The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Graduate Council Meeting
Minutes

Friday / October 18, 2024
2:00 p.m. in SSB 201

Members Present:
Mike Anderson, COE*
Maria Pour, COE
Keith Hollingsworth, COE
Wafa Hakim-Orman, COB*
Sophia Marinova, COB
Jodi Price, CAHS*
Dylan Baun, CAHS
Lisa Vangsness, CAHS
Ryan Weber, CAHS
Larry Carey, COS
Haihong Che, COS
Seyed Sadeghi, COS
Louise O'Keefe, CON*
Nilsa Black-Mead, CON
Tracy Lakin, CON
Jeremy Elliott, COEd*
Paul Whitehead, COEd
Jon Hakkila, Chair*
David Moore, Library*
Amy Smith, Registrar*
Suzanne Simpson, OIREA*

Members Absent:
Nicholas Loyd, COE
Xiaotong Li, COB
Lingze Duan, COS*
Lenora Smith, CON (Proxy: Tracy Lakin)
Laura Senn, COEd

Guests:
Susan Knight, Graduate School
Simone Frazier, Graduate School
Michelle Massey, Graduate School
Audrey Jupiter, Graduate School

**Non-Voting Member*

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1. **Introduction of Graduate Council Members / Roll Call**
   A record of new members and attendance was recorded as noted above.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**
   Motion was made by Dr. Dylan Baun to approve the Graduate Council meeting agenda. Motion was seconded by Dr. Lisa Vangsness. Motion carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of September 20, 2024

Motion was made by Dr. Mike Anderson to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 20, 2024. Motion was seconded by Dr. Keith Hollingsworth. Motion carried.

4. Announcement(s)

a. Recent Graduate School Event(s)
   i. 3MT Workshop – September 24
   ii. GA Training Workshop – September 27
   iii. 3MT Competition – October 14
   iv. Dinner with the Graduate Dean – October 15

b. Upcoming Graduate School Event(s)
   i. Graduate School Policies & Procedures Workshop – October 24, 1-3pm, SSB 201
   ii. JUMP Workshop – November 6, 10:30-11:30am, SSB 201

Ms. Simone Frazier and Ms. Michelle Massey provided brief information about the graduate-focused events/topics listed above. A request was made for the Graduate School to communicate the new JUMP requirements to the program coordinators and department chairs. An additional request was made for the Graduate School to provide deadlines for submission of GA letters.

c. NSF GRFP

As a follow up to last month's discussion, Dr. Hakkila explained that the NSF EPSCoR Graduate Fellowship EGFP was completed and submitted by the Graduate School with a request for a total of 15 funded graduate fellowships for UAH. He said the proposal included all of our engineering and science programs with the appeal that UAH is an excellent institution that largely emphasizes STEM.

Dr. Hakkila reiterated that this program enhances graduate education for doctoral students and is open to any student who received an "honorable mention" on a GRFP; it also provides EPSCoR states a chance to bring outstanding students into universities such as UAH that out-of-state students might not normally consider attending. In addition to serving as a marketing tool, this program educates UAH students about these types of funding sources.

5. Curricular Items

a. COB: ACC 613 – Tax Research *(remove pre-req; change instructional method)* ***– Approved***
b. COEd: ED 560 – Current/Emerging Instr Tech *(inactivate)* ***– Approved***
c. COEd: EDL 691 – Instructional Leadership Internship *(change from 3 credits to 1-3 credits)* ***– Approved***
d. CAHS: JUMP PY MA PY – BS Psychology, MS psychology *(JUMP from BS to MS)* ***– Approved***
e. CON: MNRA – Nursing Executive Leadership & Administration *(change program name)* ***– Approved***
f. CON: NUR 525 – Human Sexuality *(inactivate)* ***– Approved***
g. CON: NUS 752 – Informatics & Analytics for Nurse Scientists *(change course focus)* ***– Approved***
h. CON: NUS 754 – Ethical Conduct Legal Research *(change offering to summer term)* ***– Approved***
i. CON: NUS 756 – Application of Theoretical Models *(change offering to summer term)* ***– Approved***
j. CON: NUS 758 – Quantitative Research Methods *(change offering to fall term)* ***– Approved***
k. CON: NUS 762 – Healthcare Policy Underserved Populations *(change offering to fall term)* ***– Approved***
l. CON: NUS 768 – Statistics II *(change offering to spring term)* ***– Approved***
m. CON: NUS 770 – Grant Writing *(change offering to spring term)* ***– Approved***
n. CON: NUS 772 – Qualitative Research Methods *(change offering to spring term)* ***– Approved***
o. CON: NUS 774 – Measurement in Research *(new course)* ***– Approved***
p. CON: NUS 776 – Advanced Research Methods *(change offering to fall term)* ***– Approved***
q. CON: NUS 798 – Competency Assessment *(change offering to spring term)* ***– Approved***

