

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES
October 11, 2016

The Graduate Council met at 3:00PM in the Memorial Tower Conference Room with the following members present: Adams, Broussard, Cai, Chance, de Queiroz, Eades, Frick, Gansle, Kelso, Lane (ex-officio), Lindau, Marchand, Massé (ex-officio), Mocan, Page, and Pojman. Absent members were Lee (ex-officio), Lockridge, Ortner, and Perry.

Minutes of May 11, 2016 and September 20, 2016

The minutes from the May 11, 2016 meeting were moved for approval by Chance, seconded by Marchand, one abstention, and the motion was passed.

The minutes from the September 20, 2016 meeting were moved for approval by Kelso, seconded by Lindau, one abstention, and the motion was passed.

Dean's Report

Graduate Assistant Raises: The Provost has notified all colleges/departments that the graduate assistants on departmental funds will receive a raise. The colleges were given the funds from Academic Affairs.

PM31: There is progress with making revisions to PM31 for graduate students to establish residency for tuition purposes.

Budget: The budget is stable and unchanged. A mid-year cut of 5% is still expected which the university has already planned for.

Graduate Student Applications: Applications are lower than the last two years. This is a trend across graduate schools nationally and could be for multiple reasons. It is still early regarding data for next fall. The biggest departments with early deadlines in December, currently have low applications to date.

Graduate Studies Fair: Lane mentioned the Graduate Studies Fair that will be held on November 17th for working professionals. Additional details will be emailed to all graduate faculty.

3MT: The three-minute thesis will have masters and doctoral students present their research in three minutes. An information session will be held later this month. Additional details will be emailed regarding the dates, preliminaries, and final events.

Academic Affairs Report

No report.

Chairs Report

Meeting with Provost: Eades presented a draft for graduate education issues to discuss with Provost Koubek when he meets with the Graduate Council on October 20th.

1. Ability to have stipend support that is competitive with other PhD programs nationally
 - a. Increasing student fees impact this because stipends do not include fee waivers
2. The lack of tuition waivers for fellowships discourages students from applying for fellowships. This also reduces our competitiveness for the best students thereby reducing research competitiveness and competitiveness for external funding.
3. Health insurance support for graduate students is not competitive with that at programs at other universities.
4. LSU instructional funding structure does not provide incentive for increasing graduate enrollment. Adding more students to programs does not result in an increased instructional budget to deal with additional students. There are an insufficient numbers of tenure-track faculty and support staff to simultaneously deal with large service teaching loads, a large PhD program, and a healthy number of undergraduate majors.
5. Lack of clear and consistent maternity and medical leave policy for graduate assistants.

6. Cost of fringe benefits to pay graduate assistant's tuition is an excessive burden on grants. As a result, many researchers are unable to include graduate student support in grants. A portion of the fringe benefits goes to pay unfunded accrued liabilities which doesn't benefit graduate education directly.

The discussion also included the following:

1. Grants can hire postdocs to save money rather than hiring a graduate assistant.
2. Graduate education is all about financial needs to support graduate students.
3. The number of graduate faculty members is down due to funds being dedicated to other things instead of faculty lines and tenure-track lines.
4. The minimum stipend amount per PS21 is \$10,800 for a nine-month appointment which does not include fees. Each department varies on the minimum stipend.
5. The recent raise was for only graduate assistants on soft money and not those funded by grants.
6. Instead of increasing enrollment, how about increasing stipends and work with the graduate students currently enrolled.
7. Since resources are already limited, issues need to be identified as well as ways to fix issues.
8. The Provost already has data on comparing LSU to other schools on stipends, fees, tuition, etc.
9. The goal of the meeting is to stabilize graduate school, increase enrollment of higher caliber graduate students, and increase stipends. Also, to obtain additional funds for grants, explore tuition waivers, strategic planning of recruitment, and out-of-state tuition waivers.
10. Masters programs need to accept international students through programs like Shorelight and share revenue, graduate faculty lines, and generate additional funding for the departments from non-resident fees and tuition since these students pay both.
11. What are the incentives for faculty to increase enrollment, stabilize enrollment, and increase stipends?

Eades will strategically revise topics and send electronically to the Graduate Council members prior to the meeting with the Provost.

