

Graduate Council
GRADUATE COUNCIL
MINUTES

Friday, March 31, 2023 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
MHRA 2711

Members of the Graduate Council Present:

Seth Armah	Vidya Gargeya
Diane Gill	Brad Johnson
Dennis LaJeunesse	Salih Rakap
Paul Steimle	Selima Sultana
Robert Wells	Wanda Williams

Members of the Graduate Council Absent:

Aaron Beveridge	Terry Chavis
Alexander Grindstaff	

Ex Officio & Non-Voting Members Present:

Greg Bell	Graduate School
Jodi Pettazzoni	Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Academic Program Planning
Rachel Olsen	University Libraries

Ex Officio & Non-Voting Members Absent:

Lisa Henline	University Registrar's Office
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<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
11:00 a.m.	<p>I. Approval of Minutes from February 24, 2023</p> <p>Motion to approve February 24, 2023 minutes (Johnson, Steimle). Minutes approved.</p>
11:03	<p>II. Report of the Chair – Selima Sultana</p> <p>Chair Sultana reported that she attended the colloquium with Suzanne Barbour, Dean of the Duke University Graduate School. She also stated that the next Graduate Faculty Forum is April 26 and the topic is to be determined (input from the Council is welcomed). The final Graduate Council meeting of this academic year is April 21.</p>
11:13	<p>III. Report of the Dean of the Graduate School – Greg Bell</p> <p>Dean Bell reported that he attended the colloquium with Suzanne Barbour as well and that she is a leader in graduate education with great ideas. He has materials from the colloquium and can share with Council members if desired.</p> <p>Dean Bell stated that the Graduate School is slightly up in number of applications when compared to this date last year. In the previous year there was a substantial increase in MS Computer Science applications but this year those applications have returned to a sustainable number.</p>

Dean Bell shared that the fellowship process is going well. Fellowship information is now housed in Slate, which allows the Graduate School to react quickly when fellowships are accepted or decline. Slate will also provide accessible data/reports to plan for the future. Assistantships are in Slate as well, which decreases the manual work of transferring information.

Dean Bell reminded the Council that the Graduate Research & Creativity Showcase will be held on April 4. Approximately 68 students are participating, and some of the winners will be selected to go to Raleigh for Graduate Education Day, which is an advocacy event.

Dean Bell asked the Council to consider the current policy that states that when faculty leave UNCG they can no longer serve as chairs of thesis/dissertation committees. Departing faculty can be changed to adjunct faculty to serve on the committees but the departure of faculty can lead to disruption for graduate students close to finishing their degrees. Dean Bell suggested that a grace period (with the endorsement of the department head) could potentially be provided. The Council discussed that sometimes departing faculty have been placed on a leave of absence to be able to continue working with students and that there have also been instances where they have served as unofficial co-chairs.

Dean Bell informed the group that the Graduate Council has been tasked with electing a representative to the Academic Portfolio Review Task Force. Brad Johnson was nominated and elected as the Graduate Council representative. Dean Bell also noted that the student success metrics listed in the draft document are not applicable for graduate students and inquired about possible metrics to add. The Council suggested the following metrics, which will be submitted by Dean Bell today:

- Time to candidacy
- Percentages of students placed on academic probation or dismissed
- 3 and 5 year graduation rates for master's students; 4 and 7 year graduation rates for doctoral students
- Number of 801-803 extension courses offered

Jodi Pettazzoni suggested that it may be useful for the Graduate Council to analyze these metrics annually as well and share them with Graduate Program Directors. She also stated that in regard to student success metrics that the UNC System does not closely monitor certificates (although the Department of Education and SACSCOC consider them equivalent to degrees as credentials). Many UNCG graduate students enroll in certificate programs in addition to degree programs which can make tracking time to completion more challenging.

11:28 **IV. Report of the Graduate Student Association—Alexander Grindstaff—No Report**

GSA Advisor Paul Steimle stated that next week is Graduate Student Appreciation Week and that the GSA will be having a beach-themed event outside the EUC. He also reported that the GSA has been working on a Student Bill of Rights that they plan to share with the Graduate Council soon. The GSA has also been working on awarding funding.

