GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

April 16, 2020

PRESENT: Jennifer Betters-Bubon, Kristen Curran, Abbie Daly, Corey Davis,   
Lynn Gilbertson, SangHee Park, Arjan Premti, Denise Roseland,   
Balaji Sankaranarayanan, John Smith, Joanna Stradusky,   
Shannon Stuart, Donna Vosburgh, John Zbikowski, Sarah Hessenauer, Praveen Parboteeah, and Jiazhen Zhou

ABSENT: Max Hsu (on Sabbatical), Rachel Bucheger, Courtney DeVries, \*Christine Neddenriep Whitney Sherret, Xueqing Chen, and Kenyatta Barber (sitting in for Maxwell Hsu)

GUESTS: Paul Ambrose, Carol Elsen, Angela Harlan, Heather Chermak, Abbie Windsor, D’Arcy Becker, and Matt Vick

PRESIDER: Joan Littlefield Cook

\*Previously notified.

The April 16,2020, meeting was called to order at 2:17 p.m. by Interim Associate Provost Joan Littlefield Cook.

1. **Discussion Items**
2. **Pass / Fail Option for Graduate Students for Spring 2020 term**

Due to COVID-19 challenges during the Spring 2020 semester, the Graduate Council held a special meeting to discuss the UCC recommendations on grading, course drop deadline, and academic standing for the Spring 2020 term.

The Graduate Council cannot use the UCC recommendations and will need to create its own recommendations based on Graduate Studies policies and programs. It was stated that this is only a recommendation to be submitted to the Chancellor for the Spring 2020 term, it is not a new policy.

There was discussion about making sure there was a note on the transcript indicating the pass/fail option was in response to the pandemic. Angela Harlan told the council members this request came from the Faculty Senate, and applies to all programs – graduate and undergraduate.

Joan Cook asked for clarification on the section of the recommendation for academic standing, and what that meant for the Spring 2020 term. It was agreed that no student would be negatively impacted with dismissals or being placed on academic probation for the Spring 2020 term. Students will not be able to be placed on academic probation until Fall 2020. However, students could still be removed from academic probation during spring and summer 2020 terms.

Matt Vick discussed the procedure for departments submitting their list of classes not to be included in the pass/fail option for students. He suggested the colleges submit their list to the Office of Graduate Studies first and Graduate Studies would submit it to Heather Chermak at the registrar’s office. Paul Ambrose suggested the colleges send their list to Graduate Studies and the registrar’s office at the same time.

There was more discussion about what is considered a passing or failing grade. Paul Ambrose recommended it be consistent between all colleges with a B or above being a passing grade, and a C or below being a failing grade. Paul also reminded the committee that some employers would only reimburse employees for the class if it were a B or better.

Angela mentioned that any exceptions for opting out of the pass/fail option has to be consistent with the department, an individual student or an instructor cannot opt out of it. Joan also suggested that programs who are opting out need to let students know why.

Balaji Sankaranarayanan made a motion, with a second by John Zbikowski, to amend the UCC recommendation on grading, course drop deadline, and academic standing for spring 2020 in the areas of 1) Fail vs No Credit, 2) a uniform passing grade, and 3) Change amendment wording.

1. **Fail vs No Credit**: Balaji made a motion to change the pass/fail grade basis to satisfactory/no credit. Corey Davis second that motion. There was some faculty interest, but the registrar’s office is unable to accommodate this request, so Balaji withdrew his motion.
2. **Uniform passing grade:** Balaji Sankaranarayanan made a motion that courses can opt in for a “C” grade or above as passing, and each department can set higher thresholds as they see fit. Praveen Parboteeah second that motion.

Heather Chermak told the committee it would add hours of work for the registrar’s office if there are different grade thresholds for departments. Abbie Daly made a friendly amendment to remove “departments may set a higher threshold”.

Matt Vick said programs that require a higher grade would need to opt out of the P/F option. Student requests choosing the P/F option will not be processed until May 27, 2020. The motion passed.

1. **Change Wording:** John Zbikowski made a motion to change the amendment to address ‘home’ department as ‘departments/programs’. Balaji Sankaranarayanan second that motion and it passed without further discussion.
2. **Submitting Recommendation:** Matt Vick asked the council members to vote on the entire recommendation and the majority voted yes.
3. **Submission Process:** There was discussion about the process for submitting the courses that would not allow students a pass/fail option. Corey Davis made a motion that each college submit their list of courses excluded from the pass/fail option to the registrar’s office and graduate school. John Zbikowski second that motion, and the motion passed.

Corey Davis moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 p.m. Balaji Sankaranarayanan second the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Peterson

Secretary