

***MEMORANDUM***

**TO:** Felix Ngassa, Chair, ECS/UAS

**FROM:** Andrea Bostrom, Chair, Graduate Council

**SUBJECT:** Graduate Council Mid-Year Report

**DATE:** December 20, 2018

**CC:** Maria Cimitile, Provost

Jeff Potteiger, Graduate School

Frederick Antczak, CLAS

Annie Belanger, University Libraries

George Grant, CCPS

Anne Hiskes, BCOIS

Diana Lawson, SCB

Cynthia McCurren, KCON

Roy Olsson, CHP

Paul Plotkowski, PCEC

Sherril Soman, COE

Stephen Glass, Dean of Students

**Graduate Council Faculty, Student, Administrative Members, and Ex-officio members:** D. Balfour (CCPS, Vice-Chair of Graduate Council), A. Bostrom (KCON, Chair of Graduate Council), W. Burns-Ardolino (BCOIS/Liberal Studies), A. Campbell (CLAS), S. Choudhuri (PCEC, Chair of Graduate Council Policy Subcommittee), I. Fountain (administrative), B. Harvey (UL), T. James-Heer (ex-officio), T. Jones (CCPS—covering L Huang’s fall sabbatical), C. Karasinski (CHP), S. Lipnicki (ex-officio), M. Luttenton (ex-officio), E. Martin (UL), K. Ozga (CHP), J. Palm (administrative), J. Pope (SCB—covering for W. Sun year-long sabbatical) J. Potteiger (ex-officio), P. Ratliff-Miller (SCB), S. Riggleman (COE), E. Schendel (ex-officio), M. Staves (CLAS, Chair of Graduate Council Curriculum and Program Review Subcommittee), J. Toot (BCOIS), G. Tusch (PCEC—covering for X. Cao fall course conflict), M. VanderKooi (KCON), D. Vainer (ex-officio), P. Wells (ex-officio), R. Wilson (COE).

**Graduate Council Student Members:** L. Drennan, M. Nguyen (both resigned in October and have yet to be replaced.

**Ex-Officio Students** Attending: S. Tibbe (President, GSA), B. Wallsteadt (Vice President), A. Osei-Bonsu (Finance Officer), R. Dzapo (Administrative Officer, GSA), C. Melton (Communications Officer)

The Graduate Council (GC) convened on September 7, 2018 and met a total of four times through the end of November 2018. Because the GC addresses policy issues and reviews graduate curriculum proposals and implements program reviews, members of the GC also serve on either the Graduate Council Curriculum and Program Review Subcommittee (GC-CPR, Mark Staves, Chairperson) or the Graduate Council Policy Subcommittee (GC-PC, Shabbir Choudhuri, Chairperson). With each college sending two faculty members to GC, each college is represented on both subcommittees. The GC-CPR and GC-PC generally meet twice each month in addition to regular GC meetings. The GC-CPR subcommittee completed the review of one major program change and one new program this fall. The GC-CPR initiated program reviews for four programs this academic year, including Biomedical Sciences, Communications, Public Administration, and School Psychology. At this point in the review process the committee has received all program generated assurance documents and met with the external reviewers who were brought to campus. The GC-PC has reviewed issues and policies related to graduate programs, courses, admission procedures, final projects and program directors.

The GC received a memo from the ECS that set a general agenda for the 2018-2019 academic year. More specifically, the GC was charged with several tasks in that memo. The efforts of GC related to these charges are summarized below.

**1.** **Graduate policy and program review/curriculum**

Please continue to propose policy and procedural revisions to the language in the Faculty Handbook to promote high quality, uniformity, and consistency among graduate programs within the university. In particular,