Commencement: Each council member needs to attend their college commencement ceremony and those ceremonies without representatives need to have another council member attend. Gansle noted that each council member should attend three ceremonies every two years, which would be equal for all council members.

Old Business

Skype representation at exams and defenses: Kelso presented the proposal for Skype representation on general and final exams. The policy is reasonable and will work with permission of the Dean of the Graduate School. Only one person may participate remotely. The director or student may request permission to participate remotely only under extraordinary circumstances. The department must request permission from the Graduate School prior to the exam. The dean's representative may not participate remotely.

Remote Participation in Graduate Committees: DRAFT

A single committee member can participate in a Master's Exam, a Doctoral Degree Audit and Request for General Examination, or a Doctoral Final Exam remotely through VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) programs such as Skype upon receiving permission from the Graduate School. The program chosen must permit real-time, two-way exchange of visual information (e.g., presentation slides) and dialogue among the committee members and the student. Remote participation is for rare circumstances in which physical presence would be unfeasible. The individual participating remotely cannot be the director or the student except under extraordinary circumstances.

The responsibility for arranging, testing, and assuring operative connection and time-zone arrangements rests upon the student and the director. The form requesting such participation must be completed and submitted to the Graduate School along with the request for examination at least three weeks prior to the date of the examination and by the current semester deadline for graduation, if applicable.

Kelso will revise the document and circulate to the Graduate Council for additional comments.

Failed general and final exam requirements: Chance noted that there is no clear policy on failed general and final exams.

Failure of the Master's Exam, Doctoral General Examination, or Doctoral Final Exam: DRAFT

The Master's Examination, Doctoral General Examination, and Doctoral Final Examination are major milestones in a graduate student's professional path. Although failure is unusual, it can happen even with seemingly well-prepared students. Once any exam is scheduled, a result must be filed. That result can be P ("Pass"), F ("Fail") or D ("Delayed").

If a committee agrees that a student's work shows merit, it can issue a "D1," which will delay submission of material for one week while minor revisions are made (e.g., proofreading for a thesis or dissertation) or a "D2," which will delay re-taking of the examination to the end of the next semester. (N.B.: In some fields, depending upon the agreement of the committee, this may involve new course work to address deficiencies.)

The student can take any of these examinations no more than twice. If the student fails the second attempt, the student is considered terminated from the program at the end of the second examination semester. The student has the right to petition for reconsideration.

Proposed Revisions for 10/11/16 Graduate Council Meeting

Suggestion: "At least 2 weeks." (faculty member in Science)

Suggestion: Change text to "the student is considered terminated from the program at the end of the semester during which the second attempt of the examination occurs."

Suggestion: Delete "The student has the right to petition for reconsideration." (faculty member in Science)

Suggestion: Add a sentence about how "the student is not allowed to schedule the last allowable attempt of the exam/defense until all members of the Committee have met with and approved the remediation process, the details of which have to be provided to the student in writing within a week of the exam/defense that they fail. (faculty member in Science)

Suggestion: "Some departments might like a policy that permits passing in one or more areas and failing in one or more other areas, with a retake of the failed portions relatively soon. . . . Perhaps the solution would be a grade such as D3 (retake a portion of the exam within a few months), rather than a D2, waiting an entire semester." (Don Chance)

Additional discussion included:

1. Allow flexibility with the departments
2. Pass entire exam, but be allowed to make minor edits
3. Failure with remediation-allowed to retake exam within a particular time period (i.e. by end of next semester). On the exam card the committee would need to specify timeframe and what needs to be done in order to pass, since this would be a committee decision.
4. Fail-no retakes allowed
5. Partial pass/fail with a time period to complete certain tasks (i.e. take an additional course)
6. It is important to note that a student may not have time to complete tasks in order to pass exam if too close to the Graduate School graduation deadline for that particular semester.
7. There needs to be a clear definition of what constitutes a fail and the ability to retake the exam.
8. The purpose of this policy is to treat students fairly across campus. Policies across departments vary, so graduate students do not understand what needs to happen in order for them to pass.
9. If a graduate student fails the general exam, may the student petition the faculty to retake the exam?
10. Exam results must be submitted to the Graduate School within one week of the exam.

