

**The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Graduate Council Meeting
Minutes**

**Friday / November 15, 2024
2:00 p.m. in SSB 201**

- Members Present:** Mike Anderson, COE*
Maria Pour, COE
Keith Hollingsworth, COE
Nicholas Loyd, COE
Wafa Hakim-Orman, COB*
Xiaotong Li, COB
Jodi Price, CAHS*
Dylan Baun, CAHS
Lisa Vangsness, CAHS
Ryan Weber, CAHS
Lingze Duan, COS*
Larry Carey, COS
Haihong Che, COS
Seyed Sadeghi, COS
Nilsa Black-Mead, CON
Tracy Lakin, CON
Laura Senn, COEd
Jon Hakkila, Chair*
David Moore, Library*
- Members Absent:** Sophia Marinova, COB
Louise O’Keefe, CON*
Lenora Smith, CON (Proxy: Nilsa Black-Mead)
Jeremy Elliott, COEd*
Paul Whitehead, COEd (Proxy: Amanda Aguilar)
Amy Smith, Registrar*
Suzanne Simpson, OIREA*
- Guests:** Jeffrey Weimer, COS
Amber Adcock, Registrar’s Office
Susan Knight, Graduate School
Simone Frazier, Graduate School
Michelle Massey, Graduate School
Joy Werka, International Services

**Non-Voting Member*

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. Lisa Vangness to approve the Graduate Council meeting agenda. Motion was seconded by Dr. Dylan Baun. Motion carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of October 18, 2024

Motion was made by Dr. Nilsa Black-Mead to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 18, 2024. Motion was seconded by Dr. Seyed Sadeghi. Motion carried.

4. Announcement(s)

- a. Recent 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
- b. Upcoming Graduate School Event(s)
N/A

Ms. Simone Frazier and Ms. Michelle Massey provided brief information about the graduate-focused events/topics listed above.

5. Curricular Items

- a. CAHS: CM 514 – Creative Nonfiction Writing (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- b. CAHS: EH 631 – American Literature Since 1865 (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- c. CAHS: EH 680 – 18th Century Studies (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- d. CAHS: HY 650 – Research Methods in History (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- e. CAHS: MA PA – Public Affairs and Policy MA (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- f. CAHS: PSC 500 – The American Polity (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- g. CAHS: PSC 501 – The Public Policy Process (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- h. CAHS: PSC 510 – Public Management Profession (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- i. CAHS: PSC 610 – Public Management Professions (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- j. CAHS: PSC 611 – Public Personnel Administration (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- k. CAHS: PY 506 – Psychology of Women (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- l. CAHS: PY 509 – Psychology of Aging (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- m. CAHS: PY 718 – Advanced Structural Equation Modeling (*course revision*) – **Approved**
- n. CAHS: PY 762 – Performance Measur/Produ Improvement (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- o. COE: CPE 633 – Fault-Tolerant Computing Systems (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- p. COE: CPE 742 – Parallel Process Design (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- q. CON: Nursing PMHNP – Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (*new program*) – **Approved**
- r. CON: NUR 690 – PMHNP/Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner I (*new course*) – **Approved**
- s. CON: NUR 690L – PMHNP Clinical Experience (*new co-requisite lab*) – **Approved**
- t. CON: NUR 691 – PMHNP/Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner II (*new course*) – **Approved**
- u. CON: NUR 691L – PMHNP Clinical Experience (*new co-requisite lab*) – **Approved**
- v. CON: NUR 692 – PMHNP/Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner III (*new course*) – **Approved**
- w. CON: NUR 692L – PMHNP Clinical Experience (*new co-requisite lab*) – **Approved**
- x. CON: NUR 693 – PMHNP/Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner IV (*new course*) – **Approved**
- y. CON: NUR 693L – PMHNP Clinical Experience (*new co-requisite lab*) – **Approved**
- z. COS: BYS 681 – Research Design & Biostatistics (*new course*) – **Approved**

- aa. COS: CS 641 – Data Mining (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- bb. COS: MS CH – Chemistry MS (*program revision*) – **Approved**
- cc. COS: PH 636 – Introduction to Space Plasma Physics (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- dd. COS: PH 674 – General Relativity & Gravitation I (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- ee. COS: PH 731 – Advanced Plasma Theory (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- ff. COS: PH 746 – Non-Linear Optics (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- gg. COS: PH 752 – Quantum Mechanics II (*inactivate*) – **Approved**
- hh. COS: SPA 789 – Selected Topics (*course revision*) – **Withdrawn by Dr. Haihong Che for further discussion at the department level**

