

Graduate Council
GRADUATE COUNCIL
MINUTES

Friday, February 24, 2023 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
MHRA 2711

Members of the Graduate Council Present:

Seth Armah	Vidya Gargeya
Alicia Kaplan	Brad Johnson
Salih Rakap	Dennis LaJeunesse
Selima Sultana	Paul Steimle
Wanda Williams	Terry Chavis
Alexander Grindstaff	

Members of the Graduate Council Absent:

Aaron Beveridge	Diane Gill
Jennifer Park	Robert Wells

Ex Officio & Non-Voting Members Present:

Greg Bell	Graduate School
Jodi Pettazoni	Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Academic Program Planning

Ex Officio & Non-Voting Members Absent:

Lisa Henline	University Registrar's Office
Rachel Olsen	University Libraries

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
11:00 a.m.	<p>I. rpk GROUP: Mike Daly</p> <p>Mike Daly from the rpk GROUP discussed the rpk GROUP's role in supporting UNCG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing Academic Dashboards<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Supporting decision making regarding academic programs and course offerings○ Department level dashboards will have a faculty lens and program level dashboards will have a student lens<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establish/confirm data definitions▪ Create replicable methodologies for collection, validation, and utilization of defined data▪ Position dashboards to prioritize usability and drive data-informed decisions

- Assessing Opportunities for Institutional Effectiveness & Service Improvement
 - Reviewing how administrative services can better serve faculty, staff, and students
- Advising as Requested
 - Helping UNCG respond to the current budget situation
 - Consulting with working groups
 - Supporting current training for chairs
- Managing New Landscape
 - Presenting data to guide decisions; UNCG will make final decisions
 - Mission—where do we excel?
 - Market—what do those we serve need?
 - Margin—how do we create a sustainable model?

Vidya Gargeya inquired about how to contribute to this work, and Mike Daly encouraged the Council members to ask questions and make the contributions of graduate education clear. Jodi Pettazzoni asked about how criteria will be communicated as formulas/algorithms are created to evaluate programs. Mike Daly stated that the rpk GROUP will confirm data definitions regarding measures such as average class size (which is typically smaller for graduate courses based on pedagogical reasons) but that they will not be setting specific metrics for evaluation (this will be up to UNCG). The information provided by the rpk GROUP is intended to be a framework to assist UNCG in determining the health of academic programs.

11:15 **II. Approval of Minutes from December 2, 2022**

Motion to approve December 2, 2022 minutes with a correction to Seth Armah in the attendance record (Gargeya, LaJeunesse). Minutes approved.

11:18 **III. Report of the Chair – Selima Sultana**

Chair Sultana congratulated Dean Bell on his official appointment as Dean of the Graduate School. She noted that the January 27 Graduate Council meeting was canceled but that a report was provided via email and that the subcommittees have been hard at work. Chair Sultana reported that the Graduate Faculty Forum took place on January 24 and focused on the challenges of graduate education. She stated that Provost Storrs and Alan Boyette answered questions and that the forum went well.

11:28

IV. Report of the Dean of the Graduate School – Greg Bell

Dean Bell reported that waiver reallocations were also discussed at the Graduate Faculty Forum. A recording and slides from the forum are available.

Dean Bell reminded the Council that fellowship nominations are due today. Fellowships for the Graduate School comprise approximately \$350,000-400,000. Students must be nominated by faculty for the fellowships, and the different fellowships have varied requirements. The Alumni Excellence Hayes fellowships have the greatest amount of funding, and the first round of decisions have been made for those fellowships. Overall there have been a robust number of nominations and offers will be distributed when the decision process is completed. Students have until April 15 to accept offers, which can be a challenge as some students wait until the deadline to see how many offers they will receive. Once the initial offers are accepted or declined, UNCG can make additional offers. This year Slate is being used for both fellowship and assistantship offers with the goal of obtaining data to inform the process in the future (allowing UNCG to strategically over-offer to avoid having to make as many late offers).

Dean Bell informed the Council that the Research & Creativity Showcase is coming up on April 4 at 1 pm in the EUC Cone Ballroom. The event is an opportunity for students to explain their research to the general public, and community judges award the prizes.

Dean Bell shared that the Graduate School is seeking applications for a Graduate Faculty Fellow. The position is half-time and duties will be determined in collaboration with the fellow.

Dean Bell stated that applications are up by close to 1% when compared to this time last year. Master's program applications are slightly down but this is attributed mostly to a decrease in applications for the MS Computer Science which had a large increase in applications the previous year. Around 3,300 applications have been received. The number of admitted students is well behind the number of admitted students from this time last year. This is concerning because data indicates many students go to the first school that admits them. Some programs may be reluctant to offer admission without funding although they can admit students and indicate that funding information will be available later.

Dean Bell also reported that summer funding/stipends will be available this year and in a larger amount than last year.

Chair Sultana inquired about the Minerva Scholars program and Dean Bell stated that it will be ending this year. He reported that the program involved a large amount of funding for a small number of students and invited the students to exclusive events. The plan is for the funding and events to promote a more inclusive experience.

