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Graduate Council Minutes

Graduate Council

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9-29-2022

## Graduate Council Minutes - September 29, 2022

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

September 29, 2022

**Members present:** Meschke, L. (Chair), Abouelkhair, M., Aydeniz, M., Ayo, A., Cathey, A., Chaffin, K., Chappell, L. (Graduate Student Senate Vice President), Cho, M., Dickerson, A., Fields, G. (Graduate Student Senate President), First, J., Frimu, R., Gao, Y., Geidner, N., Jalata, A., Lang, M., Laursen, S., Love, A., Mannik, J., Marshall, S., McCord, R., Misawa, M., Mohsin, M., Montgomery, K., Neal, A., Ostrowski, J., Ownley, B., Palies, P. (UTSI), Pickart, C., Rosenbaum, B., Sachs, A., Schmidt, H., Scott, J., Thompson, P., Uzonyi, G., Wang, T.

**Ex-Officio members present:** Ambroziak, K., Anderson, D., Collins, C., Gramling, J., Gordon, K., Kupritz, V., McConville, B., Mercer, H., Odoi, A., Murphy, Annamaria, Ohnesorg, S., Steele, J., Stier, J., Sullivan, M., Cox, C.

1. **Call to Order and Welcome** (Laurie Meschke)

The Graduate Council Zoom meeting was called to order by Graduate Council Chair, Laurie Meschke on Thursday, September 29, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.

2. **Minutes of the Preceding Meeting**

Meschke reported, the September 1, 2022, Graduate Council Minutes were approved electronically on September 21, 2022.

3. **Committee Reports**

There were no committee meetings; therefore, there are no committee reports.

- **Academic Policy Committee** (Siris Laursen, chair)
- **Appeals Committee** (Phyllis Thompson, chair)
  - We reviewed one appeal and made a recommendation to Dean Dixie Thompson.
- **Curriculum Committee** (Avigail Sachs, chair)
- **Student Faculty Research Awards** (Dixie Thompson, chair)

4. **Administrative Reports and Announcements:**

**Deans Update:** (Dixie Thompson)

- Welcome to Carl Collins who joined us as Associate Dean and Director of Graduate Admissions. Carl has a rich history of leading graduate admissions initiatives. His most recent role was at the Citadel in Charleston, SC. In leading the graduate admissions team, Carl will oversee our processes as we continue to grow our online presence and build our on-campus enrollment.
- Graduate Hooding will be December 16 at 3PM. The ceremony will be in Thompson-Boling Arena. Students eligible for taking part in the ceremony will receive communication about how to register. Faculty

will also receive communication about participation. I encourage you to come out to support our students at this important ceremony.

- In spring 2023, we will move back to our in-person 3-Minute Thesis event. The 3MT competition is an opportunity for students to present their research in 3 minutes using one slide. This excellent communication opportunity for students gives platform for showcasing their research. We will also have a virtual 3MT viewing party for our online students and others who are not able to participate in the live event. More details will be shared later in the fall.
- In early October, each college dean will receive information about the fall 2023 fellowship opportunities. Once shared with the deans, we will make public on the Graduate School website.
- The fall 2022 DGS meeting will be October 19.
- The fall [Student-Faculty Research Awards](#) application is now open. Applications can be submitted through October 14.
- Departments may submit proposals for recruitment awards. Awards up to \$2000 can be used in activities related to recruitment of graduate students. For information, see this link: <https://tiny.utk.edu/grad-recruitment-funding>.
- Thanks in advance for sharing this information with your college.

