



NAME	ROLE	Absent
Voting Members		
Inge Wefes (Chair) <i>Tie breaker only</i>	AVP for Graduate Studies	
Ethan Waples	PD: Business Administration	
Jason Rose	PD: Clinical Behavioral Health	
LiYing Li	PD: Cybersecurity	
Lisa Altemueller	PD: Education (Curriculum & Instruction)	
Garrett Chism	PD: Health Administration	
Melissa Masters	PD: Nutrition & Dietetics	
Greg Clifton	PD: Professional Accountancy	
Tanya Greathouse	PD: Social Work	
Kara Halley	PD: Teaching (Elem & Special Ed)	conflict
Jessica Rossi-Katz	PD: Speech Language Pathology	
Marni Horan	REP. Graduate Students	
Zsuzsa Balogh	Rep. Faculty Senate	
Charisma Martinez	Rep. Graduate Strategic Enrollment	
Andreas Mueller	Rep. Council of Chairs	conflict
Jo Bailey	Rep. Council of Deans	
Ex Officio		
Shaun Schafer	AVP for Curriculum and Policy Development	
Erica Buckland	Director, Curriculum	
Connie Sanders	Registrar	
Omotola Williams	Budget Office)	

Minutes:

1) December Graduate Council Minutes

The minutes of the December Graduate Council meeting were unanimously approved without objection or abstention.

2) Priority enrollment for 2nd year students.

Graduate programs that do not prescribe in their curricula a prescribed sequence in which students have to enroll in the program courses sometimes find students who are close to graduating disadvantaged when 1st year students enroll in courses that have limited seating. The proposed change would restrict the enrollment of students according to their earned credits, i.e., a student who has already earned 15 credits in a graduate program that requires 30 credits for graduation (for example) is likely closer to degree completion than one who is just

starting or in the second semester. The Registrar can restrict the enrollment according to earned credits. Because this change would then apply to *all* graduate courses, the approval of the Graduate Council is required.

It seems that this issue has been discussed before, but it was not clear if the Graduate Council voted on a change. Please find **attached** the document that Greg Clifton shared.

3) Graduate Council Bylaws:

Currently, outdated Graduate Council Bylaws are posted on the website. They do not reflect the correct composition of the Council and we will see to it that the information is corrected.

4) Shortening the timeline and approval process for the development of new graduate programs:

This topic triggered an intensive discussion that will have to be continued in our upcoming meeting. The table with the current timeline and processes is **attached**. Below are questions that were submitted by Pat Griswold who could not attend the meeting

1. What is the overlap between the college curriculum review process and grad councils?
2. When in the curriculum review process should grad council be reviewing proposals?
3. What is the scope of review for grad council members? Are all aspects of the proposal open to review or should the review be narrower?
4. How do we keep everyone informed and close any potential “loops” between department and college review members?

Other questions/concerns that we started to address include:

- Lack of information sharing:

It has been mentioned on several occasions that individual faculty in a college might work on a proposal for a new graduate program, but the chair and college dean are not informed. The [form](#) that Erica currently requests is just a notification to her that people are thinking about submitting a new program proposal. In addition to the proposer information, the form requests the signature of the Associate Dean for Curriculum of the respective college.

As a remedy for the lack of information sharing, Erica could either ask for additional signatures on that form or make it explicit that the Associate Dean for Curriculum should share the information about the prospective proposal with the College Dean and College Chairs.

- Financial viability of graduate programs

The cash-funded design leaves risks and insecurities with the graduate programs. For new graduate programs, a five-year budget projection has to be submitted, and after that time programs have to break even, for minimum.

It was pointed out that the financial viability of programs is often not sufficiently assessed in the review process for new programs, and programs often become aware about the weak points only after programs have started to enroll students.

One point of pain in this arena is that sometimes courses cannot be offered because the program cannot afford to pay the instructors who can often obtain better compensation in industry.

- Concurrent Proposal Review

Are their steps in the review process when a proposal could be co-reviewed at the same time by different units? To be discussed!

5) Adjustments to the Graduate Councils Policies and Procedures.

The minimum standards for the processes related to earning a graduate degree are set by the Graduate Council. With a centered/serving approach, but without lowering standards for graduation, we started to discuss the following issues

- Grade Forgiveness:

The current Graduate Council Policies do not allow for any grade forgiveness/Best Grade Stands as is practiced for undergraduate students. Due to this restriction and the requirement that graduate students must hold a GPA of 3.0 or higher to graduate, some students have to enroll in many more courses than are required for the degree to make up for an “F” (for example). Even if the student earned a “B+” in the *repeated* course and this much better grade that would now prove the student’s competency in the subject area, the better grade might not be sufficient to compensate for the “F” and move the student’s GPA up to 3.0.

The important part in this change is that students still

- ⇒ have to earn the number of *credits* that their programs require
- ⇒ have to earn in *all* courses the minimum grade that their programs require
- ⇒ Have to earn a program GPA of 3.0 to graduate

Therefore, the minimum qualifications for graduation are retained, i.e., the knowledge standards have not been lowered! The only difference that the Best Grade Stands policy would make is that the course in which a student failed does *not* require the student to enroll in *multiple* courses just to make up for the “F” and to earn the minimum required GPA of 3.0. If the course was a required course, the student would have to *reenroll* in that *same* course and earn the minimum grade that the program requires, or in case of an elective course, the student could choose a different elective.

With this adjustment, the student is not chained to the “F” and the university by having to invest more time and money, i.e., the hope is that such adjusted policy would lead to less attrition.

- Attrition

It was shared that the according to the Office of Business Intelligence, Master’s programs had 12-28% attrition between fall 2021 and fall 2022. This information is based on the lack of enrollment for one whole academic year. The Office of Business Intelligence has no data on students who are still in touch with their programs and might pause for various reasons. Such information might in the future be captured through a Leave of Absence Form. Because universities do normally not broadcast their attrition, it might be difficult to compare if our data are similar to those of other institutions. For the provided time frame (Fall 2021-Fall 2022) COVID is likely also a player.

- Letter grades versus Pass/Fail or other broad grading categories:

According to current Graduate Council Policies, capstone courses (theses, portfolios, internships etc.) are graded with pass/fail and do therefore not contribute to a student's graduating GPA. We started to discuss if this lack of a letter grade could disadvantage students in multiple ways. For example,

- Some students who are very application oriented can truly flourish in these capstone activities and could earn a good grade that could also help them to move away from being on the edge of the required graduation GPA of 3.0.
- For students who would like to move into a doctorate program, the research experience or other experience during their thesis work or other capstone activity could be central to the admission interview for such program. A pass/fail grade, (not common at Graduate Schools), could lead to bias about inferior training, and the missing grade could also disadvantage the student at very competitive programs that start their first cut off with the GPA.
- If a student wants to complete the graduate training at a different university, many Graduate Schools do not accept Pass/Fail grades as transfer credits.

The discussion about these complex issues related to prospective changes in the Graduate Council Policies and Procedures as well as related to possible changes related to the timeline and approval process for new graduate programs will have to be continued.

It was suggested that we set aside three hours on a Friday for a kind of inhouse retreat (lunch provided). We are hopeful that **Friday February 17, 12 – 3PM** will work for most of you. This meeting will then replace the meeting that is currently scheduled for Thursday, February 16. Please respond to the invite ASAP so that we can be sure that we have a sufficient number of attendees for a quorum. We will announce the location as soon as we have secured the room.

Thank you all!