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Graduate Council Minutes - April 23, 2020

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

April 23, 2020 Minutes

Members present: Patterson, D., (Chair), Broemmel, A., (Chair-Elect), Alshibli, K., Baxter, T., Boder, E., Bonom, J., Choi, S. (Graduate Student Senate Vice-President), Dittmann, P., Dodds, G., Dzikus, L., Edwards, L., Finotti, L., Fleming-May, R., Fouts, H., Griffin, M., Guo, H., Herron, F., Hewett, K., Hines, M., Kotowski, M., Lang, M., Mason, L., Meschke, L., Misawa, M., Mohsin, M., Moyer, D., Ohnesorg, S., Okafor, C., Preuss, N., Stehle, M., Wang, H., Ward, M., Willis, D. (Graduate Student Senate President), Zhang, F.

Ex-Officio members present: Behn, B., Bradberry, S., Cantrell, S., Cheatham, M., Fairbrother, J., Gunther, M., Hartman, H., Kirk, C., Moore, T., Noble, C., Stier, J., Sullivan, M., Thompson, D., Cox, C.

College representative: Frymier, P.

Graduate Student Senate representatives: Austin Boyd (GSS President-elect) and Shahram Hesari (GSS Vice President-elect).

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

The Graduate Council Zoom meeting was called to order by Chair, David Patterson on Thursday, April 23, 2020, at 3:00 p.m.

2. **Minutes of the Preceding Zoom Meeting**

The March 26, 2020, Graduate Council Minutes were approved electronically on April 8, 2020.

3. **Committees and Reports:**

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

No meeting / no report.

➤ **Appeals Committee** (Amy Broemmel)

No appeals to report.

➤ **Curriculum Committee** (Laurie Meschke)

No meeting / no report.

4. **New Business**

No new business

5. **Administrative Reports and Announcements:**

Deans Update: (Dixie Thompson)

We have had a successful year. The policy updates that were approved I believe will make a difference in the years ahead.

Last month Graduate Council was busy approving temporary policy changes that were beneficial and helpful to our graduate students during this difficult, challenging, and unusual time. I thank all the faculty for your support and flexibility.

My team continues to work remotely processing all the necessary paperwork in order for the spring graduation to move forward. This afternoon I taped my portion of the virtual Hooding Ceremony. Sara Bradberry has been busy providing the names of our spring graduates to the folks in Communications in order to produce a spring Commencement Program. The Chancellor and Provost have also recorded remarks for the virtual ceremony. The virtual ceremony for our students will be around May 7. We invite and welcome those spring graduates to attend our fall Graduate Hooding Ceremony.

We continue to look to identify students who may be struggling or feeling anxious. We want to communicate with them and offer them support in any way we can in this remote environment. The All Vols Call Campaign is ongoing and many of you may be involved with that campaign contacting students to make sure they stay connected to faculty and are progressing. Thank you to those that have been involved.

We are looking at the fall semester to make it a success. The Chancellor has charged a large group of individuals to serve on the Vol Re-Imagining Fall Task Force. This committee is looking at various scenarios and possibilities for the fall semester. We are unsure at this time what that will look like. But, we are hopeful that we will be back to a more normal campus.

Graduate Admissions is working hard to migrate to our new admission platform SLATE. The plan is to have that available to launch in August. Some of you may be helping at this time with testing the new admissions application. If you are part of the testing team, please submit your feedback to Anna Maria Murphy by April 27th.

The Academic Operations Group IV continues to meet to discuss various issues concerning our students. We are gathering information regarding the magnitude and impact of delayed graduation. When we have an idea of how big this impact will be, we will look for solutions. You have probably heard the federal government established the Cares Act. This is going to provide money to universities. The University of Tennessee will receive a portion of that stimulus money. Much of that money has been directly ear-marked to go to students, to include graduate and professional students. At this time, we do not know how that money will be distributed.

I would like to thank those who served on Graduate Council. Mehmet Aydeniz is rotating off as our past-chair. We welcome Stefanie Ohnesorg as our new chair-elect. Amy Broemmel will begin her position as chair and David will transition to past-chair. I truly thank all the chairs of our committees for your work and time this year. For David, Amy, and Stefanie we will meet soon to set the dates for next year's meetings.

David Patterson asked Dean Thompson for an update with our international students.

D. Thompson: This is a difficult time for our first-time international students to get a Visa. For our students who traveled home, we do not know what travel restrictions will be like for the fall. The Center for Global Engagement is working with those first-time UT students who are already in the U.S. for a hopeful smooth transition. At present, there are more questions than answers. I will ask Scott Cantrell to give an update.

S. Cantrell: The three things that we are watching very closely are: 1) are we back on campus for fall or is it another online semester, 2) when will the embassies open back up to issue visa's, and 3) travel – for students traveling to the U.S., will students be required to self-isolate for a period of time once they arrive on campus? In the next week we intend to send out information concerning these very issues.

- International students who are outside the U.S. are eligible and allowed to take online courses, as long as your program and the Graduate School approve. We get involved only when students have to enter the U.S. to come to UT.
- Once an international student is on campus there is a limit as to the number of online courses they can take. They are allowed to take one online course. But, because of the situation we are in and that all courses are currently online, that policy/rule has been suspended at this time. This applies only to those students who were in the U.S. and on campus as of March 25. New students would not be allowed to come and engage in fully online courses.
- The Bursar's Office is required to charge tuition for every student. A responsible party would have to pay the student's tuition.

- For international students that were in the U.S. around that March 25 timeline and enrolled in classes at UT, we consider them current students and they have the exemption for taking online courses. It is a matter of where they were in the U.S. and were they engaged in an academic program around that March 25 timeline. As long as their education (or student status) was not interrupted, then they will be allowed to attend UT and will be treated as a current student.
- The Vice-Provost for International Education will have updates and guidelines available soon and that information will be sent to all departments. Dr. Thompson communicated when she receives that information she will share it with Graduate Council, the departments, and the DGS's.

Graduate Student Senate (David Willis)

We held our election via Zoom and we have a new president and vice-president. I would like to introduce Austin Boyd as our new president and Shahram Hesari as our new vice-president.

I want to say thank you to Graduate Council and extend my appreciation for allowing us to have a voice.

I want to remind everyone that on Thursday's at 6:00 p.m. we host Brew On It. This is a coffee and conversation time for graduate and professional students to come together via zoom and talk.

Graduate Council Chair (David Patterson)

I have not heard anything recently about the Oak Ridge Institute. Does anyone have information or an update about how that is going?

D. Moyer: the \$10 million state funding is no longer available. But, a proposal was submitted for external funding.

I want to thank Dean Thompson and Catherine Cox. It has been a delight to work with both of you as well as all the committee chairs. As you move forward in your careers, I invite you to look to this opportunity to work in the leadership of Graduate Council. It is a wonderful opportunity to see the university from a different prospective and to gain an appreciation of both the complexity and the tenacity of graduate education.

- 6. Items from the Floor:** It was mentioned that the College of Nursing had some issues with information on their webpage. Dr. Mary Gunter said she will share the information with her college.

With no further business, Dr. Patterson wished everyone a healthy summer and the meeting adjourned at 3:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox
Graduate Council Liaison