**Graduate Student Senate Update** (George Fields, GSS President)

- I am very happy to report that out of 106 senate seats, we have 91 filled. This is a higher number than we have received in recent years. And we are on trajectory to have the senate filled by the end of October.
- The Equity and Diversity Committee of the GSS established a resource group of graduate students for graduate students related to international student support. This committee will take on tasks of providing peer support for international graduate students connecting them with existing resources and serving as a liaison between the students and the university. Mainly helping the students navigate through processes, procedures as well as accessing resources such as Smokey Closet, Big Orange Pantry, etc.
- Food and housing insecurity: We have been active with Dr. Frank Cuevas and other administrators talking about the housing shortage. You may have seen on the news recently where undergraduate students waited in line outside for 17 hours just to sign an apartment lease. That is an example of how severe the housing market is right now in Knoxville. With that example, Dr. Cuevas and I have been talking extensively about the idea of a master lease agreement taken on by the university with apartment complexes to ensure this is housing available and that it is done at an affordable rate. Under this type of plan, which is still nebulous, the university would offer housing contracts similar to those for on-campus housing to students who need off-campus housing. In doing so, relieve some of burden with obstacles such as guarantors, credit history, etc., which is exasperated by people with adverse financial backgrounds and especially international graduate students. We will keep you updated on this project.
- GSS has been active in appointing GSS representation on various campus committees, commissions, and boards as a way to make sure the graduate and professional student voice is heard and represented on campus.

**L. Meschke:**

Thank you, George, for the GSS report. Any questions or comments for George? I want to say thank you for addressing these important topics. I hope solutions can be found.

**Graduate Council Chair** (Laurie Meschke)

Revision to the Bylaws. Stefanie will give an update.

S. Ohnesorg: The current Graduate Council Bylaws are outdated. We started the process last year to review them. A committee of leadership positions on Graduate Council will review the Bylaws and hopefully have this project completed by the end of this calendar year.

Dissemination of information from Graduate Council to the colleges. Jeanie Lim has a wonderful procedure she uses, and I wanted to share her method. She sends the Minutes to the leadership folks in the college and they in turn send it out to the departments. This is an effective way to make sure the information from the Minutes is available to the faculty. I will bring this up again at our next meeting to keep this fresh for discussion. We want our decisions and information to be shared and go out beyond the Council membership.

Update from the last Faculty Senate Meeting:

- Restructuring of the College of Arts and Sciences. The revision of restructuring has been announced by the Chancellor. The process was a little lumpy in relation to faculty involvement. Where faculty are moved may have an impact on our Graduate Council membership.
- Curriculum review process. Everyone is aware of BAM, the new budget model. This has an impact in relation to curriculum because our departments would like to keep their students within their department. Our curriculum changes sometimes do impact other units and that is reviewed at the curriculum meeting. However, with BAM it will be scrutinized more closely. If you write curriculum revision proposals for your unit, pay close attention if you are reducing the number of electives in your program and who you might be cutting out in that reduction. And likewise in adding courses. There were some courses that were dropped from one of the departments and it led to a big financial impact that wasn't noted. Nor, was it acknowledged through the entire review process – from the department review to the college review to the undergraduate curriculum review, to the Undergraduate Council review, and to the Faculty Senate. So through all these reviews, this substantial change was not noted. I bring this to your attention and ask that you pay close attention when these revisions come forward. Any questions or comments?
  - J. Stier: I wonder if we show information about where students are taking their courses. For example. For each college, indicate what percentage of courses are already taken within the college versus outside the college. That may be a benchmark for us to look back at in the next few years to determine if are changing that. Also, with Bam. I believe undergraduate education is different than graduate education. One being that graduate courses tend to be very small compared to many undergraduate courses. I wonder, knowing that UT is one of the most collegial places I have ever been to, if this might be an opportunity for us to work together across colleges and identify those courses that really matter to students rather than continuing to have a large number of woefully undersubscribed graduate courses that have a very narrow focus. As opposed to courses that we could be providing to students that would help and benefit them in many different ways. I am glad you brought this topic up. I think this is something we can discuss as a council and within our own colleges moving forward. I had an opportunity recently to hear from a faculty member within our college and from another college, both of whom were talking about the fact that the course they teach only enrolls 2 to 3 students. With the BAM model that won't cut it. And it was also shared that this is the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> course taught on this subject. On the PhD level, how much more coursework does someone need in depth as opposed to, by that point, should be able to learn the rest of that myself, as opposed to opening them up to a new area where they may not have any background.

Thank you, John, you have raised some very good points that all our departments could take into consideration.

Any items from the floor?

- A question was asked if the Access and Diversity Application Fee Waiver is still available. An answer will be forthcoming.

With no further comments or questions, may I have a motion to adjourn our meeting? Second? Thank you everyone for attending our meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox  
Graduate Council Liaison