise the MS non-thesis final exam policy for the courses only option. Gregor is requesting a courses only option with no final comprehensive written examination. We ask Dr. Gregor to provide more data so we can compare what other non-thesis master's programs do at peer (aspirational) institutions.

**Appeals Committee (Mehmet Aydeniz, Chair)**

We had no appeals to review. We used our committee time to look at the language and discussed the policy and procedures of the appeals process. Students need to be aware and realize this is a two-step process. The first step is to exhaust all their resources at the department/college level before it comes before the Appeals Committee. The other item we discussed was with faculty not working over the summer, if an appeal comes in, it is difficult to put a committee together. We will keep you updated on our discussions.

**Credentials Report (Amy Broemmelmeyer, Chair), presented 2 reports**

As mentioned, we are involved in a working group, chaired by Dr. Brothers, that is reviewing the credentialing process to determine the most efficient and productive process for faculty to receive approval to direct dissertations. We will have another meeting and then bring our findings to APC for discussion.

I also have two reports: August 31 meeting (**Attachment 3**) and September 7 meeting (**Attachment 4**)

At the August 31 meeting, 18 applications were submitted for review. Six were found to come from a department that does not offer a PhD program. Consequently, those six could not be approved. We will also bring this to the working group as a discussion item. The Credentials Committee representative from that college will follow up with a face-to-face meeting to explain the options for pursuing approval to direct. The other 12 applications were discussed and approved for doctoral directive status.

For the September 7 meeting, we had one application submitted for review. Therefore, we had a virtual meeting. The one application was approved for doctoral directive status.

***The Graduate Council unanimously approved both reports from the Credentials Committee.***

**Curriculum Report (Robert Fuller, Chair)**

The Curriculum meeting of September 21 was cancelled because no curriculum proposals were submitted for our review.

**Student Faculty Research Awards Committee (Dixie Thompson)**

Dr. Thompson is out of state at a conference. Therefore, there are no reports from the Dean today.

**3. New Business:**

There was no new business.

**4. Administrative Reports and Announcements:**

**Graduate Associate Deans Report:** with Dean Thompson away, please review the August and September Graduate Associate Deans Report at <http://gradschool.utk.edu/faculty-staff/graduate-council/graduate-associate-deans-group/>.

**Graduate Student Senate (Jamie Greig, GSS Vice President)**

- ▶ First, I would like to report that per Chancellor Davenport's recommendation, the Graduate Student Senate is no longer under SGA and consequently, no longer in the SGA Bylaws. We are now an independent organization. *We have transferred from under the Division of Student Life to the Graduate School.* This means that the Graduate School will take on the GSS budget (which includes the travel awards) and the GSS issues. Along with this transition this year, we have some core priorities as we move forward.

1. Base stipends. Since 1993, the graduate student base stipends have not increased. Some departments do not operate under the base stipends, but some still do. The base stipends are below the current poverty level and 20 percent below our peer institutions. We are

requesting departments to help us improve the base stipends or maybe top off the base stipends with either endowments or fellowships.

2. Allocations of classes between faculty and GTA's. This is an issue with multiple tiers. One issue is that tenured faculty teach 300 and 400-level courses. Leaving GTA's to teach 100 and 200-level classes. Teaching 100 and 200-level classes keeps us out of the job market because some employers want evidence of teaching 300 and 400-level. Another issue is the size of the 100 and 200-level courses, which can have up to 200 students. Classes of this size puts a burden on our graduate studies and research.
  3. Grievance procedure. Another issue we would like to bring forward is the grievance procedure within the departments when the relationship between the student and the research professor is strained and not working. Either the research is not working or the association is not working and the student has nowhere and/or no one to go to for fear of being black-listed in their departments. We would like to have a way to air our grievances without having our names blacklisted. We also brought this up at the Chancellor's Roundtable. There is a student ombudsman. But, an external person does not understand the department structure and cannot influence department policy. We would like the departments to think amongst themselves how to address these stressful situations.
    - a. A suggestion was to involve the Director of Graduate Studies. Maybe the DGS could provide guidance and/or assistance to the student. Also, to make sure the Department Handbook addresses the issue of grievances to provide a systemic change.
    - b. We will write resolutions this semester and submit to Chancellor Davenport and her officers to distribute for review and discussion.
- Our next event is in conjunction with the Center for Career Development. It is our brown-bag series, "Life Beyond Graduate School" and the topic will deal with job search. This will be on October 12 at 11:30 a.m., Hodges Library, room 253. Newly appointed assistant professors will sit on a panel and discuss with graduate students the job interview process.

**Graduate Council Chair** (Jennifer Morrow)

I want to report that Qualtrics Research Core may be going away because of a substantial increase in what it will cost UT. Bob Muenchen, IT Manger of Research Computing Support, is forming a taskforce committee to look at alternatives and to gather data. I volunteered to be on the taskforce because this greatly impacts my department. OIT will be receiving bids from other platforms. I urge you to speak to your colleagues and students because I am sure many are working on surveys, research projects, and thesis/dissertations. If we have to move to a different platform this will dramatically impact our productivity. Data continuity is important but economically, the faculty and GRA person-hours are equally important. The survey should be available in the next couple of weeks. As soon as the survey link is available from OIT, I will share the link with you and with the Department Heads and DGS's.