1. **Review the process of working with UCC on graduate program curricular changes.** In working with UCC, GC has taken responsibility for reviewing program changes and new programs. GC has not reviewed courses, specifically, in relationship to the programs. This has occasionally led to some confusion in the process of the GC review. Generally, having a presentation from the graduate program director who is proposing the changes has helped to clarify issues; however, the graduate program director may find this redundant. Some of the issues GC has may be internal processes rather than processes related to UCC-GC review. We will continue to evaluate these procedures. Currently, a large program change (KCON) has been moving between the two committees slowly. Perhaps after this program is approved, it will help to have a discussion between the two committees on how to improve the process.
2. **Examine perceived redundancy of reporting requests between GC and FSBC and recommend Faculty Handbook changes if needed.** Discussions with the chair of FSBC determined that the requests for data were complimentary rather than redundant. In addition, examining the data from the two perspectives served both as a double check and a clarification of data available from the institution.
3. **Develop and disseminate a proposed plan for graduate program quality review coordinated with UAC and FSBC review processes.** Representatives from GC, FSBC, UAC, and administration met twice this semester to discuss similarities and differences between the UAC assessment of programs and the GC quality review of graduate programs. Outcomes of these discussions included: changing the term “self-study” used in the program review document to “assurance” document to avoid confusion between the requests of the two committees, and attempting to schedule the program review so that both documents could be produced at the same time by the programs. The former change was made. The scheduling of the review was impossible to synchronize due to the difference in frequency of UAC reports and GC reviews, and the potential volume of work for Graduate Council if all of the graduate programs were reviewed on a two year schedule. These discussion also helped to determine that there was little redundancy with the data collected for GC graduate program review and FSBC (charge 1.b.).

These discussions also identified the opportunity to have the graduate program quality reviews uploaded to GVAdvance in the near future as programming resources become available.

**2. Graduate assistant funding**

Examine the current practices of awarding stipends to selected Graduate Assistants.

Share findings with ECS along with committee recommendations.

One of the most frequent comments/requests in the assurance documents has been to receive more funding for graduate assistants in order to promote/recruit for programs. This has been discussed in GC policy subcommittee as well, both in terms of using graduate students as teaching as well as research graduate assistants. Allocation of GAs remains primarily an administrative procedure with guidance from GC and adjustments in allocation has occurred based on feedback from GC.

**3. Review of graduate programs**

1. **In collaboration with administration and relevant schools and colleges, continue to review the university data collection process regarding graduate education and propose policy development and revisions, if deemed appropriate.**

The process for the Cell and Molecular Biology Graduate Program was completed this fall with a final meeting with the Provost. The final assurance document and GC-CPR summary for Kirkhof College of Nursing were submitted in early fall. The process for these two programs proved to be workable and enlightening. Some small changes were made in the process prior to starting the review during fall semester. The external reviewer’s report for Biomedical Sciences has been received; the committee is awaiting the remainder of the reports.

Program handbooks for policy review have not been identified for this year at this time.

Policies that are being developed, based on program reviews and collected data include: Thesis/Dissertation Committee Approval procedures that take into consideration the various administrative structures within colleges and programs; combined degree program procedures and identifying when a student is a graduate student within these programs; and identifying how to change policies based on the new terminology for faculty (regular and non-regular) and for badges, micromaster’s, etc.

1. **In particular, review the history of faculty workload related to graduate and undergraduate course load and make recommendations to ECS.**

This is ongoing and rife with pitfalls that are much easier to identify than to solve.

**4. Assessment**

1. **Continue to pursue assessment of faculty and student professional development activities.**

GC has discussed this charge and concluded that we are unclear as to its meaning. We are requesting that this charge be dropped or further clarified. We believe that professional development is more clearly and singularly identified within each discipline for its faculty and students.

1. **Recommend revising the committee description in the faculty handbook to reflect adding assessment materials of the institution-level graduate outcomes to UAC for review every two years like is done with academic programs as an ongoing responsibility.**

Institution-level graduate outcomes were developed for the HLC visit, but not incorporated at this time into all programs. This remains under consideration. As mentioned above, following discussions with UAC, the two year timeline for assessing outcomes was discussed. However, it was determined that this would not be possible. Every effort will be made to minimize the workload caused by the program review and program assessment activities.

**5. Graduate School Policy Revisions**

Review the following and make recommendations:

The Policies Working Group during 2017-18 worked on improvements to www.gvsu.edu/policies. They discussed policies in the collection for regular faculty (i.e., the Faculty Handbook)

1. **Review the Graduate Council sections (1.09 A-J, 2.04 H and J-L) and determine which of these policies should be in the Catalogue rather than the Handbook.**

At this time, GC does not see the need to change what is in the catalogue and the handbook.

1. **Review Graduate School policies that may need to be added in Catalogue or Handbook, for example becoming graduate school faculty and responsibilities of graduate program directors.**

These policies are being reviewed/developed. When finalized, the location for these policies will be clarified.

**6. Progress Report—this document**.

In an effort to engage more faculty in our shared governance system, prepare a 1-2 page mid-year progress report at the end of the Fall semester to be posted on the GC website and disseminated to ECS/UAS and College Deans (a full report is expected as usual at the end of the year).