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Graduate Council Minutes

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8-29-2019

## **Graduate Council Minutes - August 29, 2019**

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

August 29, 2019 Minutes

**Members present:** Patterson, D., (Chair), Broemmel, A., (Chair-Elect), Bonom, J., Choi, S. (Graduate Student Senate Vice-President), Dzikus, L., Edwards, L., Ekici, K., Finotti, L., Fleming-May, R., Fouts, H., Griffin, M., Guo, H., Han, L., Herron, F., Hewett, K., Hines, M., Kotowski, M., Lang, M., Mason, L., Meschke, L., Misawa, M., Moyer, D., Ohnesorg, S., Okafor, C., Preuss, N., Sachs, A., Stehle, M., Wang, H., Ward, M, Willis, D. (Graduate Student Senate President)

**Ex-Officio members present:** Ambroziak, K., Cantrell, S., Kavanagh, K., Kirk, C., Mercer, H., Moore, T., Thompson, D., Cox, C.

1. **Call to Order and Welcome** (David Patterson)

The Graduate Council meeting was called to order by Chair, David Patterson on Thursday, August 29, 2019, at 3:00 p.m. in the Friesen Black Cultural Center, Multipurpose Room.

- Dr. Patterson welcomed new and returning members to the first meeting of the 2019-20 Graduate Council.

2. **Minutes of the Preceding Meeting**

The Graduate Council Minutes of the April 25, 2019 meeting were approved electronically on May 13, 2019.

- For new members, Dr. Patterson read the procedure for how the Graduate Council Minutes are approved electronically.
  - Within a week of the Graduate Council Meeting, the Minutes are sent electronically to all on the Graduate Council to read and review. Any edits/revisions should be sent to Catherine Cox within that review week. Any edits/revisions received will be noted. The Minutes will be sent again the next week to only the voting members, along with the voting link. The voting members will have one week to review and submit their vote of 1) approve, 2) not approved, or 3) abstain. When the votes are received, Catherine will notify the Graduate Council Chair and Dean Thompson of the results and that they can move forward to the Senate Executive Committee. This new procedure allows the Minutes to move forward expeditiously, first to Faculty Senate for approval and then to the Board of Trustees for approval.

3. **Committees:**

- **Academic Policy Committee** (Maria Stehle)

Our first meeting is not until next Thursday, so no report today. If you have any items to bring forward for discussion, you may send those items to myself or to Catherine Cox as an agenda item.
- **Appeals Committee** (Amy Broemmel)
  - Amy introduced herself as the new chair of the Appeals Committee.
  - We recently met to review one appeal that was submitted over the summer. We gave our recommendation to Dean Thompson for review.
- **Curriculum Committee**. When the Curriculum Committee meets at the end of this meeting, they will choose a chairperson.

- Student/Faculty Research Awards (Dixie Thompson)
  - We have about \$100,000 in award money.
  - The SFRA committee will meet after this meeting to determine timelines.

4. **New Business:** There was no new business.

5. **Administrative Reports and Announcements:**

**Deans Update:** (Dixie Thompson)

Thank you to everyone for attending the Graduate Council meeting today.

We have had a busy summer in the Graduate School. I want to give you an update.

- We awarded over 1,300 graduate degrees and nearly 100 graduate certificates.
- I looked at the enrollment today for graduate and professional students and our numbers were 6,162. This is about the same total we had last year.
- We published the 2019-20 catalog with all the new reformatting to the programs. Last year we revised the Policy section. This year the graduate programs and department pages. I encourage everyone to review your department page and your program requirements to make sure all information is correct.
- We are working hard to enhance our social media presence.
- The Graduate School staff met and updated our strategic plan for the year.
- We introduced a new Professional Development framework. You will hear much more about the Graduate and Professional Student Professional Development (GPSPD). We brought in a facilitator to lead our core group of partners through an exercise to develop a list of major components of professional development that graduate and professional students need. This will be a great opportunity for our students. When the website and more information is available, emails will be sent.
- We had a successful New Student Orientation with over 400 in attendance and a New GTA Orientation with over 300 in attendance.
- \$500,000 in stipend support went out in the targeted increases this year.
- We held several recruitment activities.
- We have launched the admissions site for fall 2020.