11:43

V. Report of the Graduate Student Association—Alexander Grindstaff

Alexander Grindstaff reported that the Graduate Student Association has been working on a Graduate Student Bill of Rights. The next step will be sharing the document with the Policy Committee. The GSA hopes to include the Graduate Student Bill of Rights in department handbooks and make it visible to new/incoming students. Terry Chavis also announced a small change to the next funding window (3/13-3/24) to make it easier for students to request funding and not be impacted by Spring Break.

11:48 **VI. Report of the Graduate Curriculum Committee – Brad Johnson and Dennis LaJeunesse**

- *GCC Information Items (from meetings on January 20 and February 17)*

Co-chairs Brad Johnson and Dennis LaJeunesse reported that the GCC reviewed 17 proposals on January 20 and 44 proposals on February 17. They stated that the GCC is seeing more proposals than usual at this time of year due to the extended deadlines. They encouraged departments to submit their proposals early to allow more time for revisions if needed. The Council discussed the need for departments to be more cohesive in submitting proposals and to be sure that course SLOs match the SLOs in syllabi. They emphasized that having well-written SLOs are for the benefit of the student. The Council also suggested that SLOs and proposals could be discussed at the next Faculty Forum.

11:53 **VII. Report of the Policies & Procedures Committee—Paul Steimle**

- *Action items: vote on policy revisions regarding*
 - *ELP Deferral of Admission*
 - Interlink is no longer offered on campus at UNCG so UNCG is no longer offering conditional admission to students participating in Interlink. The Council made a motion that this policy be removed from the Catalog (Johnson, Chavis). Motion approved.
 - *Accelerated Master's Programs*
 - Revisions are proposed to clarify this policy, namely regarding the ability of transfer students to apply for Accelerated Master's Programs (this will hold all students to the same standards). Language has also been added to the end of the policy to clarify student status. The Council made a motion to approve the revised policy (Johnson, Williams). Motion approved.
 - *Enrollment Requirements/NACES Evaluations*
 - Revisions are proposed to allow applicants to submit proof of earned U.S. equivalency graduate degree instead of U.S. equivalency earned bachelor's degree. This means that applicants who have a NACES evaluation for a graduate degree do not need one for a bachelor's degree as well. The

Council made a motion to approve the revised policy (Sultana, LaJeunesse). Motion approved.

- *Leave of Absence for International Students*
 - Revisions are proposed to allow international students to request a leave of absence in consultation with the International Programs Center. The Council expressed concerns about providing false hope to international students requesting a leave of absence since it will be up to the IPC to assist students with visa issue. The Council made a motion to approve the revised policy with a modification that the policy reads “International students who wish to apply for a leave of absence must consult the International Programs Center” (Sultana, Armah). Motion approved.
- *Semester Hours Required for Graduate Degrees/700 level courses*
 - The revised policy removes the statement “Doctoral students must enroll in 700-level courses or above” as the statement may be confusing as to whether doctoral students must take only 700 level courses or whether they are required to take at least one. Doctoral program requirements all include at least one 700 level course and there are no programs that require only 700 level courses. The Council made a motion to remove the statement (Johnson, Williams). Motion approved.
- *Discussion item: Current policies on grading, probation, and dismissal*
 - *Recommendation to move to an A, B, C, and F grading scale*
 - Dean Bell summarized the current probation dismissal/policy, which is based on cumulative GPA. A 3.00 cumulative GPA is required to graduate, and if a student’s GPA falls below 3.00 they are placed on probation. If it is determined the student cannot restore a 3.00 GPA, they are dismissed. If a student is placed on probation, restores good standing, and then returns to probation, they are dismissed. Students are also dismissed if they are on probation and do not restore a 3.00 GPA within the next 9 hours they earn after being placed on probation.
 - The Policy Committee asserted that B- grades may be contributing to students being placed on probation and dismissal as students can count any

number of B- grades toward a program but may be unable to reach a 3.00 GPA. The Policy Committee also expressed concern that a B- grade does not send a clear message to a student in terms of whether the grade is acceptable or not. The Policy Committee recommends that the Graduate School move to a simplified grading scale of only awarding A, B, C, and F grades.

- The Council expressed concern that with just A, B, C, and F grades it would be harder to restore a 3.00 GPA. However, it would be easier to explain the grades and their impact to students. If the policy is approved, it would not be applied retroactively. The Council discussed that students can still have up to 2 C grades count toward program requirements. Students can retake courses but grade replacements are not an option.
- The Policy Committee will draft a revised probation/dismissal policy and share it in a future Graduate Council meeting.

12:13 pm **VIII. Report of the Student Appeals Committee—No report**

12:15 **IX. Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee – Vidya Gargeya**
Vidya Gargeya reported that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with the rpk GROUP on February 6.

12:25 **X. New Business/Other**
Chair Sultana thanked Alicia Kaplan for her service to the Graduate Council as this is her last meeting.

12:30 **XI. Adjournment**