

## Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2019

**J. Jayawickramarajah, J. Ruscher, D. Blake, G. Morris, M. Cunningham, J. O'Brien, L. Pratt, D. Dukas, L. Dornier, E. Fee, B. Mohan, A. Childress, V. John, S. Hassig, M. Zender**

1. Meeting called at 8:30
2. Approval of May Minutes, G. Morris approved, J. Ruscher seconded. All approved.
3. Grad Council Meeting Dates for Fall 2019
  - o October 2
  - o November 13
  - o December 11
4. Announcements
  - a. As of August 30, there were 1750 new graduate and professional students
    - i. We can break down by school for the 11/13 meeting
    - ii. Masters students are the largest part of that
    - iii. Some students don't register until later in the summer/fall to avoid fees
  - b. Three Minute Thesis November 7, 10:30 am
    - i. Fifth year of 3MT at Tulane
    - ii. Competition for advanced PhD students to present their research
    - iii. Grand prize winner from Tulane goes to Conference of Southern Graduate Schools to compete (last year, the Tulane student won!)
    - iv. Usually ten students compete
    - v. We prioritize students in the last year of their PhD. Students earlier in their career are welcome to attend – it helps them prepare. Masters and undergraduates are welcome to attend to see the kind of research being done at the doctoral level.
    - vi. Time commitment is variable. There is a coaching session with Ashley Nelson of the FSB which is 3 hours long. Successful students spend a lot of time on their own to polish their presentations
  - c. Fall workshops have been scheduled, posted
    - i. These are in addition to one on one meetings with students
    - ii. We've added sessions downtown, in part due to a student's involvement
    - iii. Fall workshops typically focus on academic careers, spring workshops focus on non-academic career
    - iv. Most professional students have career support within their programs
5. Introductions
  - a. Graduate Council's mission and scope

- i. We don't have a graduate school so we are an approval group/advisor to the provost for graduate education issues
    - ii. We approve new PhDs, new research based masters programs, major changes to professional school programs
  - b. GC Representatives responsibilities
    - i. You're representing your school and need to take information back
    - ii. This information is meant to be shared
    - iii. Minutes are posted after they are approved
  - c. Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies mission and scope
    - i. OGPS has been moving recently, so email and phone are best ways to contact us
    - ii. We also oversee postdocs. They can only be here for 5 years before they would need to be moved to being staff scientists
    - iii. We are a member of the National Postdoc Association
- 6. Vice Chair of Graduate Council
  - a. Vice chair chairs meetings if Mike is unavailable and takes notes on discussions during PhD reviews
  - b. Any grad council member can call a meeting (reach out to us and we can help organize)
  - c. G. Morris was nominated by S. Hassig, seconded by J. Ruscher, all in favor
- 7. BMS Program proposal – MS in Bioethics and Medical Humanities
  - a. Has already been approved by the BMS steering committee
  - b. Has there been a market survey? Parthenon Report in 2018 covered this, and a pro forma has been developed and submitted
  - c. There are 39 similar programs in the US, but none in the Gulf South
  - d. Program has a variety of audiences, could be for medical students and postgraduates. Could be for teachers, scholarly researchers, people planning to sit on IRBs and other review boards. GC would like to see a note that there should be a recognition of the working lives of clinicians and laboratory researchers.
  - e. Dr. Dukas developed and ran a program at Louisville and took lessons from that experience.
  - f. There will be live video conferencing for remote participation
  - g. J. Ruscher moved to approve, seconded by G. Morris, all in favor
- 8. Unified Handbook
  - a. Each of the schools have a handbook, but we didn't have a unified handbook
  - b. The only section that's not settled is the dissertation archival policy/website
  - c. We will talk next month about general tenure/time to degree for masters students that can be included in the handbook

- d. Leaves don't count against the tenure. However, make sure that Student Affairs is involved in any leaves being taken – we should not be involved in the reasons a student is leaving. They will also make sure that students are ready to return.
  - e. Make sure that student affairs information is in the handbook. Med School has their own people, but the Uptown Student Affairs supervise all of them.
  - f. This handbook should be linked to on schools' webpages
  - g. Would make sense for the schools' handbooks to be only about school specific policies
  - h. We'll vote on it in November for it to be effective in Fall 2020
9. PhD Reviews schedule
- a. Cycle is starting again, with BME, Chem, CBE, EENS, Math, and Physics
  - b. All departments have been notified, self-studies are due November 1.
  - c. We've been working out the committee and have identified a chair (who must be a graduate dean). We like reviewers from peers and aspirant institutions
  - d. First time we've done PhD reviews under Provost Forman. The reviews are formative, looking for recommendations
  - e. Reviews happen in the spring, have not set those dates yet. The reviews are over the course of two days, then reviewers send us a report which we summarize
  - f. This is a way to open discussions. Self-studies are about who departments are, not a request for resources, etc.
  - g. Post graduate history is very important
  - h. AAU provosts have put out a decree that they want PhD statistics to be public
10. Third year PhD "reorientation" subjects
- a. Students often need a refresher on a variety of subjects at the third year
  - b. Practical issues, such as insurance and health center fees
  - c. Practical issues need to be resolved a bit earlier than the beginning of the third year so perhaps end of the second year is better?
11. Annual review of graduate students
- a. Reminder that all students should be reviewed at least once a year. This should be formal, individual, recorded, and filed.
  - b. Should get at least a pass, high pass, or needs improvement assessment. This should be done in a timely fashion, students should find out at the end of a semester/year
  - c. Forms that each advisor should use every year, signed by the student
12. Grad Student/Postdoc unionization talking points
- a. We got a message from General Counsel that there's a discussion of unionization by students and postdocs at Tulane. We'll send the PowerPoint out.
  - b. It talks about who is and isn't an employee within the university (which includes TAs and students compensated by research grants)

- c. Administrators, department chairs, etc, are not considered employees for unionization purposes
  - d. NLRB gave students the right to unionize a few years ago, and they have every right to talk about it
  - e. We can talk about our experiences and give facts, what has happened at other universities, but we cannot threaten students over the unionization or interrogate them over participation
    - i. We can't say "I don't speak for the university but my personal opinion is..." that is legally very similar to speaking for the university
  - f. For it to get to a vote, a significant part of the population must express interest in a unionization vote. Then, a majority of those voting (even if that is not a substantial number of the students) can vote for or against unionization
    - i. Louisiana is a right to work state, so students can't be obliged to pay dues, but union rules will apply to them
    - ii. We can say that it is important for students to vote, particularly if they have any opinions about this
  - g. It has never gotten to a vote at Tulane before, though it has been discussed for a few years
  - h. If they vote to have a vote on a union, and then vote for a union, it would go to General Counsel and the Board of Administrators
    - i. At Duke, they didn't get a union, but stipends and health insurance did simultaneously go up
    - ii. If students unionize, then all students are represented by the union. Whether they would be willing to accept differing stipend levels would be something that they would have to decide
13. New programs for international students
- a. For international students to apply to a program, it must be approved by DHS
  - b. DHS has been very slow to approve programs and visas for students and scholars
  - c. Our overall number of international students has stayed fairly steady
14. If students have issues, students should be able to report to a grievance committee within their school or department
- a. Additionally, if students need to report, they can go to [Tulane.edu/concerns](http://Tulane.edu/concerns)
  - b. How do students report if they're having a problem with their mentors?  
[Tulane.edu/concerns](http://Tulane.edu/concerns) can help point students in the right direction.
  - c. Faculty can also report concerns about students through that
  - d. Some of these questions would be good to address at a reorientation
15. Meeting adjourned at 9:50, motioned by D. Blake, seconded by J. Ruscher.