

Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2021

M. Cunningham, J. O'Brien-Brown, M. Wallace, A. Reusch, G. Morris, L. Lukkarila, T. Fee, K. Tsubaki, B. Mohan, M. Miller, M. Adams, F. Wietfeldt, M. Canuto, K. Andrinopoulos, J. Jayawickramarajah, J. Clarke, D. Blake

1. Meeting called at 8:33
2. Introductions
3. Approval of May Minutes, motioned by F. Wietfeldt, seconded by G. Morris, all in favor.
4. Grad Council Meeting Dates for Fall 2021
 - a. October 13
 - b. November 10
 - c. December 8
5. Announcements
 - a. OGPS members – Briana and Jennifer are full time and located in Jones Hall, Lauren and Mike are half-time, located in Richardson and Gibson respectively.
 - b. Graduate Council scope and expectations
 - i. Graduate education at Tulane is very decentralized
 - ii. Graduate Council has oversight over graduate programs and curriculum changes need to come to GC
 - iii. We do not have oversight over professional programs, but if there is a major change, notifications come to us. One big reason is to make sure we're not duplicating programs and to advise the provost
 - iv. Major curriculum changes in professional programs need to be approved by GC
 - v. We are the main advisors for the Provost on graduate/professional affairs
 - vi. This provides faculty oversight of graduate affairs for SACS purposes
 - vii. Membership on GC is based on student population
 - c. Grad student enrollments at Tulane. Overall graduate and professional students made up roughly 41% of the student body
 - i. Almost 65% of new grad students are at the master's level
 - ii. We are more diverse at the graduate/prof level than the undergrad
 - iii. OGPS also supports postdocs and pre-docs (pre-docs are in fields that have a terminal degree at the master's level, such as an MFA or M. Arch)
 - iv. OGPS provides professional development, small travel grants, listservs
 - v. We have worked with offices like Student Affairs to specify that if something goes to all students say "undergrad, grad, and professional" etc.

- vi. Has the graduate population gotten more diverse? We can only speak readily to the PhD population, but we have gone from 17% students of color to 25% students of color
 - d. OGPS Workshops for Fall 2021 – see follow up email for details; registration through Canvas.
 - i. We'll be offering a lot of workshops for the fall
 - ii. Some changes due to Hurricane Ida both in dates and modality. Zoom does seem to be better attended. Some will be pre-recorded workshops so that students can access them in spite of the disruption of the hurricane
 - iii. Focused on academic and career topics
 - iv. 9/23 Tulane's diplomat in residence will hold an information session by zoom.
 - v. Lots of two-part workshops for careers. First part will be more informational/instructional, second part is optional to work together to create those documents
 - vi. All academic workshops will be in the evening so that students can attend (this is an experiment to see what works best)
 - vii. These are generally not recorded because of students' discussion and privacy needs. Some students are nervous about getting advice outside of the department.
 - viii. These are meant for OGPS served students
 - ix. Students can make one on one appointments if they can't attend a session
 - e. Three Minute Thesis competition – for PhD students in their final one or two years. Tues, Nov. 16, 3 PM. Kendall-Cram Lecture Hall, LBC. Interested students should email Briana Mohan at bmohan@tulane.edu. It is a judged competition and is an opportunity for students to present their research to an audience. More details will be forthcoming.
 - i. Winner gets sponsored by OGPS to go to CSGS to compete in the regional 3MT competition in the spring
 - ii. The winner from that meeting go on to the CGS meeting
 - iii. Register with Briana in advance – the deadline will be in October and will be disseminated
 - iv. The LA Deans have been trying to hold a statewide competition to let legislators see what graduate education looks like
 - v. Students who compete get a lot of practice in presenting their research
 - vi. Good pedagogical tool
 - f. This year's CGS meeting will be in New Orleans in December. Typically is an international meeting. The last two years have been virtual, but we're trying to be back in person.
6. PhD Reviews

- a. Scheduled for 2021-22. Updates to self-studies are due later this fall, reviewers will come in the spring. Departments have all been notified.
 - b. Departments being reviewed: Biomedical Engineering, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Studies, Math, and Physics
 - c. Not punitive, but rather formative. This is a good opportunity to communicate about the good being done in programs
 - d. Reviews also help us assess needs – our full time career advisor came out of this, and our new program coordinator is also part of this to create more programming for our students
 - e. PhD reviewers will come to a GC meeting, write a report about the programs, and then GC will write a summary report to the provost
7. OGPS communications with graduate and professional students via Canvas, newsletter, listservs
- a. Canvas is for OGPS supported students
 - b. Newsletter is broader, includes faculty and staff as well
 - c. Weekly announcements through Canvas
 - d. Listserv is broader, and can reach all graduate and professional students, its use is generally in conjunction with Student Affairs, Campus Health, etc
 - e. Students must check Tulane email addresses, can opt-out of some messaging
 - f. Students weren't always aware of the fact that communications applied to them (we had some issues with remote students not realizing that they had to report covid vaccination status)
8. COVID protocols are continuing. Testing will continue, wastewater testing will continue
9. Announcement: SPHTM to offer MHA in new modality
- a. MHA already has an in-person master's program and they want to offer an online version. Had to be approved by school, dean, provost. Typically, we would have had this announcement before it went to the provost, but because this went through during the summer, it was approved in advance
10. Vote: Remote meetings for dissertation and master's thesis defenses
- a. All faculty members are eligible to vote
 - b. COVID changes that we would like to make permanent
 - c. Motion to allow PhD dissertation and master's thesis proposal and defenses to be conducted virtually, whether for COVID or other practical reasons. This is to allow students and faculty the option to go virtual, but departments can still create a more restrictive policy to require in-person presentations. Moved by T. Fee, seconded by M. Wallace. All in favor.
11. Vote: Use of Adobe Sign for dissertation and master's thesis cover pages

- a. Want to permit the use of Adobe Sign for forms and cover pages. We still require that hard copies must be submitted to the university archives, but actual signatures can be challenging.
 - b. Certified signature versus an image of the signature? If this policy passes, we will make Adobe Sign available for everyone to use their system. Will students have access? They don't currently have access to most of the Adobe suite, and they would need it if they are the ones to send out the documents. Motion to approve from F. Wietfeldt, seconded by G. Morris. All in favor.
 - c. Policy will go into effect immediately and be available for December graduates.
12. Vice chair of GC election
- a. Must be a faculty member. Often leads the discussion of the PhD review and writes a one-page synopsis of the reviews
 - b. Nomination of Gil Morris accepted. D. Blake nominated, F. Wietfeldt seconded, all in favor.
13. Meeting adjourned at 9:40 moved by M. Adams, seconded by F. Wietfeldt