

**MINUTES
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES COUNCIL
FOR RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES**

MEETING: October 2, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: T. Brewster, S. Brown, E. Choi, A. Daily, E. Delavega, D. Downey, W. Duffy, E. Groenendyk, J. Lariscy, T. Maclin, M.B. Mader, J. McCutcheon, A. Mickelson, E. Nelson, H. Sable, C. Santo, X. Shen, D. Venugopal, F. Vivar, B. Zheng

MEMBERS ABSENT: V. Rus

PROXIES: N/A

PRESIDING: R. Kreuz

1. Approval of the minutes from the August 28, 2023 Council meeting

A. Daily motioned to approve the minutes. E. Delavega seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

2. Report from the September 1 UCGS and September 27 college director meetings

a) GA health insurance

R. Kreuz reported that, as of January 1, all new incoming international students will be on a hard waiver: they will be automatically enrolled with Wellfleet for their health insurance. They can opt out if they obtain some other ACA-compliant insurance.

Current international students are on a soft waiver: they are automatically enrolled with Wellfleet but can opt out if they show evidence of any DHS-compliant insurance coverage.

Starting Fall 2024, all full-time GA students will be on a hard waiver. Domestic students can opt to stay on their parents' insurance until they turn 26, or obtain their insurance through a spouse, or obtain insurance through a marketplace plan (healthcare.gov).

The college directors have been told there will not be any university funds available to subsidize students to help offset the cost of their insurance. This means that students will incur insurance costs of \$1,000-1,200 per year going forward.

b) Director of Graduate Enrollment and Recruitment interview

R. Kreuz reported that the search committee interviewed five candidates last week, and that follow-up interviews with scheduled with three of them this week and next. Dean Tollefsen hopes to have someone in place by early November.

c) Graduate certificates

R. Kreuz reports that graduate certificates have proliferated across the university: the UofM now offers about 85 of them, and many of them are under-enrolled. They provide no formula funding from the state, and departments need to consider how much tuition they generate and how much it's costing to staff the courses that serve them.

CAS has about 17 certificate programs, with a few shared across colleges. R. Kreuz said he does not think any units in CAS offer courses that are designed solely for certificate students.

These programs are now being scrutinized by Federal financial aid. This is because some students abuse the system by taking out loans and never finishing their program of study. At the undergraduate level, courses of study specify which courses students can take.

The tracking and reporting for certificates is going to get more involved. The Graduate School would like to have the college take a hard look at them. Dean Tollefsen thinks that any certificate program generating fewer than 10 graduates per year is problematic, but the decision to retain them will be made by the college deans.

On Friday, R. Kreuz forwarded council members a couple of emails from Andrew Linn, the Executive Director of Student Financial Aid. It looks like there will be increased reporting requirements for all graduate programs, and not just certificates.

Certificates required for licensure/certification will likely be exempt from this.

d) Master's comprehensive exam requirement

The UCGS will be voting on Friday regarding eliminating this requirement. The rationale is that many departments no longer require a comprehensive exam. If it passes, this requirement would be eliminated from the 24-25 catalog.

This would be for master's students only: the PhD comprehensive exam form would remain in place.

Departments can retain the requirement if they want; the change would simply get rid of the requirement at the Graduate School level. In this case, forms/documentation would be retained at the department level.

e) Dissertation committee and proposal defense forms

The Graduate School is considering eliminating their requirement of dissertation committee and proposal defense forms. R. Kreuz asked for thoughts about pros and cons of retaining or doing away with these forms. E. Delavega supported keeping for accountability but a simplified version. A majority of the Council members supported eliminating the forms.

f) iTEP as a language proficiency test

R. Kreuz reported that there is a motion before the UCGS to add the iTEP (the International English proficiency Test) as another means for applicants to demonstrate their English proficiency. Dean Tollefsen has consulted with our ESL (English as a Second Language) and IEI (intensive English for Internationals) experts, and the consensus is that the iTEP is no better or worse than other online tests, such as DuoLingo, that we already accept.

3. Discussion and vote on minimum dissertation committee size

At the August 28th meeting, W. Duffy distributed information about the English department's proposal to reduce the minimum size of dissertation committees from four to three. The English faculty approved this previously, but it will also need to be approved by the UCGS. A vote by the CAS Graduate Council would allow the motion to advance to the UCGS for discussion.

A discussion of the pros and cons of reducing committee size ensued. It was pointed out that this change would not affect any departments whose faculty want to retain the previous minimum of four members.

C. Santo motioned to call for a vote and H. Sable seconded. The vote taken by show of hands, and there was unanimous support for reducing minimum required committee size from four to three members.

4. Reminders

R. Kreuz issued a number of reminders:

a) Department websites

Departments should continue to review and update their websites to become more forward-facing. They should also include the Graduate School application link.

b) Graduate recruitment plans

Departments that have not done so already should send R. Kreuz their graduate recruitment plans. These do not have to be detailed: they can be as simple as listing what the current recruitment practices are, and possibly including what has been tried in the past that did not work.

c) Graduate student handbooks

Departments that have outdated handbooks should update them. Departments that do not have a handbook should seriously consider developing one. R. Kreuz will send examples upon request.

5. New Business

R. Kreuz reminded the members that the next meeting will start 30 minutes earlier than usual (at 2:30) to allow ample time for curriculum revision discussion and voting. No new business will be brought before the Council.

Adjournment. T. Maclin made a motion to adjourn. E. Delavega seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Minutes prepared by S. Warren with notes from R. Kreuz, and edited by R. Kreuz.