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Graduate Council Minutes

Graduate Council

9-3-2020

Graduate Council Minutes - September 3, 2020

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

September 3, 2020

Members present: Broemmel, A. (Chair), Alshibli, K., Bamwine, P., Boder, E., Bonom, J., Boyd, A. (Graduate Student Senate President), Chaffin, K., Dittmann, P., Dzikus, L., Edwards, L., Ekici, K., Finotti, L., Fleming-May, R., Griffin, M., Guo, H., Hesari, S. (Graduate Student Senate Vice-President), Hewett, K., Jaekel, J., Kaplan, G., Kenna, J., King, L., Kotowski, M., Lang, M., Lim, J., Mannik, J., Meschke, L., Misawa, M., Mohsin, M., Moyer, D., Ohnesorg, S (Chair-Elect), Okafor, C., Preuss, N., Sachs, A., Wang, H., Ward, M., Zhang, F.

Ex-Officio members present: Anderson, D., Behn, B., Bradberry, S., Brothers, E., Cantrell, S., Cheatham, M., Cox, C., Fairbrother, J., Hendricks, S., Kilic, O., Kilpatrick, Y., Mercer, H., Moore, T., Murphy, A., Noble, C., Patterson, D. (Past Chair), Perry, R., Sullivan, M.

1. **Call to Order and Welcome** (Amy Broemmel)

The Graduate Council Zoom meeting was called to order by Chair, Amy Broemmel on Thursday, September 3, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. Dr. Broemmel welcomed the new and returning members to the first meeting of the 2020-21 Graduate Council.

Broemmel shared that she is from the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences in the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education. I have served on Graduate Council since 2012.

A lot has happened since we met last April. The pandemic has continued to have a widespread impact on our campus as well as the racial and social injustices. This has spurred many questions and discussions and hopefully some positive actions as people become more engaged citizens at all levels. And, although our UTK leadership has been both thoughtful and strong with these issues, there is still some unpredictability around what the semester will bring. I hope each of you are finding some semblance of a new normal. We all navigate the additional demands of our time, the needs of our students, and our general expectations. So thank you for dedicating some of your time to serving on the Graduate Council. I look forward to working with you this year.

2. **Minutes of the Preceding Meeting**

The April 23, 2020, Graduate Council Minutes were approved electronically on May 14, 2020.

3. **Recorded message from Dr. Dixie Thompson**

Dean Thompson communicated that unfortunately the Provost Staff Retreat and the first Graduate Council meeting were scheduled on the same day. She provided a pre-recorded message that was played for the attendees.

Members were welcomed and thanked for their willingness to serve on Graduate Council. Working in close collaboration, the Graduate School and the Graduate Council are able to make positive change for our graduate and professional students. Even with the challenges we face with COVID-19, we are poised to make good progress in graduate and professional education in this academic year.

The Graduate School offices (Suite 111 SSB and Suite 201 SSB) are open and partially staffed during normal working hours. We de-densified our space and have staff rotating their time on campus. We are scheduling as many meetings as possible through either phone, Zoom or email. We are available and happy to engage with you to work out any issues or to answer questions.

We have several successes to be thankful for this fall:

- Our SLATE platform opened up for the fall 2021 applications. Our staff will be reaching out to departments for SLATE training. This is a great recruiting tool and a great way to communicate with students.
- We, for the first time, held virtual orientations for both the new student and the new GTAs. Both were a great success. We touched more students than ever before. And, a bonus, those sessions are now

archived for anyone to see. So, if a student could not attend, they can still get all of the detailed information shared that day.

- We continue to update our website with COVID-19 information resources.
- We have been working with our partners in professional development to create online opportunities for our students this year. I believe we will be able to touch many students with a lot of great content through virtual format this fall and into the spring.
- The Graduate School staff are working to recognize and eliminate potential bias in our policies, processes and procedures. As a part of our efforts, we will begin training departments on holistic admissions practices. Graduate Council members were encouraged to join this effort to eliminate bias and bring forward changes that will help all of our graduate and professional students feel welcomed and valued.

4. **Committees** (A. Broemmel)

I ask our committee chairs to introduce themselves and talk a bit about your committee.

