

**MINUTES  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES COUNCIL  
FOR RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES**

MEETING: February 1, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: D. Baker, F. Botelho, R. Cohen, A. Daily, E. Delavega, S. Fleming, E. Groenendyk, J. Lariscy, J. McCutcheon, A. Mickelson, C. Powell, T. Roche, D. Ruggiero, C. Santo, J. Scraba, X. Shen, O. Skalli, J. Topinka, M. Trapp

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

PROXIES: none

**Announcements**

Dr. Kreuz reported on the following topics:

**1. Spring '21 graduate enrollment.** As of February 1, the overall university headcount for the spring, year over year, was essentially flat (+0.8%). However, freshman enrollment was down 10%, and sophomores are down by 5%. Graduate enrollment was the bright spot: it was up by nearly 24% (or about 520 students). International graduate student enrollment was down only 1-2%, compared to a drop of about 30% nationally.

The loss of nearly 300 underclassmen will cost the university about \$3 million a year for each of the next several years. Dormitory usage was down 13% in the fall, and now it is now down 33%. This is one reason why the university is encouraging on ground classes for undergraduates: students who are more engaged are less likely to drop out.

**2. VanVleet.** On January 11, Lakesha Herring informed us that, due to limited funds, the Van Vleet fellowship will not be available this semester.

**3. Jennifer Beech.** Last week, at the College Directors meeting, it was announced that Jennifer Beech, the graduate graduation analyst who has been with us since 2017, is leaving the university for another position, within the month. James Kierulff will be filling in until the Graduate School can fill the position.

Also, **Mary Jones**, an undergraduate graduation analyst in our College who worked in Scates for many years, passed away in early December.

**Rob Marczynski**, who was the College's director of interdisciplinary programs and prelaw advisor, is transitioning away from the university this spring. Dean Parrill has elected to leave this position unfilled for now, and Rob's responsibilities have been "adopted" by other departments and units.

In addition, two of the career development specialists assigned to our College have resigned to take positions elsewhere. They worked with undergraduates to prepare them for the job market, so even though Council members may not have had much contact with them, Dr. Kreuz thought the council should know about who has departed:

**Jamel Major**, who worked with students in the humanities and the College of Communication and Fine Arts, joined the College in 2018 and left in September.

**Jada Meeks**, who joined the College in 2017 and who worked with STEM students in Arts & Sciences and the Engineering College, informed us of her departure earlier this month.

We still have **Kim Brown**, who works with the social sciences and who joined us in 2018.

Given the current financial state of the university, we don't know how quickly, or even if, these career specialist positions will be refilled. The Provost's primary focus will be to reestablish tenure-track lines that were eliminated during our current financial hardships.

**4. GA budgets for '21-'22.** Dean Poston hasn't gotten the GA budget for '21-'22 yet. She hopes to be able to make an announcement at our meeting at the University Graduate Council meeting at the end of the week, after she's met with the Provost. However, she's not expecting any major changes at the doctoral level. Feel free to go ahead and make offers of assistantships for now, and hopefully Dr. Kreuz can update you on Friday.

**5. Graduate Student Spotlight webpage.** The Graduate School is soliciting stories about students and their work. Since this can be a useful recruiting tool, and costs us nothing, please encourage your students to self-nominate using the form link to the web link in the agenda.

## **Agenda**

**1. Approval of the minutes for the October 26<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.** The last meeting was devoted entirely to the approval of curricular revisions. No Council members offered any additions or corrections. Dr. Cohen motioned to approve the minutes. Dr. Santo seconded the motion.

**2. Report from the January 22<sup>nd</sup> UCGS curricular review meeting.** Dr. Kreuz reported that the College's curricular revisions were passed unanimously at our meeting. The only feedback the College received came from Joanne Gikas, the associate dean in the College of Professional and Liberal Studies. She would like it if more of our College's doctoral classes could be held in the evening, so that more students in her college, who often have full-time jobs, could take them.

Mary Kyle will make updates to the online catalog over the next few weeks, and Dr. Kreuz said he would alert the Council members when she's finished so that they can check to make sure all changes were entered.

### **3. Report from the January 27<sup>th</sup> College Directors meeting.**

**a) Recruitment: "How did you hear about us?" (attachment 2).** Anna Grisham pulled these numbers from the UniCAS Cycle 3 application data. Over half of our applicants report finding out about us via our website(s). This underscores the importance of keeping the departmental sites up to date, and possibly adding more information that would be useful to prospective students. Debra Turner in the College office is always ready to provide assistance and make edits or additions to your sites.

