

Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 27, 2025 - ZOOM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Annette Barnes, DNP, MSN
Jennifer Bergner, MSME
Stephanie Bernhard, ENGL
Melissa Bugdal, At-Large Perdue School Rep
Laurie Couch, Provost
Mark deSocio, GIS
Yvonne Downie-Hanley, MBA
Maida Finch, EDD
James Fox, EDLD
Elizabeth Geiger, OGS
Aston Gonzalez, HIST
Clifton Griffin, Dean of Graduate School
Jen Hart – CHHS Rep (Spring 25)
Allen Koehler, AVP Enrollment Management
Eric Liebgold, BIO
Scott Mazzetti, HHPF
Ruth Malone, CURRMED
Heather Porter, Seidel Rep

Jessica Scott, OGS

Christine Spillson, At-Large Henson School Rep

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joshua Bolton, Fulton School Rep
David Burns, PUBCOMM
Memo Diriker, Faculty Senate Liaison
Amanda Hill, CHHS Rep – On Leave
Martin Hunter, Registrar
Abigail Isaacson, GSC
Stephen Oby, MSW
Ignaciyas Soosaipillai, CADR
Erin Stutelberg, MAT

GUESTS:

Liz Kressin – Attending for M. Hunter, Registrar
Kennedy Corley – Attending for A. Isaacson, GSC

I. Call to Order – 3:33pm.

II. Provost Remarks

- The “Dear Colleague” letter and executive orders suggest withholding of federal funds if certain expectations are not met.
- Curriculum is an area which may cause issues with DEI implications. Provost met with UCC and GCC leads and others to discuss how to follow mandates while maintaining academic freedoms.
 - We are waiting directives from the state and USM to determine how to evaluate our curriculum.
 - Faculty will have initial oversight. Courses will be assigned by their prefix.
 - Faculty will provide first review of their courses and make a first determination which will then be reviewed by a committee of peers who will make final recommendation to the Provost.
 - There will be support for faculty throughout this process.
 - Elective courses are student chosen. Are these courses exempt?
- Accreditation
 - Those currently undergoing accreditation processes should proceed as is unless the accreditation body tells you stop.
 - We are already seeing some accreditors back off DEI requirements but we are in communication with Attorney General’s office which is looking for legal precedents

- Enrollment
 - Cabinet is very interested in graduate enrollment. There is still an expectation for the grad population to equal 12% of the campus population.
 - Programs should review their capacity and identify room for growth
 - Target efforts used to be focused on first-time enrollment. Every cohort is now being prioritized – transfer, graduate, international.
 - Have met with consulting firm that suggests quicker solutions such as direct admissions.
 - Will have office hours in faculty lounge to answer questions

III. Minutes

- November minutes were passed as submitted.

IV. Good News

- M. Finch welcomed Jen Hart who is filling in for Amanda Hill and Kennedy Corley representing GSC
- A. Barnes – Masters FNP was approved. Thanks to J. Scott and L. Geiger for fast tracking everything to get it approved and an application created. There is already interest.
- A. Barnes – Received a grant to review the RN-MSN program.
- A. Gonzalez – Accelerated History was also approved. Looking at how to reach students in other undergrad disciplines.

V. Strategic Planning

- SU has announced open sessions for strategic planning process. GC is encouraged to sign up n attend those sessions
- We will continue to move forward with Grad School strategic planning. M. Dirker is helping to create a survey and shape that process.
 - Will be flexible
 - Start with SWOT analysis of graduate education at large.
 - Creating a stakeholder list including internal and external contacts.
 - Aim is 50-100 responses in next 5-6 weeks.
 - Responses would then be shared to be considered with SU's overall plan.
 - Zebadiah Hall has indicated he would speak to GC regarding the Strategic Plan. GC will extend an invitation for him to attend the April GC meeting.

VI. Teams/Zoom Update

- C. Griffin received an email from Ken Kundell. The survey indicated faculty and staff are not ready to replace Zoom with Teams. They will work with Academic Affairs so faculty can get more experience.
- Comments:
 - Seems IT is just putting this off a year.
 - Telling people to use Teams ignores the survey answers from researchers.
 - The survey itself did not reflect the needs that faculty require
 - Can we request the actual cost of Zoom? Seems the overall cost is nominal.

- Teams is not ideal for the Writing Center because peer papers would be assigned and stored to an “owner”.
- There was an announcement at Faculty Senate but no campus-wide communication from IT
- J. Fox asked for feedback from faculty with distance learning courses. Can that info be shared with Grad Council?
- Concerns will be compiled, shared with GC and then Faculty Senate.

VII. Automatic Admission Potential

- Suggests a “fast track” admission for current undergrads if they meet certain academic standards.
- Opportunity to be more aggressive with internal marketing efforts.
- Comments:
 - M. deSocio – Willing to waive certain application requirements for SU undergrads. Don’t need LORs as they’re colleagues.
 - A. Barnes – Nursing does a “Save the Seat” mentality where admission is offered for a 1-2 year window.
 - Y. Downie-Hanley – MBA can test this and would be willing to waive certain requirements.
 - J. Fox – Can we get a Slate refresher? How do we see our current application that goes out to students?
 - L. Geiger – Happy to do individual or group refreshers. When the application updates occur each year, we can make requested changes.
 - A. Barnes – We see a lot of international applicants who don’t qualify for the nursing program? Can we more easily weed them out?
 - Y. Downie-Hanley – Is there a dashboard we can use?
 - L. Geiger – Suggests everyone look at their current report and we can try to tweak it to fit your needs.
 - A Koehler – We’re working with Slate to build a cleaner view.
 - C. Griffin – Please make sure to review your communication plans. For those who haven’t developed personalized comms from the program/program director, should consider doing that.

VIII. Subcommittee Membership – GCC

- With Amanda Hill on leave, GCC is in need of another faculty member.
- Christa Spillson volunteered to finish the spring semester.

IX. Digital Marketing Update – Liz Geiger

- Tabled due to time.
- L. Geiger will send update via email.

X. Accelerated Master’s Update – J. Scott

- Tabled due to time.
- J. Scott will send update via email.

XI. GSC Updates

- Tabled due to time.

XII. Other Remarks

- Now taking nominations for Grad Commencement Speaker. Please encourage your students to apply.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Submitted by Jessica Scott