

**Minutes of the Graduate Council Meeting  
Wednesday, February 13, 2013**

**Present:** Tom Albrecht Cooper Battle, Tysheena Charles, Faycal Falaky, Heather Frost, Brian Mitchell, Gil Morris, Mike Mislove, Leann Myers, and Greg Oldham.

**Absent:** Jim Alm, Hank Ashbaugh, Michael Bernstein, Diane Blake, Holly Flora, Frank Jones, Laura Levy, and Stacy Overstreet.

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Brian Mitchell, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research and Acting Chair of the Graduate Council.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from November 14, 2012 were unanimously approved.

**2. PhD Programs & Promotion**

OGPS is responsible for promoting graduate education at Tulane. It has created PhD Program brochures, which can be found on the OGPS website. These can be used in recruitment fairs. Please contact Ashley Robison to request copies. OGPS has also created individual program pages with QR codes. The departments have copies of these and they are available for download here:

<https://www.box.com/s/p8oke7xtt76s6iy85qi4>

**3. Thesis & Dissertation Policy**

The Theses and Dissertation Archive policy was developed by OGPS upon the recommendation of the Office of Research, the library, and was coordinated through the schools. Students must submit the official electronic copy of their thesis or dissertation to Tulane and may do so online: <http://thesis.tulane.edu/>

Make info accessible through the website; students can still submit to ProQuest as well.

There is a space for an “embargo period” available in the event the student does not want their thesis or dissertation released until a specified period (in the meantime, the abstract is available). This is useful for those waiting on the development of patents, copyrights, etc. The embargo period is currently set at 6 & 12 months, but can be adjusted in the future.

Students do not have to release copyright ownership to Tulane; they can file for their own copyright through the Library of Congress and allow Tulane to use the document through a transfer

A motion was made by L. Myers to move the effective date to July 1<sup>st</sup> 2013; this addresses concerns for students who have not been creating their theses digitally and to

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accommodate the short notice of this change in policy. We will encourage students to use it for this May 2013 graduation period if they can.

Revisions: The Policy Effective date has been modified to July 1, 2013. Typographical changes include: removing quotations around “official” and making the “imposing additional thesis and dissertation archiving” to read “imposing additional thesis or dissertation archiving” for consistency with “of the thesis or dissertation to other digital repositories.”

The Digital Thesis and Dissertation Policy was unanimously approved as amended.

#### **4. Student Health Subsidy Policy:**

An additional clarification was added to the draft policy to read “individual university health care plan” to provide clarity that we are subsidizing the minimum university policy for the student (currently \$500 per semester).

**What is the goal of this policy?** It is to have something written in place to get the student health policy started. This policy can be reviewed and amended annually. Based on the current health insurance policies, the earliest changes could go into effect would be the 2014-15 academic year.

The School of Public Health expressed concern because they do not guarantee full financial support for TAs; TAs do not necessarily receive tuition waivers. RAs are being funded continually (but they do not receive a health insurance subsidy); RAs are grant funded and those grants could theoretically fund the health insurance subsidy for them. SPHTM does not consistently offer TA positions each semester, so the departments would have to cover insurance for the semesters that the student is employed as a TA.

In light of this subsidy, departments and schools need to have a conversation with the Provost to figure out how the subsidy will get factored into their budgets.

In paragraph 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> to last line: “proof of insurance,” G. Oldham asked why we are excluding students who are paying individual health care costs. Is it possible for them to be offered a grant to help offset the costs? Then it’d be more equitable towards all students. In the past, payments were provided to students who would drop out of their coverage after having received a waiver for their insurance costs.

Tulane currently has a fixed waiver process: you have to show you have coverage in order to opt out of the university’s insurance plan. Approximately 30-40% of graduate students are on the healthcare plan. There are tiers of coverage that provide of individual, individual + spouse, and individual + family, but no other tiers. The current plan is separate from the faculty and staff plan, but the undergraduate and graduate student populations are listed on the same plan. A majority of undergraduate students

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are on their parent's insurance plans.

- Affordable Health Care Act will provide coverage for students up to 26 now; what happens when students are suddenly no longer covered under their parents account.
- Providing for the remaining percentage could become cost prohibitive for departments.
- Are there tax implications? If you give them a healthcare subsidy, would they be taxed on it.
- Under health subsidy: "For students who get hired to teach, part-time, and we are receiving federal input as to when they should be receiving benefits. "
- It is a relatively small plan because of the small number of participants; the more participants, the higher the cost of the insurance policy.
  - A higher subsidy would increase the number of students on Tulane's policy.

C. Battle suggested covering the mandatory health center fees (approximately \$700; \$350 per semester) in lieu of offering a 50% insurance subsidy. This subsidy could be applied to all stipend students (or for equitability: all students). This could be useful if you're trying to be equitable and balanced for ALL students; however, H. Frost suggested that if the university is trying to increase students on the Tulane health insurance plan, this may result in students finding less expensive insurance elsewhere.

We have two meetings to finalize the policy before the effective date of July 1<sup>st</sup>—the student health insurance subsidy policy will be tabled until the next meeting.

#### **5. PhD Program Review:**

The PhD External Review Team will meet with the Graduate Council in a special meeting on Monday, March 4. This is not a regular business meeting of the Graduate Council; rather, it is an opportunity for the Graduate Council to provide input into the review process.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 a.m.