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Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes

Graduate Council

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4-9-2020

## Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes - April 9, 2020

Graduate Council

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**Graduate Associate Deans**  
**Minutes - April 9, 2020 – Via Zoom**

Attending:

Mary Gunther; Bruce Behn; Katherine Ambroziak; ginger1; Jeff Fairbrother; John Stier; Charles Noble; Sherry Cummings; Todd Moore; Sadie Hutson; Claudia Kirk; Ozlem Kilic; Paula Schaefer; Holly Mercer

Ex Officio: Sean Hendricks; Dixie Thompson; Sara Bradberry; Ernest Brothers; Yvonne Kilpatrick; AnnaMaria Murphy; Sean Hendricks; Millie Cheatham

Welcome & Approve Minutes (Feb.13) – Dixie Thompson

- Minutes approved.

Graduate School Updates – Dixie Thompson

- The staff of the Graduate School has been telecommuting 100% except for short periods of time for basic functions like mail. We are continuing to monitor the main email account and phones.
- Dixie is involved in several COVID19 initiatives on campus, including an Academic Operations Group that is advocating for the needs of our graduate programs and students.
- We have made several temporary policy changes to help our students. Starting next Monday, students can go in and make changes to grading options or withdraw from classes. It will be open April 13 – 22. For students to understand their choices and the implications of them, Dixie will send communication out on Monday and encourage them to talk with their faculty advisors to help make those decisions. We have communicated with departments to get a list of the courses they want to open up to S/NC grading. The grading option that students choose will be reflected when instructors log in to enter grades.
- Dixie participated in a CGS Webinar yesterday and left knowing we are all facing similar challenges, and what we are doing is in a similar vein as other institutions. All of us extending deadlines, looking at grading, etc.
- Discussed GRAs and how those positions will be handled moving forward. There is not a uniform answer - it will vary a lot as we move forward from spring semester. GRAs need to be in close communication with their PIs and the PIs need to be in close touch with the Office of Research.
  - John Stier shared that Herbert College of Agriculture sent a letter to all their graduate students thanking them for continued flexibility. It was a commitment to work with them individually to assure progress for their degrees and providing support; however, this will be on a case by case basis. He will share a copy of the letter with this group.

- Discussed COVID19 issues facing the students. There is a petition from GSS asking the university to guarantee extended funding. Students are coming from different places, and unfortunately there is not a one size fits all. While many of these changes need to come from the department, we want to promote maximum flexibility, and perhaps share with each other how that is happening.
  - Dixie asked that deans help us determine the magnitude of the effect in their colleges of students trying to graduate and the need for exceptions and/or resources and to determine the plans colleges have to manage incoming international students who cannot get here (and specifically as it relates to assistantships)
  - Todd Moore shared that Arts & Sciences sent out a survey to help determine this impact. Dixie asked Todd to share the survey with Millie so we can distribute to this group as we need to get a feel for how many students are facing these types of issues. Associate Deans are asked to communicate with departments to help determine a rough estimate.
  - The Center for Global Engagement recently reported that students looking to get VISAs are having to wait until November to even get an appointment. Students trying to come from overseas likely won't be here in August, and maybe not January. For some colleges this will be a big hit, and how to handle it may also be on a case by case basis. International students already in the states will have an easier time transferring here rather than coming from their home country.
  - The question was raised if international students could start classes, even if they could not get here. We would need to work with Global Engagement to see how that would work
  - Dixie encouraged everyone to stay in touch with the office of Graduate Admissions and the Center for Global Engagement as these issues arise.
  - Question raised about flexibility in catalog edits. Dixie explained that the new Graduate Council leadership will meet with her and Catherine soon to set up the calendar for next year. Claudia will get with Dixie after the meeting to discuss the question of changing the hours for their class that starts April 20.

**Pulse Survey Update** – the survey went out in the last week or so which gave students a chance to respond to how they are doing. Those who say they are struggling and need help are being contacted by their department. The goal, however, is for all 29,000 students to receive a call.

**Continuing Graduate Education Opportunities** - The Chancellor would like to create an inventory of opportunities for students who will be graduating this semester or in the summer, but will be entering into a shaky job market and may want to stay and continue their education. What programs are available that are attractive ways for students to pursue graduate education in the short term? Send Millie a list of programs (certifications, licenses, degrees, etc.) that might be options for them.

**Graduate Admissions Update** – Yvonne Kilpatrick

Things are going well. We are continuing to process applications, accept transcripts, picking up mail once a week; test scores are being loaded and/or scanned. Sean posted a short COVID19

update on the website from Graduate Admissions; getting closer to the time to enter the new application in Slate and putting up the application in Slate for 2021.

Admissions specialists are polling programs to see if they are interested in reviewing additional applications. If yes, we will send communication re those students whose file is in process or not yet completed. We are attending biweekly NAGAP webinars related to COVID19.

We sent out a message to everyone admitted for Fall 2020; just giving them an update letting them know we are still interested in them coming. It has made a difference, and they know we are still thinking of them. Also communicated to the applicant pool to let them know we hope they become a part of us and we are moving forward.

Discussed transfer credits for students who may not be able to get back and are taking classes where they are. Sara shared that typically if the committee accepts it, so will the Graduate School. They can add it to their Admission to Candidacy. There is a certain number that have to be taken at UT, but certainly a semesters worth of information is doable.

**Slate Update** – AnnaMaria Murphy – The application is ready for testing. She will email a link and testing instructions, and you can let us know if there are any changes that need to be made. You will receive a feedback form. We recommended using different browsers if you have multiple people testing so we can see if there is an issue with particular browsers. Sending that to the departments. Still anticipating an August launch. We appreciate the hard work that has gone into this. Lots of good things coming!

#### **Graduate Student Services Update** – Sara Bradberry

- T/d deadlines extended to May 8 (electronic/signatures okay)
- All spring deadlines extended.
- Julie and Sylvia have followed up with their graduates. They have UT cell phones that they have, lots of good feedback. Keeping them on track with anything they may need.
- We are going to award degrees May 12. We will be on campus that day.
- May ceremony has been cancelled. There will probably not be a summer ceremony; we are going to push for the December ceremony that will be for all 2020 graduates.
- A virtual ceremony planned for May 7. Sara will share the information with Millie to share with you. Students will have a slide instead of walking. The company will announce the names. It will be an on-demand option. It is all coming together quickly. Beth's office is working on a mail out to all graduates and a program listing all graduates (ug/g) the first of May.

#### **Fellowships & recruitment** - Ernest

Returning student reviews end today, department swill be notified and students will need to accept or decline by the deadline

Recruitment – having to rethink how we do recruitment. Thinking instead of registration we would pay for access to the attendees. Looking at ways to continue to do this. This has brought to our attention how important it is to have a solid electronic / digital presence. We will all be different because of what we have experienced, but we are learning we can do it differently.

**Meeting adjourned.**