6. Graduate Faculty Nominations – For Membership Consideration

- a. CAHS: Krenn, Daniel – PhD/Industrial & Organizational Psychology (*request to teach graduate courses*) – **Approved**
- b. COE: Pape, Patrick – PhD/Computer Science (*request to teach graduate courses*) – **Approved**
- c. COS: Fuller, Kirk – PhD/Physics (*request to serve on supervisory committee*) – **Approved**
- d. COS: Walker, Thomas – PhD/Physics (*request to serve on supervisory committee*) – **Approved**

7. International Student Regulations & Academics

Ms. Joy Werka, Director of International Services at UAH, presented the topic, “International Student Regulations & Academics” (see attached presentation).

Dr. Jeffrey Weimer asked Ms. Werka to clarify the bullet in her presentation that reads:

“Summer is considered a vacation period so that international students can opt to travel outside of the U.S., remain in the U.S. without enrolling in classes, or enroll in any number of courses in the U.S. (traditional or online) as they choose.”

Ms. Werka reiterated that the U.S. government stipulates that students are entitled to an annual vacation period provided they have been enrolled in either the fall/spring consecutive semesters or, if they start during the spring semester, they were enrolled in the entire spring semester; summer enrollment is not mandatory.

Dr. Weimer also asked about potential liability issues if international students are allowed to work in the labs during the summer but are not enrolled. He further asked for clarity on what international students can and cannot do so that no immigration rules that would send them back to their home country are violated.

Ms. Werka stated that, with regards to medical liability issues, international students are required to purchase health insurance for the duration of their studies at UAH, so that they have full medical coverage throughout the calendar year. She also shared her theory that the confusion with these issues often involves the perceived overlap between assistantship funding/stipend offer letters and federal immigration paperwork requirements.

Dr. Lingze Duan expressed concern about international students earning a master’s degree along the way to obtaining their PhD. Ms. Werka explained that this is not be a problem as long as the student does not attempt to earn a master’s degree during the same semester that their PhD is conferred. She continued by saying that the issue is not with the first OPT, because the U.S. government takes the student at ‘face value’ as to which degree they are working on. But, fast forward to the stem extension – if the student receives a science, technology, engineering, or math degree, that student is eligible to apply for a two-year stem extension after their one-year OPT expires. At that point, Ms. Werka said, the U.S. government requires proof that the international student actually earned a stem degree and that proof must present in

the form of the transcript. So, she continued, if the student sends the transcript to U.S. citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and on the transcript it says they are pursuing a master's degree in biology, then USCIS will question which degree the student was working on – the i20 says the student was working on the PhD, but the master's degree was conferred in the same semester as the PhD, which is a violation. Ms. Werka summarized by saying that, in these scenarios, the bottom line to avoiding problems with the U.S. government is for international students not to earn their master's degree during the same semester as they earn their PhD.

Dr. Hakkila also discussed that the Graduate School applies this same logic to domestic students also, because that would not be part of the progression requirements.

8. Department Review of Program Requirements in Catalog (see attached document)

Ms. Michelle Massey kicked off this discussion by asking graduate council members to begin preparation for the catalog rollover by reviewing their respective program pages in the 2024-25 Kuali version of the course catalog, specifically those pages that relate to master's degrees.

Ms. Massey explained that some programs have requirements specifically in terms of the percentage of coursework at the 600- or 700-level that are actually higher than what the overarching graduate programs require, which is 30 percent. In many of these cases, it is not clear whether this type of "extra" percentage requirement exists at the program level, because it is not delineated on the program pages in the catalog.

Dr. Hakkila further explained that during the transition from the paper catalog to the electronic catalog, some important program information was lost, including progressions requirements, so the new Kuali version of the catalog does not necessarily reflect the content from the former paper catalog.

The comment was also made that only substantive changes should go through graduate council for approval prior to making the change(s) in the Kuali catalog. Dr. Larry Carey asked whether the department chair can make the official determination on whether a change should be made; Dr. Hakkila agreed that would be ideal.

Dr. Hakkila asked graduate council members to communicate this information within their departments.

In summary, it was suggested that a training workshop be held on how to make edits to the departmental/program catalog pages in Kuali. The Graduate School will follow up with the Provost's Office to relay the concerns and ideas raised in this meeting with the communications regarding deadlines, those responsible at the department level for making changes to the catalog, and a potential training session.

The next catalog revision will take place in March/April 2025 as directed by Ms. Brenda Youngblood in the Provost's office.