**4. Items from the floor:**

**Beauvais Lyons (Faculty Senate President)**

This year 8 graduate students were assisted by UT's Office of National Scholarships and Fellowships with their fellowship applications. With the tremendous growth in the number of students applying for fellowships, I would like to see a conversation take place between the Graduate School and the Office of National Scholarships and Fellowships (Michael Handelsman is the Senior Faculty Director). Both offices working together would provide helpful information and guidance to those graduate students applying for a Fulbright Award.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox  
Graduate Council Liaison

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**Academic Policy Committee Meeting Report**  
**Thursday, August 31, 2017, 2:00 P.M.**  
**111 Student Services Building**

Attendees: Maria Stehle (Chair), Mary Albrecht, Mehmet Aydeniz, Sergio Bedford (GSS President), Eric Boder, Julie Bonom, Lars Dzikus, Jennifer Morrow, Reza Seddighi, Dixie Thompson

The meeting was called to order by Maria Stehle at 2:00 p.m.

Dixie Thompson reviewed the summer work done in the Graduate School to implement APC changes from last year. This includes:

- The new process for graduate certificates
- The new process for using iThenticate

Dixie Thompson reviewed the 3 working groups she chaired this summer.

- A working group (Yvonne Kilpatrick – chair) to investigate issues related to students for whom English is not the primary language.
- A working group (Ernest Brothers – chair) to consider changes to the process for credentialing faculty to chair dissertation committees.
- A working group (Mary Albrecht – chair) to examine the layout and content of the Academic Policies and Procedures section of the Graduate Catalog.

The APC will take up the issue of examining policies for students that do not have English as the primary language. Yvonne Kilpatrick led the summer working group. She will bring the issue and discussion to the APC for their consideration. Data was collected that may be useful in deliberations. Input from campus will be important. The needs of students will be an essential component of the discussion.

The working group looking at Graduate Catalog revision will continue its work. Mary Albrecht will bring sections as they are completed to the APC for their insight. All policy changes are the purview of the APC, so no changes in policy will be implemented without working through the APC. However, some rewriting for clarity sake will occur without intimate oversight by APC. Albrecht will share rewrites with the APC so that the entire process is handled with transparency.

Respectfully submitted,

Dixie Thompson  
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**Academic Policy Committee Meeting Report**  
**Thursday, September 7, 2017, 2:00 P.M.**  
**111 Student Services Building**

Attendees: Maria Stehle (Chair), Mary Albrecht, Mehmet Aydeniz, Sergio Bedford (GSS President), Eric Boder, Lars Dzikus, Yvonne Kilpatrick, Jennifer Morrow, Michael Palenchar, Reza Seddighi, Dixie Thompson, Catherine Cox

The meeting was called to order by Maria Stehle at 2:00 p.m.

1. One of the working groups Dr. Thompson charged this summer was to investigate issues related to students for whom English is not the primary language. Yvonne Kilpatrick led the summer working group. Yvonne will bring us up to date on how that working group is progressing.

Yvonne Kilpatrick: The two items we reviewed are 1) the English language certification (standardized testing required at time of admission) and 2) English proficiency (English placement testing after matriculation). Yvonne gave background information on these two English policies in the catalog:

- The English proficiency is required for both undergraduate and graduate students.
- The English Proficiency (placement into courses) was redesigned a couple of years ago by English as a Second Language (ESL), housed in the English Department. Dr. Tanita Saenkhum is the Director of ESL.
- Because of the challenges and conflicts the English Proficiency model caused with student registration (registration for English 122) and within the departments with program requirements, a different model or redesign was selected.
- The redesign combined the efforts for both undergraduate and graduate students. It was decided to use the standardized test scores for testing the English proficiency. The two standardized tests that we use at UT are the TOEFL and IELTS.
- This new model came forward to APC in 2016, but a question arose with concern, how would the policy be enforced? Undergraduate APC also had questions, so this proposal came to a halt.

Because our practice is not in alignment with the policy in the Graduate Catalog, we need to determine the best practice and submit a proposal to APC for consideration. We worked with the Graduate Associate Deans' group in the summer and discussed different ideas and practices for this policy. I also met with Sarah Melton from the English Department in the summer. Sarah is the Associate Director for ESL.

We believe the best practice to determine English proficiency is to use the results from the English language certification (TOEFL and IELTS).

Some questions and issues that came forward:

- How will our policy affect cohort groups with their registration?
- Should all departments have the same minimum score requirement? Actually, some departments require higher test scores than the minimum.
- A student may not take more than 9 additional hours of course work while enrolled in English 121/122. This causes issues for some programs that require 10 or more program hours in the students' first year.
- How is it interpreted on the admissions application, with the question, is your native language English? Will we require certification that the degree or courses from a foreign institution were taught in English?
- What about those students who earn a bachelor's degree within the US? What about a master's degree?
- If course English 122 is no longer available, a scholarly writing course might be an option. There are a few options for other courses at UT that students could take.
- Should our students take English 122? Further, the content of English 122 is not comparable to the content of taking 500- and 600-level courses.
- How about just raising the TOEFL score, to where English proficiency would then not be necessary.
- Instead of mandating a course, maybe indicate after their admission, that because English is not their native language, that we have resources for them to succeed – and list those resources. And, to educate the departments that good mentoring is necessary for student success.

