

Graduate Council
GRADUATE COUNCIL
MINUTES

Friday, September 23, 2022 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
MHRA 2711

Members of the Graduate Council Present:

Seth Armah	Paul Steimle
Diane Gill	Robert Wells
Alicia Kaplan	Wanda Williams
Dennis LaJeunesse	Terry Chavis
Jennifer Park	Alexander Grindstaff

Members of the Graduate Council Absent:

Aaron Beveridge	Vidya Gargeya
Brad Johnson	Salih Rakap
Selima Sultana	

Ex Officio & Non-Voting Members Present:

Greg Bell	Graduate School
Jodi Pettazoni	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.	I. Approval of Minutes from August 26, 2022 Motion to approve August 26, 2022 minutes (Gill, Wells). Minutes approved.
11:03	II. Report of the Chair—No Report
11:13	III. Report of the Interim Dean of the Graduate School—Greg Bell Dean Bell stated that the Graduate Program Director meetings in September focused on recruitment. ETS hosted a session on recruiting strategies and will host an upcoming session on holistic admission practices. Dean Bell is connecting Donna Heath with the Graduate Student Association to discuss the upcoming ITS changes. Dean Bell shared that the UNC System requires that no increases be made to undergraduate tuition and fees but is allowing more latitude in regard to graduate tuition and fees. The Council expressed concern regarding the impact of tuition and fee increases on the ability to fund graduate students. Dean Bell stated that increased tuition and fees could be a way to offset

the loss in funding for non-resident students. He also explained that he is an ex officio member of the Tuition and Fees Committee.

Diane Gill raised a concern about doctoral students who miss the defense deadline to graduate (but defend later that semester) and have to register for credits the following semester. Dean Bell plans to consult with the Graduate School staff to see if the defense deadline could be moved later in the semester and still allow processing time for the Graduate School. He also recommended that this matter be discussed by the Policy Committee. Dennis LaJeunesse also expressed concern regarding differential tuition and making additional charges clear to students when they register.

Dean Bell shared that a presentation on freedom of expression was included in the Faculty Forum this week. He stated that the group can present to the graduate faculty if the Graduate Council is interested, and the council expressed support.

11:28 **IV. Report of the Graduate Student Association—Alexander Grindstaff**

Alexander Grindstaff reported that an online student has recently raised concerns regarding ineligibility for student health insurance through UNCG despite working at an on-campus assistantship. The Council discussed the required student fees and policies and expressed concerns about some UNCG students being ineligible for student health insurance. Alexander also stated that graduate students have expressed concern regarding increasing costs for housing and other living expenses while stipend amounts have not increased. The Council encouraged graduate students to express their concerns at all levels and make sure their programs are aware. Dean Bell reported that the other UNC System schools have also voiced concerns about their stipends not being competitive, which has resulted in recruiting challenges.

11:38 **V. Report of the Graduate Curriculum Committee—Dennis LaJeunesse**

- *GCC Information Items (from September 16, 2022 meeting)*

Co-chair Dennis LaJeunesse stated that Jodi Pettazzoni discussed curriculum roles and review along with the addition of CIM course fields at the September 16 GCC meeting. Two course revisions and three program revisions were approved at the meeting. He reminded the Council of the October 31 deadline for curricular items to be in CIM workflow and to ideally have made it at least to the unit level committee.

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

- *Discussion item: Revisions to Graduate Council membership*

Policy Committee chair Paul Steimle reported that the September 2 meeting focused on the probation and dismissal policy as well as revisions to Graduate Council membership. He provided the following summary from the Policy Committee notes:

The current Graduate Council membership includes 4 appointed members with voting rights and 1-year terms, which raises concerns of conflicts of interest since they are appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. The Policy committee discussed options such as removing the voting rights for

appointed members (which could result in logistical challenges) and changing the appointed members to be elected members for 3-year terms. Alexander Grindstaff also proposed a method where the Graduate Council would be required vote on members appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School.

After discussion, the Policy Committee expressed support for allocating 4 additional elected members of the Graduate Council to academic units to replace the appointed members. The additional elected members will be allocated proportionally based on the number of graduate faculty. The Graduate School will handle the allocation and communicating with the academic units. There are plans for the Graduate School to review the number of graduate faculty and allocated members on a regular basis; every 5 years was suggested. Greg Bell also expressed interest in reviewing policies of replacing Graduate Council members who leave before their term is over.

The Council discussed whether a change in membership is needed and expressed that the current system allows for appointed members to “fill in the blanks” as needed on subcommittees. The Council also discussed that the current bylaws allow for 3 year appointed terms but that the practice has been to utilize 1 year terms. The Council stated that the idea of voting to approve appointments could be a good balance but that the consultation between the Chair, Chair-Elect, and Dean of the Graduate School also serves a check in regard to conflicts of interest. The Policy Committee will revisit this matter and return to the Council with a formal motion.

Dean Bell also provided a summary of the probation and dismissal policy concerns. The current policy is based on a student’s overall graduate GPA at UNCG and places students on probation if their GPA falls below 3.00. If their GPA is brought above 3.00 within 9 credit hours, they are removed from probation. If the 3.00 GPA is not restored or it is deemed mathematically impossible for them to restore the 3.00 GPA, they are dismissed. Dean Bell shared that the previous policy dismissed students if they earned any combination of 3 Cs or Fs. He expressed a desire for the policy to be more specific than just “mathematically impossible to restore a 3.00 GPA.” Dean Bell stated that fewer than a couple dozen students are dismissed each year but that many more are placed on probation (typically master’s students) and that some decide to withdraw or submit a retroactive course withdrawal. The Council expressed concern regarding students taking courses not required for their programs in an effort to increase their GPAs and the effect on student aid.

11:58 **VII. Report of the Student Appeals Committee—No Report**

12:00 pm **VIII. Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee—Vidya Gargeya**

In the last meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee held on September 12th, 2022, there was an extensive presentation on Information Technology Services (ITS)/ technological changes by Ms. Donna Heath (Vice Chancellor of Information Technology Services) followed by a substantial discussion. The changes being proposed and implemented by June 2023 would impact faculty delivering courses and conducting research, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. The presentation material provided by Ms. Heath is attached to this email. Faculty members teaching in graduate programs are requested to pay close

attention to the changes.

The Council discussed that Microsoft will help with the migration to the new system and that no action is needed at this time, although purging unneeded items may be helpful in reducing file sizes. Council members reported that other campuses have made or are in the process of making this transition and that the increase in Box pricing has been a driving factor. Rachel Olsen expressed concern that some departments may buy Zoom licenses while others may not, which could lead to difficulties. The Council also voiced concern over staff cuts in ITS, decrease in classroom support, and a reduction in number of ADA compliant classrooms.

12:10 **IX. New Business/Other**

Alexander Grindstaff raised the possibility of creating a Graduate Student Bill of Rights and inquired whether others had been at institutions with such a document. Paul Steimle mentioned a Best Practices for Graduate Students document that he would share with Alexander. The Council offered to provide feedback if a Graduate Student Bill of Rights is drafted and suggested that it could be helpful to include in program handbooks.

12:30 **X. Adjournment**