**b) ABM language (attachment 3).** In early December, Dr. Kreuz sent out a draft from the University Undergraduate Council concerning language about the accelerated bachelors-masters (ABM) program that they were proposing adding to the catalog. The goal was to make sure that they would meet SAC standards. (This has been an issue elsewhere.)

Dr. Kreuz noted that a couple Council members sent him strongly-worded objections to the proposal. The concern was that a requirement for a detailed program of study doesn't really work for many graduate programs outside of professional degrees. He forwarded your concerns to Dr. Carol Danehower, who asked for feedback in mid-December. (Dr. Danehower is the coordinator of the university undergraduate curriculum.) This was effective, because the new version, labeled as attachment 3, is much less prescriptive. In fact, all it says about programs of study is that:

*Departments determine which graduate courses are appropriate substitutes for undergraduate major requirements, given program learning objectives.*

**c) Graduate School task forces.** Dr. Kreuz gave the Council members a heads up about a number of issues that the Graduate School will be working on this term, via several ongoing and new task forces. These groups are composed of college directors and, in some cases, elected members of the Graduate Council:

**(1) transfer/shared credit.** Roger Meier, the college director for Engineering, is leading a group looking at these issues. He expects to have a proposal to circulate in March.

**(2) expired course grade removal from cumulative GPA.** Dr. Kierulff group is looking at this issue. One idea being discussed is grade forgiveness for graduate students who perform poorly in one discipline and change to a different one. Their earlier grades can have a major adverse effect on their GPA and staying off probation or being eligible for funding.

**(3) admission letters language.** The associate dean in the Graduate School, Brian Meredith, will lead a group to review the language in the letters sent out by the Graduate School.

**(4) three-year bachelor's degree policies (Kierulff).** Dr. Kreuz reported that the Graduate School doesn't currently accept students with a 3-year bachelor's unless it's been evaluated by WES (World Education Services), which costs ~\$200. This may be prohibitive for some applicants. This group will see if our acceptance policies can be modified so that evaluation by WES isn't required. For example, there may be other, cheaper alternatives.

**(5) retention and termination (Poston).** Dean Poston will lead a group that will make recommendations for uniform policies across colleges. Right now, they're not consistent, and this puts the university at a disadvantage when students claim bias or discrimination and choose to contest or litigate when they've been terminated.

Latosha Dexter, the deputy university counsel, will be part of the group. Dr. Kreuz reported that he will be serving in this group, as will Dr. Paul Simone, a former member of the Council and now chair of Chemistry, who is and also the natural science representative on the University Council. The College will be well represented for this important policy discussion.

**d) faculty search committee policy changes.** Tiffany Baker Cox, the director and chief compliance officer of OIE (the Office for Institutional Equity), is putting a number of new policies in place. (She started last March, so probably most Council members have ever met her.) She'll be sending out documentation on this, but Dr. Kreuz hasn't gotten it yet. It should be widely distributed when it is released. Here are the major policy changes:

(1) All faculty and staff search committee members will need to attend a training session before serving. This applies to both current and future search committees. I've been through the training, and it takes about 75 minutes.

(2) Initial search committee meetings must now include a representative from IOE or HR.

(3) For candidate review, a rubric should be developed, based on content in the position posting. Each committee members should score the candidates individually, before the review meeting.

(4) Search committees should not have only one untenured faculty member. Tiffany believes that this leaves the junior faculty member open to pressure from senior committee members or possible retaliation.

(5) Records generated by search committees must be maintained for five years. Paper records can be scanned to reduce the bulk and storage issues arising for maintaining these files.

As with retention and termination, these policies are designed to ensure that we comply with federal and university guidelines.

**Spread the word.** Dr. Kreuz emphasized the importance of Council members meeting with their chairs on a regular basis to keep them apprised of what is happening at the Graduate School. Ms. Tardugno and Dr. Kreuz often deal with situations in which chairs or faculty aren't aware of changes in policy or personnel changes, so he asked the Council to help us to get the word out. Council members should feel free to share the minutes from our meetings with any other interested parties.

Adjournment: Dr. D. Ruggiero moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:57 pm. Dr. T. Roche has seconded the motion.

*Prepared by T. Tardugno from notes provided by R. Kreuz*