

## Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2019, 2:00-3:30 pm

Madison Union 306

### I. Approval of the Minutes

Upon motion by Dannette Bronaugh, seconded by Hossain Heydari, the Graduate Council unanimously approved the October 18, 2018, Graduate Council minutes.

### II. Announcements, Reports, and Updates

1. Michael Stoloff asked programs to consider admitting more students than they want to enroll during their first round of admission typically don't enroll all of the students that they admit. Programs should use their recent program-specific admission and enrollment history to decide how many students should be admitted. Programs were encouraged to keep in mind that their best applicants probably also applied to other schools and some of these students will enroll elsewhere. Since other schools encourage student enrollment by tying admissions and GA decisions, assistantships should be assigned as soon as possible to encourage enrollment. Laura Ryman will send an email confirming allocation of GAs during the next few weeks.
2. John Burgess asked everyone to encourage applications to the 3-Minute Thesis competition (3MT). Everyone was also encouraged to attend. 3MT will be held on Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm in Madison Hall. GSA is planning a celebration after the event in Madison Hotel. As of the time of this meeting, there were 12 applications, double last year's participants; TGS is excited to see this program growing. In particular, they would like to see enough participants to allow students to compete in multiple heats. At the time of this meeting 7 individuals agreed to judge the competition, including Sal Romero, one of the Harrisonburg City Council members.
3. John asked everyone to encourage applications to the TGS Travel Grant program. Roshna Wunderlich asked about the potential for using these grants to allow students to attend meetings for training, but John explained that they are meant for the presentation or showcase of student work. GSA President Jack Nichting described how GSA professional development grants can be used for training conference attendance and up to \$200 per award is available. John clarified that TGS travel grants should not be used for faculty travel. All full-time graduate students are eligible for travel grants and he encouraged students from every discipline to apply. Jeannie Garber asked for reconsideration of the full-time student requirement as there are many part-time graduate students including many in our Nursing programs. It was agreed that consideration for part-time graduate students should have flexibility, but that the grants should be reserved for graduate students rather than faculty who are enrolled in graduate classes.
4. John updated the group on Graduate State Scholarships. He suggested that these scholarships be used as a recruiting tool rather than awarding them to already-enrolled students. Paula Maxwell asked about appointing a point person within each college for these scholarships, and John responded that he will ask Deans to identify a contact person in their college who can facilitate the distribution of these grants. In addition, if a college is not using one of these scholarships, it would be appreciated if TGS would be made aware. He affirmed that if a college doesn't use its full allocation this would not affect their scholarship allocation for the next year. Jie suggested that this information be shared with Graduate Council members' schools and departments.
5. Kathryn Brown, from TGS, updated the group on the online graduation application. Kathryn has been working with IT and the Records Office to develop procedures that would allow graduate students to submit graduation applications through MyMadison. There is no date yet for rollout, but TGS will keep everyone updated on progress. The Executive Committee will be briefed more thoroughly on this topic at their next meeting, so John suggested members of Graduate Council direct their questions to their EC representative.

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6. Jie introduced Cyber Intelligence, a new graduate certificate program recently approved by SCHEV. This program will be offered through Outreach & Engagement. Michael expanded on this program, mentioning that the application is available now and that the first cohort will begin in March.
7. Jie introduced the Budget Requests that TGS initiated and coordinated, and all three deans presented a summary of the requests to GC. The budget requests were organized into two categories, university-wide GA requests and internal TGS requests. They thank GC members for their involvement in the process of crafting these requests. There were a few questions regarding the budget requests in general:
  - Paula Maxwell inquired about health benefits for graduate students. John responded that there are two options for this: making group insurance available, or automatically enrolling students in a plan and covering the cost with higher tuition. He asked for feedback on these options.
  - Julie Wallace Carr expressed her concerns that a 3% raise in GA stipends won't be enough to compete with graduate assistantships offered at other institutions; 3% won't help us to enroll more students. Jie thanked her for the feedback and mentioned that making GA stipends more competitive is something he would like to bring up in institutional strategic planning, and that the current request was just a first step to strengthen our competitiveness. Michael mentioned that it is difficult to both add new assistantships and increase their rate of pay, but that we are advocating for both.
8. Jack Nichting reported on GSA activities. He reiterated that Professional Development grants are still available and that they are still processing grants from last semester. GSA will hold their elections on the last Thursday of March. They are also hosting a rehearsal for 3MT at the Cohen Center a week before the event. A conference for Virginia GSAs is in the works for this spring as well as a trivia night at 3 Notch'd on February 28<sup>th</sup>. Faculty are welcome at the trivia night. Jack also announced GSA's partnership with Campus Kitchen in order to provide 4-5 free meals a week for graduate students to pick up from the lounge refrigerator.

### III. Discussion and Action Items

1. John overviewed RA support, including a new form to request a RA that should be submitted as soon as a faculty member is awarded a grant with allocated RA support. Jie asked that feedback and questions regarding this process be directed to John, and urged all GC members to help disseminate the information about this program to all faculty members. Information on the RA program can be found at: <http://www.jmu.edu/grad/faculty/research-assistants.shtml>
2. Jie briefly explained the process of revising the GC by-laws, which was originally suggested by the APR External Review Team. The Executive Committee has been revising the by-laws since spring, and finished the current draft last semester. He introduced the members of the Executive Committee. Jie, John and Michael described the major changes in the bylaws which included the following:
  - i. Simplification of purpose & functions statement
  - ii. Graduate Council membership by Academic Department rather than CIP Code. All departments offering one or more graduate degree or certificate programs are represented.
  - iii. Creation of the "Graduate Program Director Assembly." All graduate degree or certificate programs are represented.
  - iv. Creation of a "Curriculum Committee" charged with C&I functions for the Graduate Council.

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- v. Clarification of the role and method of appointment of the “Executive Committee.”
- vi. Elimination of procedures for appointment of graduate faculty from the bi-laws document. These are already part of our Policy documents.
- vii. “Non-voting members” referred to as “guests” or “regularly attending guests.”
- viii. Simplification of procedures for meetings.
- ix. Reorganization to simplify, and technical changes to adjust to organization of TGS (e.g.-two associate deans, Assistant to the Dean, no Assistant Dean, etc.)

Feedback should be directed to Jie by January 29<sup>th</sup> in order for EC to consider at its next meeting.

**End of Minutes.**