For the coming year

- I am working on the GC Procedures Manual and hope to have it available for your review at the September meeting.
- For APC, I have a couple of discussion items that I will propose:
  1. Academic Second Opportunity for graduate students.
  2. Confirmation of attendance into our Graduate Admissions process.
- Some points of emphasis this year:
  1. Our Professional Development Framework.
  2. We want to continue to push on recruitment. We want to have a large, competitive, and diverse group of applicants.
  3. We will be making changes to our admissions platform over the course of this year. I will update you more on this as we move forward.
  4. Another important initiative this year is something called, *Mattering and Belonging*. This is coming from Student Life mainly for undergraduates. However, it is important to me that we communicate to our graduate and professional students that at UT they matter and belong.
  5. Exciting news. September 20 is the opening of the Graduate Student Commons in Hodges Library.
  6. Something I feel very strongly about and is important to me is to advocate for our graduate and professional students.

**Graduate Student Senate** (David Willis)

- David introduced himself and Sue Choi, the GSS vice-president.
- Travel Awards: The travel award submission closes tomorrow, August 30.
- The New Student Orientation was a success. The day after orientation, we had our Student Social at Barleys where 206 attended. It was nice to see students from a variety of disciplines interacting.
- For our Executive Team, we still need a treasurer.
- Out of the 98 possible senators, we have 58 filled. And, out of the 58, 30 are new.
- If you don't know who your senators are within your department, you can email us at gss.utk.edu and we will give you that information. Sue sent an email to the DGS explaining the informal process of electing senators. If your department does not have a senator and you want more information, please email us.
- A question was asked about hiccups with the new electronic process for the Travel Awards. David responded that after this first submission closes, he would request feedback about how the process worked. We are working to make this process streamline and I welcome any comments and suggestions.

**Graduate Council Chair** (David Patterson)

- I have two items to bring forward.
  1. At the Faculty Senate Retreat last Friday, we discussed the plan for the Oak Ridge Institute at UT to have 60 new faculty and 60 new scientist researchers with subsequently 120 to 500 new joint PhD students. It was purported that this may generate \$150 million in external funding. What are your thoughts and concerns on this that I can take back and share with the Faculty Senate? How will these new students be funded and monitored? Dr. Thompson and I discussed this before the meeting and Dr. Thompson reminded me that on a doctoral committee, two members on the committee must be tenure-track.
    - Dr. Thompson shared her understanding. I believe the idea is that the Oak Ridge Institute would be the framework under which a number of entities would exist. The Bredesen Center being one of those. It is important to communicate to those making decisions that ORNL, the Bredesen Center, and the Oak Ridge Institute will not be awarding degrees. The University of Tennessee is responsible for awarding degrees. This body will be responsible for setting policies related to the instruction and training of those students. Where will these new students reside? This is still in the planning stages and so there are many unanswered questions at this time.
    - A comment and concern from one of the colleges is the priority of oversight for these graduate students. Will these students be treated as trainees or students? We hope there will be proper oversight so the students will be considered and looked upon as students.
    - Dr. Thompson shared that she would love to see graduate enrollment grow by 380 students. In addition, also shared her concern for the students - that they will be treated as students.
    - It was shared the next Faculty Senate Meeting is on September 16, where this idea will be discussed. Faculty are encouraged to attend to hear the discussion.
  2. I suspect that many of you are working on your SACSCOC report. I am curious how others see the rubric and expectations. One college answered that they write their report revolving around assessment of competencies with their accrediting body.

**6. Items from the Floor:**

With no items from the floor. David asked that when we adjourn that the members of the various committees get together to meet.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox  
Graduate Council Liaison