r. CON: PHD NUSC – Nursing Science, PhD *(program changes)* ***– Approved***

6. Graduate Faculty Nominations – For Membership Consideration

a. COE: CAHS: Golding, Jonathon – PhD/Cognitive Psychology *(request to serve on supervisory committee)* ***– Approved***
b. COEd: Walsh, Daniel – EdD/Educational Leadership *(requests to teach graduate courses and serve on supervisory committee)* ***– Approved***
c. COEd: Mann, Davina – MA/Elementary Education *(requests to supervise student research and serve on supervisory committee)* ***– Approved***
d. COS: Lu, Gang – PhD/Space Physics *(request to serve on supervisory committee)* ***– Approved***
e. COS: Hain, Christopher – PhD/Atmospheric Science *(request to serve on supervisory committee)* ***– Approved***
f. CON: Rajendran, Amarabalan – MD *(request to serve as DNP Mentor)* ***– Approved***
g. CON: Shelton, Timothy – MD *(request to serve as DNP Mentor)* ***– Approved***
h. CON: Schiefer, Louisa – DNP *(request to serve as DNP Mentor)* ***– Approved***

7. PhD Progress Reports (follow-up discussion)

Dr. Hakkila continued this dialogue by explaining that he had received a lot of feedback since the last Graduate council meeting, including examples of formats for the progress report, input from UAH administration on what to potentially include on the progress report, and comparison scenarios with other institutions. He also commented on the following bulleted recommendations that were posed for consideration at the last Graduate Council meeting:

- ***The Graduate School will build a Kuali form for Annual Progress Reports:*** *Dr. Hakkila said, "Initially we thought we would evaluate the various report formats during the next year, but the compelling thought is to develop a Kuali form to generate and submit progress reports." Council seemed to agree.*
- ***Reports would be generated every semester, including the semesters in which the student only completes coursework; the report will then also serve to document the progress students make in completing their coursework:*** *Dr. Hakkila suggested that progress reports could be completed fairly frequently, such as each semester. There was feedback from some Council members who felt providing progress reports each semester might not be reasonable.*
- ***Progress reports would document the student's POS and the progress made each semester to complete all requirements of the POS:*** *Dr. Hakkila commented that this was interesting because sometimes there are other requirements that programs stipulate in addition to just coursework, such as a written exam or a service component(s).*
- ***The reports would include documentation of all non-coursework degree requirements and expectations to include exams, service activities, etc.:*** *No comment was made.*
- ***The reports would document a student's graduate assistantship performance****: Dr. Hakkila said, "This is probably especially true for students who are on a research assistantship and are basically doing the same thing in their research assistantship as they are doing in their research."*
- ***The report could allow for a student to complete a self-evaluation:*** *Dr. Hakkila indicated that he had received input from a number of different sources suggesting that students do self-evaluations.*
- ***The report would include the date the supervisory committee is established as well as the dates during which the committee has met:*** *Dr. Hakkila commented that this seemed like something that would serve as a paper trail to ensure the committee meetings occur.*
- ***The report should identify areas of progress to be made and a timeline by which the progress should occur:*** *Dr. Hakkila indicated this would help students know exactly what targets they need to hit as well as when.*
- ***The completed form will route for signatures to the supervisory committee, the program director, the Graduate Dean, and the student:*** *Dr. Mike Anderson commented that students in their first semester do not have a supervisory committee.*

Dr. Hakkila reiterated the following questions that must be addressed in order to confirm policy requirements:

- *What will be the final format of the progress report (e.g., Kuali form, PDF, department choice)?*
- *When should the first progress report be submitted?*
- *When should the supervisory committee be formed (consider related timelines)?*
- *Should the first progress report be submitted in tandem with the student's initial POS?*
- *Will the report include a description of the POS or potentially a field to upload the student's POS?*
- *Who initiates the submission of the progress report?*
- *How often will the report be submitted (annually, bi-annually)?*
- *Will the student submit a self-evaluation as part of the report?*
- *Will the committee and the student be expected to meet and will the meeting be documented in the report?*
- *Will a student be allowed to receive an 'S' in a 799 course if they receive negative feedback on the report?*
- *Is there an institutional expectation on the maximum allowed length of time to complete the PhD? Average of four years?*
- *How do we handle the timeline for degree completion for part-time students?*

Dr. Hakkila also reminded Council that the primary goals of the progress report are to ensure that the student knows what the requirements are and that the advisor knows how to guide the student's progress; meeting these goals will help the department chair assess whether there are issues that should be addressed along the way to degree completion.

