

Graduate Council Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2017
Commons Aurora
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

X	Jerry McMurtry	X	Ben Hunter		Alistair Smith
	Ayobami Adegbite	X	Jill Johnson	X	Karen Trebitz
X	Julie Amador - phone		Scott Minnich	X	Greg Turner-Rahman
X	Jeff Bailey		Gordon Murdoch		Elowyn Yager - phone
X	Laura Holyoke	X	Kelly Quinnett	X	Ata Zadehgo

- I. Approval of the minutes from February 1, 2017
- Johnson moved to approve. Seconded by Trebitz. Approved unanimously.
- II. Announcements and reports
- A. COGS Dean Search Update
- McMurtry updated Councilmembers on the dean search. Priority deadline for applicants is Friday, March 3.
- B. COGS Spring Events
1. Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition – Tuesday, April 11
 2. Innovation Showcase – Thursday, April 13
- McMurtry encouraged members to register as judges and asked them to tell their students to enter these competitions.
- C. TA Support Task Force
- McMurtry reminded members that the first task force meeting will be Thursday, March 2.
- D. AGEP Project Update
- McMurtry reported that he went to the NSF AGEP National Forum in Washington, DC, in February. He reported that they were told several times that our alliance (UI-WSU-MSU-UM) is the best alliance in the nation.
 - NSF will be here for a site visit in late April. Faculty members might get an invitation to talk to NSF program officers during that visit.
- III. Discussion Items
- A. Curriculum Items
1. Critical Infrastructure Resilience Graduate Certificate
 - Moved to next meeting.
- B. Navitas Criteria – Letters of Recommendation, GPA, TOEFL, Statement, Vita, Transcripts
- McMurtry is working with Dean Kahler on the Navitas criteria.
 - Normally, Graduate Admissions staff would collect these items and would determine whether the transcript is valid and official.
 - Navitas wants a two-day turnaround on I-20's.
 - They want to evaluate everything. We will have to have “good faith” that Navitas is properly checking.

- Questions from councilmembers:
 - Trebitz: Are there any judgements that Graduate Admissions would normally make that UI is now trusting Navitas to make?
 - JM: They are evaluating all documents. McMurtry is comfortable with their process and what they're promising.
 - Trebitz: Is there a trial period?
 - JM: There will be a review at some point. There is an exit clause in the contract if they fail in their responsibilities, etc.

C. Navitas English Equivalency Tests

- Navitas is asking to use a different English proficiency evaluation - Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE A). It is a Versant test.
- McMurtry asked if Graduate Council members are willing to accept that?
- Questions/comments:
 - Johnson: Do other universities accept it?
 - JM: Yes.
 - Trebitz suggested we accept it with the caveat that after the first year, if they are not proficient, they do ALCP.
 - McMurtry will talk to other graduate schools and see what they think.
- This will be brought back to a later Graduate Council meeting.

D. Thesis and Dissertation Submission – Melinda Deyasi

- Melinda Deyasi told Council that she is finding that committee members are not reading students' theses/dissertations; they are just signing them.
- Deyasi: How do committees/Major Professors know if the changes they suggest are actually being made? How can we prevent sloppy work getting through the committees?
- Questions/comments:
 - Trebitz: Just because a student is defending, it doesn't mean the document is done.
 - Johnson: Often small changes will be suggested.
 - Deyasi: Who checks to make sure the changes are done?
 - Johnson: Major Professor/PI
 - Bailey suggested a form could be created that the major professor signs to certify that the changes have been made and the document is ready... OR ... Tell the major professors to hold the signature page until the document is ready to go.
 - Deyasi told the group she often sees theses/dissertations with glaring grammatical errors.
 - Johnson said this is the major professor's job to make sure the "product is ready to go."
 - Quinnett: Is one department consistently bad?
 - Deyasi: No, it is across the board. Spelling is atrocious.
 - McMurtry asked councilmembers for ideas.
 - Trebitz suggested students could start a reading club to share their papers with fellow students in the departments to read each other's papers.
 - Johnson said if the major professor isn't fixing the problems, then the department chair should be told.
 - McMurtry said he can talk to the chairs.

-- Holyoke agreed that it goes back to the major professor. It is their responsibility to ensure quality work.

-- Bailey said COGS should communicate to the departments that this is a problem.

- McMurtry said he is working with the Registrar's Office to create an electronic signature page. It is stuck in ITS. He hopes they have a beta of it over the summer.

E. TA FTE Discussion

- McMurtry asked "What is a TA appointment? What is a 20 hour/week appointment?" He asked councilmembers if they want to address this.
- Not all departments treat all TA's the same. Some TA's say they are expected to work 40 hours per week.
- Questions/comments:
 - Johnson suggested that departments should be surveyed.
 - Bailey: Do supervisors think "free labor" and pile on the work, or do they underestimate how much time the student needs to work?
 - Trebitz suggested they survey departments based on the actual TA job, and not an average of all TA's in the department. Average hours per week per TA.
 - Quinnett suggested supervisors do take advantage of students.
 - McMurtry said there is also an issue with students being on a .3 FTE TA, but they are doing .5 FTE amount of work.
 - Johnson asked if this should be another task of the TA taskforce.
 - McMurtry reminded the group that we are very decentralized, so COGS has no control over TA workload.
 - Turner-Rahman agrees that it should be included in the work of the task force.
 - Hunter: Should the UI centralization committee should look at this?
 - McMurtry: Wouldn't want to take the ability of the decision-making away from the departments.
- McMurtry said this will be added to the TA task force.

Bailey moved to adjourn. Zadehgol seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Future Meetings:

April 5 – Commons Aurora

May 10 – Commons Crest

All meetings are at 3:30 p.m. Pacific.