➤ **Academic Policy Committee**

The previous chair rotated off Graduate Council. A new chair will be elected today at the Breakout Session.

➤ **Appeals Committee (Stefanie Ohnesorg)**

The Appeals Committee is an important venue for students appealing grades or maybe a program misunderstanding. This committee does not meet on a regular basis but only when/if an appeal comes to us. If there is an appeal, we have a timeframe that we have to work within.

I am also the Chair-elect for Graduate Council. I have been involved with Graduate Council for many years. My home department is Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures in German studies.

➤ **Curriculum Committee (Laurie Meschke)**

I welcome everyone to Graduate Council and I welcome anyone that is new to the Curriculum Committee. We are a busy committee reviewing and approving the curriculum changes. Our big meeting is in January as that is the last opportunity to review changes for the next catalog. At the October meeting, we will look at the Courses Not Taught in 4 or More Years Report.

➤ **Student/Faculty Research Awards Committee (Millie Cheatham for Dixie Thompson)**

Millie Cheatham shared that the SFRA committee meets twice a year. The committee reads and reviews each application and awards funds up to \$5,000.00 per each application. With the funds available, the committee can usually award around 12 applications.

5. **New Business**

No new business

6. **Administrative Reports and Announcements:**

Deans Update: (Ernest Brothers for Dixie Thompson)

We have been adversely impacted with COVID-19. This August the Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools actually met to have a dialogue and conversation regarding issues relevant to graduate education and the struggles and concerns of our graduate students. The international students are a concern that continue to rise to the top of the list. This morning we had a meeting with the Center for Global Engagement (CGE) to begin a dialogue about next steps as it relates to recruitment, retention, and to advocacy. This will be an ongoing effort.

As Dean Thompson mentioned, the orientations were well attended and very successful. Additionally, the Graduate and Professional Student Professional Development (GPSPD) are planning several professional development activities that you can find on the UTK Calendar. Best Practices in Teaching just began. And, beginning September 8, we will present, What's Your Work About?

I also want to bring to your attention there has been an interest in mentoring. Particularly mentoring for faculty who work with graduate students. I will be giving a presentation this Friday on Mentoring Foundations to the faculty in the College of Communication and Information. I also have two mentoring presentations with the Bredesen Center. And, then in October, I've been contracted out by the UT Health Science Center to give a presentation on mentoring. So, you can see, there is a strong need for mentoring training. I am also working collaboratively with TLI to maybe create a mentoring certificate for both faculty and graduate students.

As for recruitment. Recruitment now is primarily virtual. We continue to interact with our Recruiters Network. We have two virtual meetings coming up soon. We have Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University on Wednesday, September 9 and Indiana University in a couple of weeks. We are also looking at other types of conferences such as the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS). So, even with COVID-19, we are still active in our recruitment efforts.

With COVID-19, I ask you to stay safe, stay positive, and stay engaged. And, to be adaptable, flexible, and intentional.

Enrollment: Yvonne Kilpatrick

I am happy to report that the enrollment data I submitted this week to the Office of Institutional Research (ORI) was encouraging. Our admit rate, which is the ratio between the number of applicants and the number that are admitted was 62 percent. Which was the same as last year's ratio of 62 percent. And, the ratio between the number of applications and the number of enrolled students was 49 percent, which was also the same as last years. I am sad to report that our international numbers are down at least 50 percent for those that were actually able to enroll.

Graduate Student Senate (Austin Boyd)

Hello, I am Austin Boyd. The new GSS President. The first GSS meeting is Wednesday, September 9, so I will have a report for you at the next Graduate Council Meeting. I look forward to working with all of you and with Graduate Council.

Graduate Council Chair (Amy Broemmel)

Thank you to everyone that attended today. If you are on one of our four committees, I ask you to stay on this Zoom meeting as each of the four committees will now go to a Breakout Session to meet and discuss the work of the committee. If you are not serving on one of the four committees, this meeting is now adjourned and you can leave the Zoom meeting. Again, those on the committee's please stay on and you will be sent to your Breakout Rooms.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

APC Breakout Session

Broemmel reported that at the APC breakout meeting, Eric Boder agreed to Chair the committee. We thank Dr. Boder for his time and service to chair this committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox
Graduate Council Liaison