Yvonne distributed handouts.

- An Environmental Scan. Looking at the 2016 peer groups and aspirational peer groups. This review is just the requirement for admission, not how the policy is enforced.
- English Certification description.
- English Proficiency description.
- English Proficiency Scores, Placement, and GPA Outcomes. This handout is a report Yvonne created to determine the GPA outcome of students taking English 122 versus those who did not take English 122. The GPA was almost the same. However, is the GPA the best indicator of how well the student did at UT? We might need to look at what would be the difference where writing is required for assessment. For example, passing comps. Using a different measurement for English proficiency.
- Excerpts from English Course Placement for ESL webpage.

Maria Stehle:

- How do we want to proceed with this information? Is the best evidence to change the policy or drop the policy?
- Yvonne, we request your Working Group bring a proposal to clarify the exception for the English certification.
- Second, we need more data/input before we make a proposal to revise the English 122 requirement. We want a policy or requirement that will help the student succeed in graduate school.
- Collect more data and have input from across campus, and, if possible, qualitative feedback and/or evaluations of course English 122. Jennifer Morrow offered that a student in her program could conduct an evaluation of course English 122 for Graduate Council.

2. Mary Albrecht: Working Group – Graduate Catalog text

- I am ready to send catalog revisions. How do you want to receive the revisions? Do you want to see items side by side?
- For the reorganization of catalog text, can I send you those by email?
- We will begin with reviewing by email. If that process doesn't work, we'll change it.
- Any policy issues or changes will come as a proposal to APC for approval.

3. Change in MS non-thesis final exam policy for the courses only option – Jens Gregor, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

- Current policy indicates, "Each non-thesis student must pass a final comprehensive written examination."
- Gregor is requesting a courses only option with no final comprehensive written examination.
- Do we want a non-culminating experience for earning a master's degree?
- We will ask Dr. Gregor to provide data so we can compare what non-thesis master's requirements are at peer (aspirational) institutions.
- We will review this proposal again at our next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox  
Graduate Council Liaison

**ATTACHMENT 3**  
**Credentials Committee Report**  
**August 31, 2017**  
**111 Student Services Building**

Present: Amy Broemmel (chair), Chad Black, Jim Larson, Reza Abedi, Nuria Cruz-Camara, Jens Gregor, and Mohammad Mohsin. Dixie Thompson attended in a non-voting role.

18 applications were submitted for review. The committee reviewed the applications and:

- ◆ 6 were found to come from a department that does not have a Ph.D. program. The Credentials Committee representative from that college will follow up with a face-to-face meeting to explain the options for pursuing approval to direct.
- ◆ 12 were discussed and approved for doctoral direct status by the committee.

The following faculty members were recommended for approval to direct dissertations as follows:

Employee Name	Title	Current Department	Approval
<b>Initial Approval of Tenure Track Faculty without Tenure (Probationary)</b>			
Anderson, Joel	Associate Professor	Nursing	Until Tenure
Christian, Michelle	Assistant Professor	Sociology	Until Tenure
Harris, Matthew	Assistant Professor	Economics	Until Tenure
Swamy, Raja	Assistant Professor	Anthropology	Until Tenure
Vogiatzis, Konstantinos	Assistant Professor	Chemistry	Until Tenure
<b>Continuing Approval of Faculty with Tenure</b>			
Beyl, Caula	Professor and Dean	Plant Sciences	10 years, through the 2027-2028 academic year
Benson, Roberto	Professor	Materials Science and Engineering	10 years, through the 2027-2028 academic year
Boder, Eric	Associate Professor	Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering	10 years, through the 2027-2028 academic year

Buchanan, John	Associate Professor	Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science	10 years, through the 2027-2028 academic year
Frey, Scott	Professor	Sociology	10 years, through the 2027-2028 academic year
Hinde, Robert	Professor and Vice Provost	Chemistry	10 years, through the 2027-2028 academic year
Violanti, Michelle	Associate Professor	Communication Studies	10 years, through the 2027-2028 academic year

**ATTACHMENT 4  
 Credentials Committee Report  
 September 14, 2017  
 111 Student Services Building**

Voting electronically: Amy Broemmel (chair), Chad Black, Jim Larson, Reza Abedi, Nuria Cruz-Camara, Jens Gregor, and Mohammad Mohsin.

One application was submitted for review. The committee reviewed the application and voted electronically to approve.

The following faculty member is recommended for continuing approval to direct dissertations.

Employee Name	Title	Current Department	Approval
<b>Continuing Approval of Faculty with Tenure</b>			
Khomami, Bamin	Professor and Department Head	Biomolecular Engineering	10 years, through the 2027-2028 academic year