

Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2023

J. O'Brien-Brown, M. Cunningham, S. Bernhard, D. Omerbasic, G. Morris, R. Stivers, B. McFadden, M. Miller, L. Lukkarila, K. Morris, M. McClure, D. Pociask, M. Canuto, D. Lowell, X. Geng, H. Boyd, O. Sabo, K. Andrinopoulos, D. Khismatullin, J. Tasker

1. Meeting called at 8:31
2. Grad Council Meeting Dates for Fall 2023
 - a. October 11
 - b. November 8
 - c. December 13 (if needed)
 - d. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month
 - e. Program proposals and major changes need to be submitted to OGPS by the first Wednesday of the month
3. Overview of Scope and Roles of GC
 - a. Anything the provost has to sign comes to GC first. Major changes in professional programs come to GC, though it's more informational.
4. Approval of May Minutes, motioned by S. Bernhard, seconded by B. McFadden.
5. Announcements
 - a. Orientation updates. New student and new TA orientations went well, were well attended.
 - b. Three Minute Thesis – November 9. Hosted every year, for advanced PhD students. Powerful presentations and a very good opportunity for students.
 - c. Syllabus language updates
 - i. From the CELT website
 - ii. New information about AI within syllabus language
 - iii. EDI, religious accommodations, recordings of class sessions, Title IX and gender-based discrimination, confidential and private resources, emergency preparedness, language is all available
 - iv. Pregnancy.tulane.edu
6. Artificial Intelligence
7. Honor Code Revisions
 - a. Has not been updated since 2007. Working with Vanessa Rodriguez to adapt the code and to update the methods for calling committees and the general processes.
 - b. Our understanding is that it needs to go to the schools first before it can go out to GC, but we plan to change it to be reviewed by GC in the future.
8. PhD reviews
 - a. SSE departments under review. We're trying to schedule the visit for late January

9. Legal issues in graduate admissions, presented by Howard Boyd
 - a. SCOTUS case on using race in admissions
 - i. Prior to the ruling, schools were permitted to use race in the admissions process as part of their review
 - ii. Need to be able to point to legitimate, non-discriminatory reasons for choices that we make regarding admissions or other decisions
 - iii. A student's race cannot be a basis for an admissions decision
 - iv. Universities can consider an applicant's discussion of how race or other attributes has impacted their life
 - v. Race-neutral alternatives are allowed
 - vi. The SCOTUS decision does not change our commitment to diversity
 - vii. Targeted outreach to students of protected classes is permitted (ie, using the McNair Scholars list). In employment matters, we are required to monitor the diversity of our workforce and we are allowed to set goals, though we don't hire or fire based on race. This can be an analogous situation.
 - viii. Practical compliance steps:
 1. Have, and document, legitimate, non-discriminatory educational reasons for your decisions. Document the reasons for all decisions. Real-time information is very important in the record.
 2. Noting race as a "tie-breaker" is not permitted
 3. Race and ethnicity is collected in Slate but is not made readily apparent in the application for reviewers to see. Review form is allowing reviewers to choose reasons to admit or deny from drop down menu
 4. Some awards/funding is based on NSF/NIH definitions of underrepresented race. There's a method called "pool and match" where everyone who is eligible for scholarships that are not race-dependent, you can then match people to the appropriate funds (Need to speak about SREB fund)
 - b. Foreign Influence Screening Act (Act 767)
 - i. We are screening all people who will be hired in research positions, including new PhD students
 - ii. This will add an extra time-burden to the admission process, so we advise departments to make decisions as soon as possible.
10. Meeting adjourned at 9:44 by J. Tasker, seconded by B. McFadden