11. The dean's representative would still be responsible for seeing that the exam was appropriate and meets the Graduate School's requirements.

Ganlse moved to separate this policy into two different documents. One for general exams and non-thesis final exams and the other for thesis final exams and doctoral final exams. Broussard seconded motion and the motion was unanimously passed. Chance will make revisions for council members to review and vote.

Academic Actions Policy Proposal: Lane presented the proposal on behalf of the Graduate School. The plus/minus change created issues with academic actions.

Proposal for a change in cumulative GPA requirements as they relate to Graduate School Academic Actions (probation, academic drop and permanent drop)

According to current Graduate School policies, a graduate student with a cumulative graduate GPA below 3.0 but above 2.75 is placed on probation. A graduate student with a cumulative graduate GPA below 2.75 but above 2.50 receives an academic drop, while graduate students with a cumulative graduate GPA below 2.50 are permanently dropped by the Graduate School.

The proposed changes reflect the new +/- grading scale. A graduate student with a cumulative graduate GPA below 3.0 but above 2.70 ("B-" average) would be placed on probation. A graduate student with a cumulative graduate GPA below 2.70 but above 2.30 will receive an academic drop ("C+" average), while all graduate students with an overall graduate GPA below 2.30 will be permanently dropped by the Graduate School.

A review of the Fall 2015 academic actions indicated that 15 graduate students would have benefited from the policy change mentioned above by either being placed on probation instead of receiving an academic drop, or being assigned an academic drop instead of being permanently dropped by the Graduate School. (An academic drop allows for a reinstatement petition to be submitted by the on behalf of the student, while there is no such recourse for a permanent drop).

Graduate School Academic Action Codes

Academic Probation

- 1PB Academic Probation – Student had a cumulative GPA below a 3.00 but above a 2.75 1CP Academic Probation – Student continued on probation
- 1UR Academic Probation – Student had a U grade in research hours
- 1UP Academic Probation – Student had a cumulative GPA below a 3.00 but above a 2.75; student also had a U grade in research hours.
- 1SP Academic Probation – Special condition probation
- 1AP Academic Probation – Student had a cumulative GPA greater or equal to a 3.00, but had less than 9 credit hours

Academic Drop

- 2AP Academic Drop – Student had a cumulative GPA below a 3.00; admit on probation
- 2OP Academic Drop – Student had a cumulative GPA below a 2.75; admit on probation
- 2DR Academic Drop – Consecutive semester where cumulative GPA remained between a 2.75 and a 2.50
- 2AV Academic Drop – Student’s cumulative GPA dropped below a 2.75, but remained higher than a 2.50
- 2UR Academic Drop – Student received a second U grade in research hours.
- 2AI Academic Drop – Student had a cumulative GPA below a 2.75, but above a 2.50 and had an I grade
- 2SD Academic Drop – Special condition drop
- 2UP Academic Drop – Student had a cumulative GPA below a 2.75, but above a 2.50; student also had a U grade in research hours

Permanent Drop

- 3AP Permanent Drop – Student had a cumulative GPA below a 2.50; admit on probation
- 3DR Permanent Drop – Consecutive semester where cumulative GPA remained below a 2.50
- 3AV Permanent Drop – Student’s cumulative GPA fell below a 2.50
- 3OP Permanent Drop – Student’s cumulative GPA fell below and had previous academic drops
- 3UR Permanent Drop – Student receives a second U grade and has had previous academic probations
- 3UP Permanent Drop – Student receives a second U grade in research and is currently on academic action
- 3SD Permanent Drop – Special condition drop

- ROP Readmitted on probation
- REM Removed from probation

Kelso moved to accept the proposal, Broussard seconded, and the motion was passed.

New Business

Graduate Faculty Affiliates: Masse discussed graduate faculty affiliates. She wanted the Graduate Council’s support to stop allowing graduate faculty affiliates to chair committees. The affiliates may chair with approval of the Graduate School Dean. She will continue to approve only in rare cases.

Executive Session

Standing Committee Reports

Promotion and Tenure Committee: No report.

Graduate Faculty: No report.

Awards Committee: No report.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30pm.

Recorded by:

Chantelle Collier, Assistant to the Dean

Approved by:

Michelle Massé, Dean Graduate School