

**UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL  
MINUTES**

October 22, 2020

1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

WEBEX

Council in Attendance:

Mike Wittie (Engineering)  
Christopher Livingston (Architecture)  
Brock Smith (Agriculture)  
Mark Pemarowski (Letters & Science)  
Tricia Seifert (Education)  
Dawn Tarabochia (Health & Human Development)  
Bradford Watson (Faculty Senate)  
Catherine Dunlop (Letters & Science)  
Anne Christensen (Business)  
Dennis Aig (Arts)  
Wade Hill (Nursing)  
Craig Ogilvie (Dean of The Graduate School)  
Doralyn Rossmann (Library)  
Maureen Kessler (Student Representative)

Also in Attendance:

Emily Peters (Graduate School)  
Donna Negaard (Graduate School)

Absent:

Que Vo (International Programs)

Meeting started at 1:03 pm on WebEx

**October 8, 2020 minutes**

- Motion to approve by Aig, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dunlop, unanimously passed

**Announcements**

- **Update from the Dean**
  - Virtual Graduate School recruitment fair: over 30 departments hosting 1-hour Webex sessions for prospective students
    - Attendees receive coupon to apply at no cost
  - Second Annual Candidacy Celebration: 5pm on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> via Webex
  - Hooding ceremony was approved: afternoon of November 21<sup>st</sup>
  - Scholarship applications for childcare, food, international students: received 3x more applicants for each scholarship than had budget for – reallocated Graduate School budget to fund all the applicants
    - Highlights need for increased stipend, minimum stipend (department set) for research grants, increased pay for GTAs

- **Faculty Senate update (Watson)**
  - Faculty Senate took proposal forward to accommodate childcare on campus; HR is trying to find a partner
  - Hoping to finalize and disseminate findings from COVID taskforce next week
  - Graduate courses and certificates were approved at Faculty Senate
  - Concern raised that COVID communications and policy updates are not listed in a central location—the university is working on organizing this information in a singular place

## Old Business

- **Cybersecurity MS, Level II program proposal**
  - Call for comments on revised proposal:
    - Pg. 4: second paragraph needs more clarification: “A BS carries significantly more weight...”
      - Should it be an MS or is referencing a Computer Science BS?
    - Tarabochia moves to approve the proposal with clarification of the second paragraph on pg. 4, second by Wittie, unanimously approved
      - Livingston will ask for clarification and then forward the proposal
- **PhD in Indigenous & Rural Health, Level II program proposal**
  - Proposer will attend November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting
- **Graduate Certificate Policy**
  - Removed the language of “governmental, educational, or health care related agency”
    - These requirements may come from a different body – tried to create more flexible language
  - Updated language: “9-11 credits if such an amount is sufficient to obtain licensure or continuing education credits necessary to secure or maintain employment credentials”
  - Call for comments
  - Will revisit at next meeting for a vote
- **Co-convening, discussion on possible limits**
  - Review background: issue raised in an accreditation review
  - Possible option: no more than a set number (ex: 1/3) of a program’s curriculum can be co-convened
    - Could differentiate required courses versus electives
  - Open Discussion:
    - Seems difficult to have numbers of courses versus percentages, because of different total amounts required by programs
    - A ratio seems fair to create a distinct graduate level experience, but does not penalize smaller programs – great starting place
    - Q: Does this include 590/690 research credits?
      - A: Used the term “course” for this reason, would be ratio of coursework, not research credits
    - The recent cybersecurity proposal discussed the benefits of co-convened courses for undergraduate students
    - Q: Any sense of how many courses are co-convened?
      - A: Unsure. This information is not readily accessible

- Estimate 5-10 % of courses through faculty senate are co-convened
- It would be helpful to have a sense of how many programs use co-convened courses—what would the impact of the policy be on existing programs?
  - Might be helpful to look at a sample of programs to see how many classes are co-convened
- Suggestion that co-convened course could enroll no more than 1/3 undergraduates
  - Often the other direction, more undergraduates in the course
  - This would be challenging to enforce
  - Focusing on the actual course instead of enrollment in the course would be better for tracking and enforcement
- Helpful to consider required courses separately from elective courses – policy could be for core courses with more flexibility for electives
- Q: Are there any best practices for teaching these classes? How to successfully teach these co-convened classes so that undergraduates and graduates get the learning outcomes they need? Is this a successful pedagogical approach?
  - A: Graduate School will look at best practices on co-convening and data on co-convening in existing programs
- Peer learning provides great structure for undergraduate students, raises the level of conversation
  - Raises level for undergraduates, but does that serve the graduates? Some skills gained from teaching undergraduates, but is the content at a high enough level?
- Usually offered to resolve departmental logistic issues—stabilizing enrollments, not enough faculty to teach, etc.
- Crossing disciplines is very beneficial to programs

### **New Business**

- **UGC role description for CiM:** tabled
- **Conflict of Interest policy**
  - Policy committee raised questions regarding the policy draft
    - Where/how would disclosure of a relationship occur?
    - Faculty privacy – what are the faculty rights?
    - ADVANCE grant: restoring gender balance; spousal hires were used as an incentive to bring female faculties to MSU
    - Is this setting back institutional or cultural change?
    - Should the policy proposal be sent to the family advocate or office of institutional equity?
  - History of the policy proposal: the power differential between students and faculty is a huge aspect; issues arise when there is a conflict and students must navigate the situation with a couple and the existing power differential
    - The intent is not to require disclosure of private information, more of a managerial tool to fall back on when conflicts arise
  - What about situations where students want a couple on their committee?
    - There is an exception, over seen by the department head and the graduate school
    - Expertise is usually the biggest concern; it might be in the student's best interest to have both members on the committee
    - Exception proposed as a 5<sup>th</sup> member

- When does a couple need to disclose that they are a couple? Or no longer a couple? Or maybe do not want to disclose a same sex relationship?
- “Conflict of interest” does not have to be a relationship; what the “conflict of interest” is does not have to be disclosed
- Department Heads help create committees and function in an HR role; already help with committee decisions, balancing workloads, etc.
- How is the decision made that there is a conflict of interest?
  - Case-by-case situations do currently exist; would be extremely helpful to have a policy to direct these situations to
- Process usually seems to start at the Department Head
- The graduate representative was valuable for these situations
  - It was in the best interest of the student, but it was removed because it was difficult for students to find this additional person
  - Suggested creating a pool of graduate representatives willing to serve
  - Feedback that a graduate representative was beneficial
  - Graduate representatives are still an option, it is just no longer required
  - Students never think there will be a conflict when they start their program. It can add additional conflict to request a grad rep later.
  - Someone, such as a DH, could see a potential conflict and that triggers a grad rep
- This specific policy narrows the problem to spouses, but there are also a variety of other problems – might send the wrong message to departments that have worked hard to bring couples, particularly females, to MSU
- MSU has a current conflict of interest policy, this could be leaned on
  - If there is a conflict of interest – a graduate representative can be added to the committee
- Dean Ogilvie will send a revised version to policy committee

Adjourned at 2:31 pm

Next scheduled meeting – November 5, 2020 WEBEX