

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

MEETING: February 6, 2017

PRESENT: B. Burraston, R. Cohen, M. Conroy, R. Cox, E. Delavega, S. Fleming, E. Groenendyk, T. Hagen, K. Hicks, W. James, C. Lessman, C. Powell, S. Roakes, T. Roche, P. Simone, J. Scraba, J. Topinka, D. Unowsky

ABSENT: S. Mishra

PRESIDING: R. Kreuz; V. Tardugno, recording secretary

**Welcome:** Elena Delavega, the new Council representative for Social Work  
Tori Tardugno, the new Administrative Associate in the College office

**Approval** of minutes from the November 7, 2016 meeting (K. Hicks; P. Simone second)

**Announcements**

Dr. Kreuz announced that Graduate School forms should now be sent to Tori Tardugno; she is an authorized approver for the College. He also emphasized that departments should not hold onto paperwork, such as candidacy forms, and submit them to the College right before the deadlines, since the forms need to be checked, signed, and scanned.

The GA budget for the next academic year will be the same as this year's.

Academic probation holds can now be cleared by departments themselves. There seems to be some confusion about this. Jim Kierulff is willing to provide training sessions if necessary.

The Student Research Forum will be held on March 27, and the student submission deadline is March 7.

**Reports: December University Council meeting**

Dr. Kreuz reported that all of the College's curriculum changes were approved at the December meeting, as well as the proposed PhD program in Urban Affairs. A doctoral program in nursing practice (DNP) was also approved.

**Student Awards**

Dr. Kreuz reported that the College had not received any nominations so far. The deadlines appear on the agenda, and, he pointed out that today is the deadline for the Van Vleet. Dr. Lessman said he thought that Biology turned in two candidates but is not sure who submitted them. Dr. Cohen believes that they had 1-2 candidates who were nominated.

The Morton Thesis/Dissertation award deadline is February 16. This year, nominated students must be enrolled in coursework in Fall 2017. In other words, the award is not retrospective. The purpose is to assist those in their thesis or thesis work.

It was pointed out at the Council meeting that many of the deadlines for these awards occur too early (e.g. the Van Vleet). Dr. Simone pointed out that this is the case for about 95% of the students in Chemistry, who are never be eligible for that award, since most graduate in August. The purpose of the Van Vleet is to support incoming and very promising doctoral students. Many departments have not made decisions about incoming doctoral students by February. Dr. Dhaliwal said that there may be a stipulation in the actual gift that causes the awards to have such early deadlines. He will look into whether the deadlines can be changed, since they are out of sync with the students that the university is trying to honor or assist with these awards. This has also been an issue for those departments that give a part time master's fellowship, which has a deadline of April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Dr. Kreuz hopes to report something positive going forwards. He encouraged everyone to submit nominations directly to the Graduate School or to the College itself. Generally, the College nominees are very competitive compared to other graduate programs across the University.

### **NCUR (National Conference Undergraduate Research)**

Dr. Kreuz reported that about 4,500 students from across the country will be on campus April 6-7, 2017, and that this should be a major opportunity for recruitment. A list of names, email addresses and areas of interest will be available two weeks before the event. He stressed the importance of departments holding open houses during the event. Some concern was expressed about the number of participants in some disciplines; Dr. Hagen reported that Math received only 16 abstracts to review. Dr. Kreuz warned that some department will see large numbers, and that they should be prepared for this.

### **Decision Desk update**

Dr. Kierulff reports that, as of February 3, all application components have been requested, all help text has been requested, all programs are represented, and all necessary administrators have been requested.

Dr. Kreuz asked if anyone was having problems. Dr. Fleming reported that the experience in Computer Science was positive. Dr. Cohen reported that changes he requested had not been made. Concerns were raised about the responsiveness of the vendor. Dr. Delavaga also reported issues with requested changes, and that the system seems improved, makeshift, and buggy.

Dr. Kreuz announced that reviewer training will be held on February 9 and 23. Dr. Simone requested that they provide written step-by-step instructions, and added that the communication on when things were fixed was not very good because of the time between contacting about the issue and the e-mail regarding the corrections. Dr. Kreuz reported that the "go live" date for the system is March 13.

### **Multi-term registration**

Dr. Kreuz reported that this new initiative solves the problem of undergraduates failing to register each term. It may make sense for undergraduate and some master's programs. It will be implemented in Fall 2018. This will require departments to create multi-term teaching plans, but this should be occurring already – the dean has been emphasizing the importance of teaching templates at the Chairs and Directors meetings.

Dr. Dhaliwal also announced a new program for drop-out and stop-out graduate students. The goal is to bring them back into the program or at least maintain contact with them. The goal will be to assign these students a faculty member to act as a coach, and to have a conversation about why they've dropped or stopped out. Several Council members expressed concerns about how this increases service workloads at the expense of time for research and other obligations. Dr. Kreuz said that the number of students should not be very large, and would be divided among the faculty so that it would not place an excessive burden on any one faculty member. The goal is to keep as many of our students on track to graduate as we can.

### **Graduate Education Week in Tennessee**

Drs. Dhaliwal, Kreuz, and Levy will represent the university and attend the student presentations at the Legislative Plaza in Nashville on February 8, and at the spring meeting of the Tennessee Council of Graduate Schools to meet with members of the Senate and House education committees.

### **New Business**

#### **GPA policy change proposal**

Dr. Delavaga (Social Work) explained the proposal to the Council and gave an example from her department. Positive credit hours expire after eight years, with the GPA staying the same. The negative credit hours do not expire and continue to have a long-term effect (8+ years) on a student's GPA. This creates a problem for retaining students and allowing them to graduate. The student will keep the GPA but not the positive credits that go with the GPA, and only the negative credits carry over the 8+ years. Dr. Cohen asked if this is a departmental or university policy. Dr. Delavaga said that it is a university policy. Dr. Simone did not understand the position on the GPA from the proposal and asked for clarification. Drs. Unowsky and Burraston attempted to reword the proposal to make it clearer. Dr. Unowsky said that he was unaware of the current policy, and supported the change. Dr. Cohen brought up revalidating credits via exam or petition, but Dr. Delavaga said that this was not the issue. The proposal is to have both positive and negative credit hours to expire after the eight years, which will "reset" the GPA.

Dr. Kreuz asked the Council to take the proposal back to the departments and to solicit the reactions of other faculty members. A vote will be held at the March Council meeting

**Motion** to adjourn (B. Burraston, P. Simone second)

*Notes taken by Tori Tardugno; minutes prepared by Roger Kreuz*