9. For the Good of the Order

- *Dr. Mike Anderson asked for an explanation of the email recently sent by the Graduate School that requested feedback on specific program admissions criteria. Dr. Hakkila explained that the graduate admissions team needs this information, as they are in the process of building out the Slate knowledgebase and want to ensure that the information is accurate at the onset of the Slate launch.*
- *Dr. Jodi Price asked about the graduate timeline with regards to launching Slate, and Dr. Hakkila confirmed that the graduate school launch timeline is the same as the undergraduate launch timeline, namely March 2025. Dr. Hakkila also confirmed that existing applications in Banner will transfer to Slate when it is implemented, and that departments will receive notifications*

throughout the admissions process so that colleges can be more proactive with their admissions communications with prospective students.

- *Dr. Wafa Hakim-Orman asked when the workflows for Slate will be developed to which Dr. Hakkila replied, “over the course of the next four months.”*

10. Reminder: Next Graduate Council Meeting – December 13, 2024, @ 2:00 p.m. in SSB 201

12. Adjourn

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

/srk

International Graduate Student Regulatory Introduction/Refresher

Advising tips to help your F-1 International Students
succeed and maintain their Visa status.

USCIS Full-Time Enrollment Requirements

- International Graduate students **MUST** be enrolled in 9 credit hours each semester.
 - International Graduate students are required to be enrolled in 6 credit hours of face-to-face (traditional) hours every semester.
 - Summer is considered a vacation period so that international students can opt to travel outside of the U.S., remain in the U.S. without enrolling in classes, or enroll in any number of courses **in the U.S.** (traditional or online) as they choose.
 - IF Summer is the **FIRST** term that an international student enrolls at UAH, they are required to abide by the 9 credit hour enrollment rule, and 6 of those 9 credit hours **MUST** be traditional courses.
 - Dissertation/Thesis hours **DO NOT** count towards full-time enrollment requirement during an international student's **FIRST SEMESTER**.
 - Students who require **LESS THAN** 9 credit hours to complete their program in their **FINAL** semester may request a **Reduced Course Load** approval in SEVIS with our office with the support of their academic advisor.
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USCIS Timelines and Forward Progress Rules

- International Students accepted into Professional Master's Programs are allowed 2 years to complete their program.
 - International Students accepted into Thesis Master's Programs are allowed 2.5 years to complete their program.
 - International Students accepted into PhD Programs are allowed 5 years to complete their program.
 - Students who are unable to complete their program within the allotted time outlined on their I-20 may request a **SEVIS Extension** with International Services IF they have a compelling academic or medical reason that necessitates the extension with the support of their academic advisor.
 - International Students must be making forward progress every semester they are enrolled.
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Maintaining Full-Time Enrollment ALL Semester Long

International Students **MAY NOT** withdraw from a course at any point in a semester if this action will cause them to be enrolled in less than 9 credit hours.

International Students **MAY NOT** be enrolled in less than 6 credit hours of face-to face classes every semester.

Full-time enrollment is required by USCIS even if the student is in danger of failing the class or there are not enough face-to-face classes offered that semester.

Advising and course availability are special considerations for international students.

1. What courses will be available as traditional courses vs. online courses?
 2. What pre-requisite courses should be taken and when? (Note: Undergraduate pre-requisite courses and course repeats **DO NOT** count towards the 9 hours of full-time enrollment regulation).
 3. What is the workload each semester?
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Questions?



Graduate Council Meeting
November 15, 2024

Department Reviews of Program Requirements in the Catalog

The Graduate School would like to begin a discussion to address departmental review of **master's** program requirements in the current 2024-2025 Quali Academic Catalog to address any deficiencies in preparation of the publication of the 2025-2026 version of the catalog.

The Graduate School encourages departments to begin reviews of each of their program requirements in the current catalog and address any deficiencies of information. Somehow, only the coursework requirements were transferred when the current version of the catalog was created. Many specific program requirements were not included in the construction of the catalog program pages.

Students have expressed confusion regarding these requirements and new faculty advisors may not be aware of them.

Examples of these details include:

- Percentage of 600-level courses required by the program, which may differ from that of the Graduate School
- Absence of specifications for minor requirements
- Details about comprehensive exam requirements

All departments will receive notification from Academic Affairs in mid-Spring to review their catalog program pages and submit any changes (program proposals) to prepare for the implementation of the 2025-2026 catalog rollover.

We encourage departments to review a copy of the 2023-2024 catalog, which is the last CourseLeaf version of the catalog. Many details of individual program requirements were listed in that version and we ask departments to review those details.