GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

April 9, 2020

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

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

GUESTS: Paul Ambrose, Carol Elsen, Angela Harlan, Heather Chermak, Abbie Windsor, Zachary Oster, and Matt Vick

PRESIDER: Joan Littlefield Cook

\*Previously notified.

The April 9,2020, meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m. by Interim Associate Provost Joan Littlefield Cook.

**Discussion Item**

**Pass / Fail Option for Graduate Students**

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, and what changes to the recommendation may or may not be necessary for graduate students.

* Students would be offered the option of choosing P/F in place of a letter grade for this semester. Council members were concerned that a satisfactory grade does not count towards the student’s GPA, but a fail grade would lower the student’s GPA.
* There was discussion about whether faculty would be able to make the decision on what courses they would allow students to choose a P/F grade, and if they would be able to determine what is considered as a failing grade for their courses.
  + Matt Vick confirmed that faculty could make those decisions, and Joan Cook said the instructor can decided what is considered passing, but the department would have to decide if the course will be allowed to have a P/F option.
  + Faculty will need to send a list of courses that can be considered for P/F to the colleges and dean first, then to the registrar to flag courses that cannot be P/F for accreditation reasons.
  + Angela suggested this cannot be a situation where one section choses the P/F option, it would need to be all sections of the course, or none. Donna Vosburgh said that her program uses electives from the MBA program and was concerned about using the P/F option. Paul Ambrose said that has not been discussed yet, but whatever is decided, he wants to keep it uniform. Angela suggested that, in those instances, faculty should reach out to their students and recommend they not use the P/F option.
  + Council members were also advised that a new syllabus or amendment to the course syllabus.
  + Angela Harlan said the P/F option will also be given to online students, given the current circumstances.
  + Praveen Parboteeah said the P/F is not an option for his DBA students. He also said he has been working closely with his cohort to make sure they are successful.
  + A question was asked about courses that are prerequisites requiring students to meet a specific grade criteria. Abby Windsor said it would need special permissions.
  + Corey Davis asked about transfer credit transferability between departments and campuses. Matt Vick said with the small number of those requests, it can be treated like an exception. Students can transfer credits, but it would not be included in their GPA, and the program will need to determine if P/F is transferable.
  + Jiazhen Zhou suggested there should be a limit the number of credits that students can use the S/F for. Heather Chermak said the UG students have a 15 cr. limit, but are required to take more credits that GRAD. We could figure out the percentage and apply that to the number of credits required for GRAD.
* Another area of discussion were concerns over the end of term processing being 1-2 weeks later that normal, and the affect it will have on Financial Aid recipients. The new disbursement date for financial aid would be either June 8, 2020, or sometime early the following week.

There was concern that, although students would receive their financial aid in time for their university billing on June 19, 2020, they would not have the money they may need for rent, food, textbooks, and other necessities.

Another financial aid concern is that, even if graduate students do not participate in the P/F option, their financial aid will still be processed the same as undergraduate and cannot be done earlier.

* Balaji Sankaranarayanan said the Faculty Senate committee had met and discussed the current UCC recommendation, and they will be meeting again on April 14, 2020 to vote on amendments they’d like made to the UCC recommendation including:
  + Changing the date allowing students to change their grading basis from May 27, 2020 to May 8 or May 19, 2020. The concern was that May 27,2020 would be too late.
  + Giving students until May 1, 2020 to make the choice of an P/F or letter grade.
  + Putting a note on transcripts stating the Spring 2020 grade changes are due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Angela Harlan said that is already being considered and an amendment for this is not necessary.
* Angela Harlan said the UCC wants to make this an option for everyone to choose, even if P/F is not allowed. Joan ask how many committee members would accept that, and everyone present agreed as long as they had the option to opt out.
* Angela said that because of the extenuating circumstances, we could suspend the late drop policy and allow students to drop classes on their own until May 8, 2020, without needing a form. Joan Cook pointed out that one reason to not approve a late drop is if it is because a student is getting a poor grade.
* Joan and Matt will put together a plan and schedule another Grad Council meeting to vote on the recommendation.

Meeting ended at 3:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Peterson

Secretary