

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

MEETING: January 29, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: T. Brewster, S. Brown, E. Choi, A. Daily, E. Delavega, D. Downey, W. Duffy, J. Lariscy, T. Maclin, J. McCutcheon, A. Mickelson, E. Nelson, H. Sable, K. Saghafi, C. Santo, F. Vivar, T. Watson, B. Zheng

MEMBERS ABSENT: E. Groenendyk, S. Pollard, V. Rus

PROXIES: Dursun Peksen (POLS for E. Groenendyk)

PRESIDING: R. Kreuz

Introduction of three new Council members:

Computer Science: Tom Watson for Deepak Venugopal, who has a teaching schedule conflict.

Philosophy: Kas Saghafi replacing Mary Beth Mader as Director of Graduate Studies.

Physics: Shawn Pollard filling in for Xiao Shen, who is on PDA during Spring 24.

1. Approval of the minutes from the November 27, 2023 Council meeting

H. Sable made a motion to approve the minutes. T. Brewster seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

2. Report from the December 1 UCGS and January 25 College Director meetings

a) Approval of CAS curriculum changes

R. Kreuz presented the CAS curriculum changes at the December 1 UCGS meeting: all were approved. The new catalog is tentatively scheduled to be released on March 1.

Dean Tollefsen is encouraging units to start thinking about catalog revisions no later than April so that they can be voted on by departments before the end of the spring term, and then submitted via Curriculog in the early fall.

b) Health insurance update

For the 2024-25 academic year, insurance will be required for all full-time students, with the cost being split 50/50 by the units hiring the GA and a central pool. Starting in Fall 2025, the cost of the subsidy will be the responsibility of the unit hiring the GA.

On November 14, Dean Parrill informed the chairs and directors that her intention is to have the college cover the entire portion of the subsidy, as opposed to having the units cover any part of it. Currently unknown how much this will cost, and where the funding will come from.

There is no new funding source, so the cost will be made up from IDCR, and/or faculty salary lapse, and/or the faculty research grant program, and/or vacant faculty lines. The goal is to eventually have this expense base budgeted, which will protect it from year-to-year variations in IDCR (or years in which there is little or no faculty turnover).

Student who opt-in to the Wellfleet program will be charged a one-time \$230 enrollment fee.

Offer letter templates are being updated to include explanation of insurance and will be posted to the Graduate School's website. Departments will be contacted once they are ready and are strongly encouraged to use them in making offers to program applicants.

c) Students on probation: data and improvement

Ryan Crews reported that there were 338 graduate students on probation across the entire college at the end of the fall term, which is a YOY improvement from 486 in Fall 22. 144 international grad students were on probation at the end of Fall 23, down from 274 in Fall 22.

d) Definition of a "full-time" graduate student

The definition of this term has taken on new importance since full-time GAs will be required to have health insurance of some sort. Full-time is being defined as students with a 20-hour GA contract (or contracts that add to 20 hours). It also includes late-stage student who may be taking only one credit hour.

Graduate assistantships cover tuition and fees and provide the student with a stipend. The graduate school's recommendation is that a stipend pays at least \$15 per hour, which is considered a living wage (this works out to at least \$1,200 per month).

3. Recruiting events

The College is sending graduate coordinators to three recruiting events this semester:

- a) Four CAS faculty members will attend the Morehouse College Career and Graduate School Fair, to be held on February 6. Andy Daily (History) will represent the humanities, Davia Downey (Urban Affairs) and Elena Delavega

(Social Work) will represent the social sciences, and Bentuo Zheng (Mathematics) will represent the natural sciences.

- b) Two CAS faculty members will attend the Ole Miss graduate fair to be held on March 5: Andy Daily (History) for the humanities and Bentuo Zheng (Mathematics) for the natural sciences. Brian Meredith and Lynda Feenaughty (Communication Sciences and Disorders) will also attend.
- c) Three CAS faculty members are attending NCUR in Long Beach CA, which runs from April 8 to 10: Andy Daily (History) will represent the humanities, Tim Brewster (Chemistry) will represent the natural sciences, and Helen Sable (Psychology) will represent the social sciences.

Please send recruitment flyers for distribution to your division representative soon; the Morehouse event is just nine days away. A simple method would be to create a QR code that prospective applicants can scan with their phones. If your department does not have a dedicated landing page on their website for prospective students, now is the time to develop one.

4. Competitor / assistantship information request

At the January 9 chairs and directors meeting, Dean Parrill revealed the College's strategic plan and action items for the chairs. As part of Goal 7 (Generate and Steward Financial Resources), our action item is:

“CAS will develop a systemic plan to increase graduate assistantship funding to be competitive with other R1 institutions. This plan should include establishing minimum stipend levels by discipline based on review of peer institution assistantship data, with a phased implementation to balance negative impacts on enrollment against positive impacts on matriculating student quality metrics.”

At the meeting, the chairs were asked to send the following information to R. Kreuz by February 14:

- 1) What institutions compete with your graduate program for graduate students (separate by master's and doctoral if you have both programs)?
- 2) What assistantship support do competing programs offer (separate by master's and doctoral if you offer assistantships for both program levels)?
 - a) Stipend (indicate hours of work associated with specific stipend)
 - b) Tuition/fees
 - c) Health insurance
- 3) What assistantship support do you offer your students (separate by master's and doctoral if you offer assistantships for both program levels)?

R. Kreuz asked the council members to assist their chairs in gathering this information.

5. Microcredentials update

Assistant Dean Ladrica Menson-Furr reports that the provost's microcredentials committee is still working on a plan of action and is hoping to have further information to share by March.

6. New Business

R. Kreuz announced that graduate coordinators need to be aware of a quirk in Slate: "Slate days" begin at 12:01 am Eastern Time. UofM's deadlines are tied to Eastern Time, so a Friday deadline closes locally at 11 pm on Thursday.

Adjournment: T. Maclin made a motion to adjourn. A. Mickelson seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Minutes prepared by S. Warren based on notes provided by R. Kreuz and a recording of the session; edited by R. Kreuz