

# Graduate Council Minutes

## February 22nd, 2024

**Present:** Brenda J. Anderson, Brooke Belise, Kimberly R. Bell, Agnieszka Bialkowska, Lily Blocker, Elizabeth Boon, Susan E. Brennan, Michael Ferdman, David Green, Melissa L. Jordan, Chris B. Kretz, Celia J. Marshik, Jose Alberto Moscoso Nunez, Colleen O'Toole, David A. Rubenstein, Marcia Simon, Kristen E. Shorette, Arleen Steckel, Daniel Waxman, Nancy Strein (Provost's office)

**Absent:** Holly Colognato, Kara Mallory DeSanna, Gianna M. Juliano-Hooper, Brian J. Nucci,

1. Meeting called to order at 1:02pm
2. Approval of the Minutes from 02/08/2024
  - a. Revised attendance.
  - b. Motion to approve with corrections to names. Seconded. Approved unanimously.**
3. Christopher Percival from the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Policy Committee (FRRPC)
  - a. Currently, for undergraduates there is a set of “Minimal Instructional and Student Responsibilities” in the Undergraduate Bulletin, but no analogous document for graduate education
  - b. The FRRPC has accordingly drafted a document that analogously outlines minimal mentorship responsibilities for PhD students
  - c. Comment: Language surrounding “advisors” has many possible edge cases, and is not centrally tracked by the Graduate School throughout a PhD student’s education
    - i. Support is voiced for allowing GPDs to tailor guidelines to their programs
  - d. Q: What is the reasoning for restricting to PhD students, and not, e.g., Masters students pursuing a thesis option?
    - i. A: The FRRPC felt it was the easiest first step to only include PhD students, and would likely be willing to expand to Masters with thesis students, or more broadly roles like “research mentor.”
  - e. General consensus that this would be beneficial as a “normative” document, rather than an “enforceable” one
    - i. Other documents from the Graduate School will address what happens when the mentor-mentee relationship breaks down
    - ii. Notably, in the analogous “Minimal Instructional and Student Responsibilities” in the Undergraduate Bulletin, enforcement mechanisms aren’t laid out
    - iii. Comment: if the document is to be seen as “normative” rather than “enforceable,” this should be made clear wherever the document is distributed

- f. Some reorganization is recommended to consolidate information; in particular responsibilities that are mutually expected of a mentor and mentee may be stated just once
- g. Question from Christopher: What are the next steps recommended by the Graduate Council?
  - i. Motion to ask for revisions, and table discussion until they are returned. Seconded. Approved unanimously.

#### 4. New Business

- a. Proposed update to Graduate Bulletin for Dissertation Committee
  - i. Result of a committee of GPDs redesigning/clarifying dissertation committee requirements
    - 1. In particular, the outside member and chair of the committee
    - 2. The previous policy implied the outside member was somewhat separated from the dissertation work. But often, the outside member is from external collaboration and is closely involved. The new policy reflects flexibility in this respect, with each program establishing consistent rules.
    - 3. Reorganized the document for readability
  - ii. Discussion regarding hybrid defenses
    - 1. The Committee was split on the issue of hybrid defenses, and accordingly did not provide strong language on the topic
    - 2. Proposed language changes to reflect that the attendance requirements are minimal, and that the Graduate School strongly prefers in-person attendance from all participants
  - iii. Comment: Having program-by-program criteria for program affiliates may be cumbersome for degree clearance
  - iv. Comments: The role of affiliates in dissertation committees may influence a program's decisions regarding affiliates, which this policy should be mindful of
    - 1. Simultaneously, there is a concern of committees being formed that lack core faculty in a program
  - v. Motion to table discussion until next meeting. Seconded. Approved unanimously.
- b. Online MBA
  - i. Main change: Originally the program was designated as only part-time and is now changed to allow full-time.
  - ii. In parallel, some curricular changes took place, including fewer core requirements and more elective requirements
  - iii. Motion to approve. Seconded. Approved unanimously.
- c. Dean's Report
  - i. Celia will talk to GPDs, deans, etc. to address longer-term considerations regarding international student recruiters
  - ii. The Graduate School is offering resilience training starting in March

1. This is a 6-week program modeled on NIH programs, and addresses strategies to deal with stress, the difficulties of graduate degrees, how students can advocate for themselves, etc.
  2. Comment: This is a welcome idea. Perhaps it can be further improved by maintaining a notion of “cohorts”
- iii. Graduate School has been doing strategic planning
1. The Graduate School will not do a full strategic plan, in part because it depends on each college’s strategic plans, but are using the outline for goal planning
  2. A draft will be sent to the Graduate Council with a form for feedback, but won’t take meeting time.

5. Motion to adjourn at 2:32pm. Seconded. Approved unanimously.