

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

MEETING: March 25, 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, S. Pollard, H. Sable, C. Santo, F. Vivar, T. Watson, B. Zheng

MEMBERS ABSENT: E. Groenendyk, V. Rus, K. Saghafi

PROXIES: Matthias Kaelberer (POLS for E. Groenendyk)

PRESIDING: R. Kreuz

1. Approval of the minutes from the February 26, 2024 Council meeting

E. Delavega made a motion to approve the minutes. C. Santo seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

2. Reports from meetings with the Graduate School

R. Kreuz reported meetings he had attended during the past month.

March 15 Graduate Academic Advising Network meeting:

a) Master's comprehensive exam requirement eliminated

This is not currently in effect; it will appear in the 2024-25 catalog. However, students can choose which catalog to graduate under, so current students can choose to graduate under next year's catalog. This will no longer be a Graduate School requirement, but departments can retain it if desired.

Starting Fall 24, the minimum GPA requirements for admission will be 3.0 for PhD programs and 2.75 for master's programs. A department can ask for an exception, but this should not become routine.

Courses cannot be used three times for different credentials. Double dipping is acceptable, but triple dipping will not be allowed due to accreditation issues.

March 20 College Directors meeting:

b) Increase in financial awards for GAMTA and Morton Thesis/Dissertation awards

These have not been adjusted for a long time and will be adjusted for this year. For the Morton, the \$500 awards will be \$750, the \$750 awards will be \$1,000,

and the GAMTA will be increased from \$500 to \$1,000. Other Graduate School awards will also be increased, and Dean Tollefsen hopes to keep increasing them every couple of years.

c) **Assistantship sample letter templates and mutual expectations document available**

<https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/resources/>

The website given on the agenda has links to the letter and a new document: a Statement of Mutual Expectations. It is a “structured conversation” to ensure that a graduate student and their supervisor share a clear understanding of what to expect from each other. The Graduate School recommends that supervisors fill out the form and discuss it with their GAs at the start of their assignment. The template can be customized as needed.

d) **UCGS elections (Humanities representative)**

Before the end of the term, CAS will hold an election to select a representative from the humanities for a three-year term. R. Kreuz is currently seeking nominations for the chairs of these departments. Ivan Ortega-Santos is temporarily filling in for a faculty member who withdrew from the Council, and this election will either seat him for a full term or lead to the seating of a new member to represent those four departments.

e) **Reminder that low impact changes are only approved during the curriculum season.**

March 21 Graduate Admissions update meeting:

Due to other obligations, R. Kreuz was 20 minutes late to this meeting. It was a short meeting, and Ryan Crews talked about accessing Slate inquiries and Banner 9 registration changes. Students will be registering using a new but greatly streamlined process. However, he pointed out that students must make acknowledgements regarding their immunization records and financial responsibility issues. None of the graduate coordinators who attended had anything to add to this.

3. New Business

a) **Graduate inquiries in Slate**

R. Kreuz offered clarification on the language used during the April CAS meeting: there are no inquiry bins, but there should be a graduate inquiry link available in the Slate reader. Directions were sent out to members on February 27; the document was from the Graduate School and is titled “How to respond to Slate inquiries?”.

Responding to a student’s query within Slate keeps all the correspondence in one place. Selecting “cancel registration” removes them from the list.

A major limitation in Slate is that it can tie only one person's name to each department. We will need to make sure that as graduate coordinators change, this is updated.

H. Sable asked if there is a way to group delete old inquiries. R. Kreuz will check with Shelia Jones.

b) Morton awards: include projects/portfolios/capstone projects?

It was pointed out to R. Kreuz that some departments have moved away from theses to projects or portfolios serving as capstone projects. This creates a problem in that students completing non-thesis projects aren't eligible for the Morton Thesis Award. R. Kreuz brought this up with Dean Tollefsen, and she's going to check the language in the original MOU that funds the award to see if the award can be broadened to include other types of capstones. R. Kreuz asked if the Council would support such a move, and four Council members voiced support.

c) Report on GA stipends

At the January 9th chairs and directors meeting, Dean Parrill asked the chairs to send R. Kreuz information about their unit's stipends and the stipends paid by each program's competitors. At the PhD level, the UofM stipends in the natural sciences are about \$6,500 below the median of our competitors. In the humanities, we're about \$5,200 below the median of our competitors.

R. Kreuz's report was also sent to Dean Tollefsen, and she shared it with all the other deans and with the provost. She has asked the Directors of Graduate Studies in other colleges to obtain similar data, with the objective of quantifying just how noncompetitive the University has become in the stipends offered.

Dean Tollefsen will be proposing a five-year program to exploit to a largely untapped source of funding: community donors and our programs' alumni. R. Kreuz promised to keep the Council posted on this issue.

d) NCUR preparations

Three members of the Council, A. Daily, T. Brewster, and H. Sable, will be going to Long Beach for NCUR early next month to recruit for CAS programs. They should have already been in touch to obtain handouts, QR codes, and any swag that Council members can provide them with.

e) Vote on Council name change

With the creation of a College Research Council, R. Kreuz suggested that the name of our Council be changed. H. Sable made a motion to call for a vote for a change to The College of Arts and Sciences Council for Graduate studies (removing the phrase "And Research"), and E. Nelson seconded it. The vote was

taken by a show of hands, and the motion was unanimously approved (19-0).

f) **Vote on Council meeting time change**

J. McCutcheon made a motion to call for a vote to move the Council meeting start time to 1:30 and E. Delavega seconded. The vote was taken by a show of hands, and the motion was approved 18-1. The change will take effect in August.

g) **Catalog delays**

With registration starting on next week, on Monday, April 1, the College has been told that the 24-25 catalog may not be ready in time. The Council will be notified when the proofs are available.

Adjournment: B. Zheng made a motion to adjourn. T. Maclin 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 meeting, and edited by R. Kreuz