11:38 **V. Report of the Graduate Curriculum Committee – Brad Johnson and Dennis LaJeunesse**

- *GCC Information Items (from March 17 meeting)*

Brad Johnson reported that the GCC reviewed 9 proposals at the March 17 meeting. He shared that Jodi Pettazzoni discussed a possible electronic review process for “routine change” proposals to streamline the curriculum review process. She also discussed possibly requiring a syllabus or draft/outline for new course proposals to address committee questions and reduce rollbacks.

11:48 **VI. Report of the Policies & Procedures Committee—Paul Steimle**

- *Vote to revise the charge of the GC Student Appeals Committee to include examining admissions exceptions requests and related matters. For context, see item VI of the attached minutes from the 4/29/22 meeting of the GC. For reference, the graduate faculty governance document is also attached.*

Paul Steimle reviewed minor changes to the Faculty Governance Document (such as removing mention of the Associate Dean) and highlighted the following addition to the charge for the Appeals Committee:

- Hearing exceptional admissions requests brought to the Graduate School by program faculty

A motion was made (Wells, Steimle) to accept this change, and the motion was approved.

Another motion (Sultana, Armah) was made to update the Faculty Governance Document to reflect that the Dean of the Graduate School is no longer a voting member on the Graduate Curriculum Committee. Text was also added to indicate that ex-officio and non-voting members of the Graduate Council may serve on the GCC. The motion was approved.

- *Discussion to finalize the rationale and recommendation for changing the graduate student grading scale to A, B, C, and F, and to prepare the format and content of the document that will be shared with the general graduate faculty. See the attached summary document that will be used to guide our discussion.*

Paul requested feedback on the Grading Scale Policy document before sending it to the Graduate Faculty. The Council discussed including clearer statements in the challenges section (to explain the need for the change) and providing the current grading scale to make it clear that the recommendation is to remove pluses and minuses. Council members

expressed concern about limiting grades to A, B, C, and F only as there will be less variation in the grades they can award (ex. they would only be able to award grades of A whereas now they can award grades of A and A-). The Council suggested it may be helpful to share the proposed grading scale changes with the GSA Executive Board. Some council members expressed a preference for keeping pluses in the grading scale but removing minuses. Dean Bell stated that removing both pluses and minuses would be a clearer way to communicate to students the grades needed (such as each grade of C must be balanced by a grade of A to restore a 3.0 GPA).

- *Discussion of graduate student full-time status and impacts on eligibility for visas, assistantships, tuition support, and health insurance.*

Paul and Dean Bell discussed the current policies regarding full-time status and the challenges in enforcing the policies. In 2015 full-time status for graduate students was defined as 9 hours (it was previously defined as 6 hours). However, program curricula were not necessarily revised so that students were instructed to take at least 9 hours per semester. The current policy in the Catalog states that graduate students must be full-time to qualify for an assistantship but numerous exception requests are received (most often when a plan of study recommends 6 hours for a student). Dean Bell stated that a policy that can be followed without so many exceptions should be adopted. He suggested that requiring graduate students to be full-time or enrolled in at least 6 hours to qualify for assistantships may be ideal. Council members expressed that some departments do want their students to be enrolled in at least 9 hours and that this policy change may result in students enrolling in fewer hours per semester. The Council also indicated that changing the policy may be challenging given that international students are required to be full-time.

12:08 pm

VII. Report of the Student Appeals Committee

Dean Bell stated that he asked the Appeals Committee for feedback on an admissions request where the student requested to use an evaluation other than NACES. The International Programs Center indicated that the alternative evaluation was considered equivalent to NACES.

12:10

VIII. Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee – Vidya Gargeya

Vidya Gargeya provided three updates:

- Faculty Senate Executive Committee has been in extensive discussions with rpk GROUP regarding data
- M365 migration is upcoming and graduate students must be made aware too (Todd Sutton is meeting with the GSA)
- A new Graduate Council representative will be needed for the Faculty Senate Executive Committee next year. An election will be held at the April 21 meeting.

12:20

IX. New Business/Other

Chair Sultana requested that Council members send her any ideas for topics for the Graduate Faculty forum.

12:30 **X. Adjournment**