

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

MEETING: February 27, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: D. Baker, E. Choi, A. Daily, E. Delavega, D. Downey, W. Duffy, S. Fleming, A. Johnson, J. Lariscy, T. Maclin, M. B. Mader, A. Mickelson, I. Ortega-Santos, H. Sable, X. Shen, O. Skalli, J. Topinka, B. Zheng

MEMBERS ABSENT: E. Groenendyk, V. Rus, C. Santo

PROXY: Matthias Kaelberer for E. Groenendyk

PRESIDING: R. Kreuz

**1. Approval of the minutes from the January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting**

There were no additions or corrections needed for last month's minutes. E. Delavega motioned to approve the minutes. J. Topinka seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**2. Report from the February 10th University Graduate Council meeting and the February 22nd College Directors meeting by R. Kreuz**

- a) **Graduate School minimum admission requirements approved.** These were approved unanimously by the UCGS, and the new language will appear in the next graduate catalog.
- b) **Language support for international students.** There is a proposal to aid international students in core courses (such as in STEM). The plan is to hire two assistants for the summer and four in the fall. R. Kreuz will share details, including the specific courses, as they are received.
- c) **Subcommittee on non-departmental GAs.** Dean Tollefsen appointed R. Kreuz chair of a subcommittee tasked with creating a portal and a clearinghouse for non-departmental (e.g., athletics, disability support services) GAs. The goal is to have this in place for Fall 2023.

R. Kreuz discussed this with Cody Clinton, the CAS pre-professional advisor, and he suggested using Tiger Zone, since all students have accounts. It could be added as a new service on that portal. GA position announcements could be posted in Tiger Zone on a regular basis. Faculty and staff receiving email inquiries for positions can reply with a link to Tiger Zone.

S. Fleming asked if these areas are having trouble filling GA positions. He wondered if the possible large influx of applicants would be problematic. R. Kreuz responded that he planned to get in touch with these areas once he has the comprehensive list and contact information.

- d) Health insurance update.** The proposed plan was presented to the deans and chairs by the provost and Dean Tollefsen and was met with unanimous approval and buy-in. The proposal would call for the subsidy part of the cost to be split 50% centrally and 50% from the colleges. Dean Emmert strongly supports the plan. It's currently at the level of the president. If approved, the hope is that it will be offered starting Fall 2023 but it could slip to Fall 2024.

In the interim, the provost has directed that the health care proposal not be discussed with prospective graduate students, because the funding model may not work.

D. Downey asked if the cost is based on 12 months or 9 months. R. Kreuz answered that there will be flexibility with the coverage periods.

- e) Stuck candidacy forms.** There have been reports of issues with SoftDocs. IT claims that candidacy form notification emails are being sent, but this has not been true for everyone. Peggy Callahan has asked that everyone check their queue regularly until this problem has been resolved. R. Kreuz asked the members if their departments were having this issue. Some are getting the emails and some are not.
- f) Probation holds.** The Graduate School will continue to send the list of graduate students on probation immediately after each term so that advisors can continue to follow up with students. Probation holds will be placed in Banner on March 1.
- g) Nonvoting thesis/dissertation committee members.** There is language in the graduate catalog regarding nonvoting committee members. Since it no longer makes any sense, it is being removed. The Graduate School minimum for dissertation committees is four members, with one being an external member. (There is no maximum.)
- h) Graduate Academic Advising Network.** Dean Tollefsen will be creating an advising network like the one that exists at the undergraduate level. Details will be shared as they become available.
- i) Curriculum proposals** (S. Warren). There could be a change in the Program Revisions and Catalog Edit proposals for the 2024-25 submission cycle. Instead of attaching a Word document with track changes, the changes will be made within the proposal in the Curriculum Schema section.

S. Fleming asked if the catalog preview would be sent out soon. S. Warren answered that she remembered it going online last year in March, so hopefully it would be ready soon.

**j) Graduate School information sessions.** On February 8, Dean Tollefsen held a session on Slate with graduate coordinators. Several of Slate's quirks were discussed and there was Q&A. The Graduate School is still learning what Slate can (and can't) do. A video of the session is available, and anyone who would like one-on-one training can contact Todd Deese in the Graduate School.

R. Kreuz asked the Council members what their experiences have been with Slate so far.

D. Downey said that it does not work well with multiple reviewers. She has discussed this with Todd Deese. Downloading application PDFs has been a workaround. She shared that a positive aspect of the system has been ease of communication with applicants.

H. Sable said that different deadlines are needed for different programs within the same degree. She has spoken to Todd, and he said this might not be doable.

R. Kreuz will be advocating for this feature.

A. Daily said a more visible access point is needed for the reviewer side.

H. Sable said the waiver of applicant's right to view recommendation letters is missing.

On February 17, Dean Tollefsen held a session with the graduate coordinators and advisors. A video of the meeting is available.

Dean Tollefsen had a lunch on February 22 for the dissertation directors of the 62 students who have filed for spring or summer graduation. The primary issue was to remind them of the importance of getting their graduates certified by July 1 in order to get them included in the final year of the current three-year data collection cycle.

M. B. Mader attended and said that a student can participate in May graduation if they are defending in June.

### **3. Announcements/Reminders**

GA contracts session that was scheduled for March 1 has been canceled. The Graduate School is waiting on clarification from various units on campus regarding drop for non-payment deadlines and contract processing procedures. Once they have this information, they will reschedule the meeting.

### **4. New business**

**UCGS elections (social science representative).** Leslie Robinson (Psychology) is finishing her three-year term on the Council, and earlier today Deb Porter sent out a

ballot to the social science faculty, who have two weeks to vote. R. Kreuz asked members in the social sciences to encourage their colleagues to participate.

R. Kreuz asked for any other new business.

I. Ortega-Santos asked if Duolingo scores were still being accepted by Graduate Admissions. R. Kreuz answered that they are. The required minimum has been adjusted and that information has been shared.

S. Fleming shared the Computer Science admission committee does not want to accept Duolingo. R. Kreuz suggested that programs track new students who were accepted with Duolingo scores and monitor their performance to see if the concerns have merit. S. Fleming wondered if programs were able to disallow a particular test for their applicants. R. Kreuz will check with the Graduate School.

J. Topinka raised the issue of the \$1,500 reservation fee. PADM gets 3-4 international applicants a year. They cannot get a visa without a GA position, but GA decisions are not made by PADM until a student has registered. Is it refundable if the student is unable to get a visa?

E. Delavega asked if it was possible for a department to waive this requirement, to which R. Kreuz replied that it was unlikely.

S. Fleming noted that The University of Memphis' fee is much higher than its peer institutions.

The next council meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2023.

R. Kreuz called for a motion to adjourn, which was made by A. Johnson and seconded by H. Sable. The meeting was adjourned at 3:49.

*Prepared by S. Warren from notes provided by R. Kreuz and a recording of the meeting.  
Minutes edited by R. Kreuz.*