

Graduate Council Meeting Minutes October 7, 2016

Graduate Council members in attendance: Timothy Burns, Beth Barr, Gary Carini, Kevin Chambliss, Gia Chevis, Gerald Cleaver, Sara Dolan, Kevin Dougherty, Neil Fleming, Charles Garner, Greg Hamerly, Julie Holcomb, Randall Jean, Chris Kearney, Ryan King, Grant Morgan, Mark Morman, David Music, James Nogalski, Jungjun Park, Jim Patton, Dan Peppe, Van Pham, Alex Pruss, Richard Russell, Mark Sepanski, Joe Shim, Doug Smith, Rishi Sriram, Michael Thomas, Sascha Usenko, Suzy Weems, Trena Wilkerson, G.W. Willis, Matthew Wood, and Laurel Zeiss.

Guests and substitutes in attendance: Jonathan Helm, Kevin Singer, Megan Martinsen, Doug Welch, David Alexander, Marion Castleberry, Jack Tubbs, Debra Burleson, Doug Weaver, Sharon Bracken-Gripp, Angela Bailey, and Steve Green.

Graduate School deans and staff in attendance: Larry Lyon, Laine Scales, Denny Kramer, Chris Rios, Steve Driese, Anna Henderson, and Candice Prose.

Unable to attend: Jim Ellor, Dave Jortner, Dorothy Leidner, Mia Moody-Ramirez, JL Radford-Williard, Col. Scott Shaffer, James Stamey, and Tanya Sudia.

Graduate School Dean, Larry Lyon, introduced guests and new graduate program directors.

Matthew Wood led the invocation.

The minutes from April 2016 were approved.

Chris Rios provided details on how graduate students qualify for a subsidized parking sticker.

Rios also pointed out the complexities of student health insurance at this time. No one knows what will happen with the Affordable Care Act next year. Baylor has people working hard to follow the rules and insure that our subsidized insurance will continue into the future.

Rios emphasized several dos and don'ts from the Title IX office

- Do encourage students to register with OALA if they mention accommodations
- Don't provide accommodations without documentation
- Do coordinate arrangements for exams
- Don't lower academic expectations
- Do consult OALA when needed

It is a good idea to inform students that OALA services may be available to them but that they must take the initiative to register with OALA themselves and provide faculty with documentation from OALA. The OALA staff are willing to talk with your program to determine what is fitting for your particular requirements.

Laine Scales spoke about the upcoming graduate faculty development sessions. This year's series will begin with a special guest from Stanford, Chris Golde, author of *Formation of Scholars*. Invitations will be sent out for a luncheon at the Faculty Center on Friday, October 28.

Jonathan Helm, Registrar for Baylor, was invited to speak about the university's grade change policy. He said that written policy protects the integrity of the institution and the faculty as well. The graduate

version of the grade change policy can be found at the end of this document. Helm requested that faculty refer to the Graduate Dean's offices in complex instances. The time limit for a grade change for graduate students would be until the end of the program, 5-8 years typically. After this time the Incomplete would become an F because a student can't graduate with an I on the transcript. Helm said that the Registrar would not stand in the way if the Graduate School decided on changes that would improve the process overall. Graduate Council members discussed whether giving grades for dissertation/thesis courses would be better motivators than just giving *credit*. If the incomplete really meant something, they would be spurred to action to get something done. As it is now, a whole lot of work is required at the end to go back and fix it.

Larry Lyon asked that those who feel strongly about this issue send an email to him and Sherry Sims. These individuals will then be asked to meet with Sims, Lyon, and the Registrar to come up with solution.

Steve Driese mentioned that the English for Academic Performance program is hoping to add a writing component, but discussions are still ongoing. This program mainly benefits international STEM graduate students.

Driese stated that he is currently working on a system to improve the reporting of student publications and presentations. He said that he would like to develop a kind of portal for students to self-report their accomplishments.

Denny Kramer talked about recruiting systems such as gradschoolmatch.com and careereco. He mentioned that the Graduate School could assist in reaching out to these students initially.

Lyon reminded the graduate program directors that if they wanted to request an increase in their stipend and/or tuition budgets, the request form should be submitted by November 23. Meetings to discuss requests will be scheduled on December 6.

The meeting continued with topics relevant to doctoral programs only.

Rios and Driese talked about developing doctoral program benchmarks.

Best practices

1. Clear academic expectations
 - a. Incompletes – you *can* have stronger requirements than the graduate students have
 - b. Failed classes/exams
 - c. Demonstrating research progress
2. Stated expectations for professionalism (relationships with faculty and peers, interactions in labs and classrooms, etc.) – *we are considering adding this to the graduate catalog: students are expected to demonstrate professionalism*. Questions came up about how specific to be about what constitutes professional behavior. General Counsel recommends not being too specific. In academics, you the PhDs, are the experts in your areas. Sriram says he would be more comfortable with the grad school coming up with a statement on professionalism rather than the department interpreting that.
3. Statement about university resources, especially title 9 and OALA.
4. Regular student evaluation and feedback

Steps for building a policy and procedures document

1. The GPD and department chair create draft document
2. The document is vetted through the graduate faculty
3. A link to the document is included on the department website
4. The document is introduced at graduate student orientation

Driese said that a regular review with the student is very important to the benchmark and the process.

Doug Welch and David Alexander from the compliance office and General Counsel talked about how to deal with students of concern. They recommended involving General Counsel any time there is a question. They suggested that departments follow the policies and procedures that are in place, and call General Counsel any time it seems that the problem is getting too big. Err on the side of caution. Documentation is important, and sharing this with the student as you go along. Having a departmental graduate student handbook can also be helpful. General Council can be reached at extension 3821.

Lyon said that he is proposing a formative PhD assessment process as a regular examination of graduate education. Several programs will participate in a pilot of the process.