A great deal of discussion and comments ensued, including a suggestion to identify common threads to find clarity on what needs to be addressed in the report; finding a middle ground so as not to overburden the process; a suggestion to complete the report annually to allow students one semester to get back on track in the event of problems they might be experiencing; determining whether there is a way to "fail" the report and, if so, identifying what happens; finding the right balance of responsibility for providing feedback in the report so as to remove the pressure from only one faculty member; pinpointing the problem that the progress report is intended to solve; and potential interactions with the university's 10-year rule.

Dr. Hakkila put the discussion on hold by reminding Council of our duty and responsibility to actually graduate students, not to keep them enrolled because we want them to pay tuition. He commented that maintaining our R1 status is not based on the number of PhD student we have enrolled but that it is based on the number of PhD students that graduate.

8. Supervisory Committee Appointments

Dr. Hakkila began the conversation to address the Graduate School policy on the formation of the doctoral supervisory committee. The current policy indicates that the committee members are appointed by the department chair with approval by the Graduate Dean during the review and approval of the student's POS; this policy language is stated as follows:

> *"A supervisory committee is appointed for each student working toward the Ph.D., usually after satisfactory completion of a preliminary examination administered by the major department. The Ph.D. supervisory committee, which is composed of at least five members, shall be appointed by the Department/Program Chair, with approval of the Graduate Dean as part of the POS approval. Committee members shall all have been approved as graduate faculty, with at least half being full members of the graduate faculty and at least half being from the major department/program. The Committee Chair, who oversees the dissertation process, must be a full-time UAH graduate faculty member. If the Research Advisor, who oversees the research project, is not a full member of the UAH graduate faculty, then there must be a separate Committee Chair."*

The current policy language above, which indicates the department chair appoints the supervisory committee, is inconsistent with standard practice as reported by different programs within UAH. Therefore, Graduate Council discussed the following options to determine how the policy might be revised:

- *The student seeks and establishes a faculty research advisor, either from within or outside of the department.*
- *If the advisor is selected from within the department, then that advisor becomes the committee chair.*
- *If the advisor is selected from outside of the department, then the committee chair is selected by the student, or program director, or department chair.*
- *The supervisory committee is selected by the student with approval from the committee chair or department chair.*

The discussion included explanations of different models experienced by Graduate Council members, and the suggestion was made to ensure any wording used to revise the language included consistency of titles across all related documents (advisor, supervisor, department chair, etc.). More discussion to come on this topic.

9. Graduate Council Membership Composition

Dr. Hakkila opened this discussion saying that, for some time, faculty senate has expressed an interest in having a seat in Graduate Council but a potential problem is that, since our membership roster is so small, it could conceivably cause an imbalance. He also mentioned that, although the associate dean members provide a great deal of input, there is no document that says they are supposed to be a part of Graduate Council (albeit ex officio/non-voting).

Further, he said, that brings up the questions of how Graduate Council functions and what makes it work? The current Graduate Council makeup provides for input from administration, faculty, graduate school, the library, the registrar's office, and our SACSCOC liaison, and many of the decisions made in Graduate Council require the need to have these constituents in attendance. Dr. Hakkila also shared that, in the past, he has received some confidential concerns by some members who are hesitant to speak because of the attendance of their college administrators. Another concern with the current roster is that there are programs across campus that do not fit into the membership parameters.

Dr. Hakkila stated that, in addition, even though there is an open invitation to attend the meetings, some faculty continue to feel that there is a lack of communication and transparency. Dr. Hakkila shared that he is always amazed when he hears this because of the many different ways information from Graduate Council is extended, including the regular distribution to all faculty of meeting agendas and minutes, his attendance and willingness to attend executive committee and faculty senate meetings, and our members' efforts to share information with their chairs, faculty, department, and/or colleges at large.

In summation, Dr. Hakkila commented that the conversation about expanding Graduate Council has been going on for a long time. He said that, when considering this change, we need to ensure that the membership is equitable and a place is created for all voices to be heard.

10. For the Good of the Order

Dr. Maria Pour asked about the reason why we will soon not allow students to use both the JUMP program and Form 16. Dr. Hakkila explained that there were students who would take the total number of credits allowed via JUMP; then, they would continue taking graduate courses at the undergraduate tuition price while delaying their graduation because they were not taking any undergraduate courses. They would basically complete two-thirds of a graduate degree before they had even graduated from

their undergraduate studies, which does not provide for enough of a separation from undergraduate status to graduate status.

Ms. Amy Smith added that it was too hard for the Registrar's Office to track the students who were in the JUMP program and also using Form 16. There were also issues with tracking the appropriate tuition and then transferring that information accurately from the Registrar's Office to the Bursar's Office so that students would be charged correctly; she said there were a lot of moving parts and a lot of confusion about what students were actually trying to accomplish.

11. Reminder: Next Graduate Council Meeting – *November 15, 2024, @ 2:00 p.m. in SSB 201*

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

/srk