

Graduate Council
GRADUATE COUNCIL
MINUTES

Friday, September 8, 2023 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Faculty Center

Members of the Graduate Council Present:

Selima Sultana, Chair	Aileen Reid
Diane Gill	Gwen Schug
Lakshmi Iyer	Johnette Walser
Brad Johnson	Wanda Williams
Dennis LaJeunesse	Robert Wells
Douglas Levine	Melody Patterson Zoch
Christian Moraru	Terry Chavis
Salih Rakap	

Members of the Graduate Council Absent:

Alexander Grindstaff

Ex Officio & Non-Voting Members Present:

Greg Bell	Graduate School
Jodi Pettazzoni	Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Academic Program Planning
Lisa Henline	University Registrar's Office
Rachel Olsen	University Libraries

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
11:00 a.m.	<p>I. Approval of Minutes from April 21, 2023</p> <p>Motion to approve April 21, 2023 minutes (Gill, Johnson). Minutes approved with 1 recusal.</p>
11:03	<p>II. Report of the Chair – Selima Sultana</p> <p>Chair Selima Sultana welcomed the new members of the Graduate Council and self-introductions followed. She noted that she and Dean Bell collaborated in the assignment of new members and that they have also been working together on the upcoming Graduate Faculty Forum.</p>
11:13	<p>III. Report of the Dean of the Graduate School – Greg Bell</p> <p>Dean Bell thanked the Graduate Council members for their service. He stated that the Graduate Council drives the work of the Graduate School and functions like the Faculty Senate with curriculum, policy, and appeals committees. Dean Bell expressed that he hopes graduate programs will be responsive to student needs in terms of program length and start terms. He also stated that he would like the Policy Committee to clarify some ambiguous policies and policies that are causing challenges for students, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students being required to take coursework in their last semester• Demonstrating that an international degree is equivalent to a U.S. degree

- Ability of graduate assistants to work remotely
- AMP entrance requirements
- Visiting student concerns

Dean Bell stated that the Supreme Court decision regarding affirmative action is also of concern to higher education. UNCG is now suppressing the ability to self-identify race on admission applications. Students can express race/identity in personal statement portions of admission applications. In addition, the compelled speech policy is now an NC state law and prohibits certain topics from being included in instruction. General Counsel Jerry Blakemore will be attending the upcoming Graduate Roundtables to discuss both issues.

Dean Bell reported that fall graduate enrollment is approximately 10% below the target set by Enrollment Management. The number of applications has remained consistent and there was an increase in the number of committed students, but the number of enrolled students was down. In the previous academic year more graduate degrees were awarded than ever before, which resulted in a decrease in the number of continuing students. Dean Bell is working with the deans of the academic units to decrease melt (students who commit but don't enroll). One idea is to charge an enrollment deposit (already utilized by the School of Nursing) but this could be a barrier to admission. Students not registering for the fall semester before faculty leave for the summer is also an enrollment challenge. The Council discussed that April 15 is the deadline for students to commit to financial offers but that this can be challenging given that admission/financial offers are sometimes provided to doctoral students as early as February. Dean Bell stated that Slate data regarding the percentage of offers typically accepted may aid departments in determining if they can make additional offers before the deadline. Council members also inquired if data is collected regarding students who commit but don't enroll. Dean Bell stated that the Graduate School often reaches out to such students but has had trouble communicating with them via their UNCG email. Dean Bell acknowledged that challenges occurred with automation in Slate/Banner for the assistantship process. He is hopeful that the lessons learned will lead to improvements in the future. Staff vacancies also led to difficulties in the I-9 process, and there was confusion about the start date for graduate assistantships. Graduate assistants who were not paid for August can reach out to Dean Bell, who has been in communication with Financial Aid regarding emergency loans.

Dean Bell updated the Council that Mary Early has retired and that Maria Hayden is now serving as the Director of Enrolled Student Services. Sarah Daynes is serving as a Graduate School Fellow and is working with faculty-facing concerns, and Hewan Girma is also serving as a Graduate School fellow and addressing student-facing concerns. George Durfee will be serving as a program liaison to make sure the needs of programs are met, and someone will be hired soon to replace Adam Horton in working directly with Slate.

The Fall Graduate Faculty Forum will be held on September 14 in the Nursing Instructional Building, 3:30-4:30. The agenda has been kept open to allow time for discussion. Graduate program director meetings are also upcoming; one will be held in-person and one will be held virtually. Sessions were held last week regarding the portfolio review process, and the task force will be using positive measures of graduate student success.

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

Terry Chavis provided an update from the GSA:

- First meeting was held on September 7 and the next meeting will be held on October 5
 - Financial concerns were voiced by students regarding discrepancies between assistantships stipends for master's and doctoral students and also increases in tuition and fees
 - Safety concerns were also voiced, and GSA has asked Public Safety to attend a future meeting
- The next funding window for professional development and research capstones will open on October 6 and close October 20
- GSA is also focusing on engagement and community building between graduate students and with academic departments
 - Signature events such as the Halloween Social, Professional Headshots, and Graduate Student Appreciation week are being planned, and GSA is also open to collaborating with units on campus
- GSA Executive Board is discussing how to receive feedback from a greater population

11:38 **V. Report of the Graduate Curriculum Committee – Robert Wells**

- *GCC Information Item (from August 25, 2023 meeting)*
 - One course revision was approved
- *Review of curriculum committee processes*
 - Voting/review procedures were discussed
 - Electronic review of limited routine changes will be piloted
 - Syllabi or outlines are now required for new course proposals
 - Departments will be encouraged to review course descriptions and titles to ensure that they accurately reflect course content
 - Many course titles/descriptions have not been reviewed in several years
 - The School of Nursing and School of Music indicated that they will be making course updates due to accreditation needs
 - Some of these changes may be done

administratively but if the content & SLOs change they must go through curricular review

- *Discussion regarding certificate policies and independent study courses*
 - Currently certificate students are not allowed to take independent study courses
 - Digital Earth Technologies and Global Societies & Governance certificates list independent study courses as options
 - Dean Bell has been in communication with the GES department
 - The Policy Committee will discuss potential policy changes and any changes will be approved by the Graduate Council

- 11:48 **VI. Report of the Policies & Procedures Committee – Dennis LaJeunesse**
Dennis LaJeunesse reported that that Policies & Procedures Committee will meet on September 15, 2023.
- 11:58 **VII. Report of the Student Appeals Committee—No Report**
- 12:00 pm **VIII. Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee – Selima Sultana**
Chair Sultana reported that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met before the fall semester began and that so far they have focused on the portfolio review process. The Provost is sending regular email updates regarding the process, and data dashboards are available online.
- 12:10 **IX. New Business/Other**
 - *Election of Graduate Council Chair-Elect*
 - Dennis LaJeunesse was elected as the Graduate Council Chair-Elect (Gill, Wells).
 - *Attendance of Graduate School Fellows*
 - A motion was put forth and approved for the Graduate School Fellows to be invited to both the Graduate Council and subcommittee meetings (Sultana, LaJeunesse).
- 12:30 **X. Adjournment**