

University Graduate Council
March 3, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Present: Carla Calarge, A&L; Eric Berlatsky, A&L; Anita Pennathur, Business; Paul Peluso, Education - UGC Chair; Ali Danesh, Education; Mihaela Cardei, Engineering; David Newman, Nursing; Manny Gonzalez, CSWCJ; Dawn Froot, Library; Christopher Beetle, Science; Marianne Porter, Science; Kassadi Smith, GPSA (on behalf of Karina Cruz).

Absent: Mahyar Shirazi, Medicine; Francisco Presuel-Moreno, Engineering; Karina Cruz, GPSA.

Others Present: Brian Farrell, Graduate College; Robert Stackman, Graduate College; Jan Macko, Graduate College; Brian Hodge, Registrar; William Kalies, Science; Erin Hari, Center for Global Engagement; Mihaela Metianu, Center for Global Engagement; Liana Smith, Graduate College; Randy Blakely, FAU Brain Institute; Debra Szabo, Academic Affairs/Provost's Office.

- I.** The UGC meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by UGC Chair, Paul Peluso.
- II.** No announcements.
- III.** The minutes from the UGC Meeting held on February 3, 2021 were unanimously approved by the Council.
 - A. Manny Gonzalez noted that he was "Present" at the February 3rd meeting and should be reflected as such in the minutes.
- IV.** Curricula items from GPC meeting held on February 24, 2021 submitted by GPC Chair, Chris Beetle, for approval by UGC to move forward to Senate Steering meeting on March 18, 2021.
 - A. A motion was made to approve the curricula items as submitted.
 - B. This motion was seconded.
 - C. Approved by the UGC committee.
 - D. Action vs. Consent Items
 1. Action Agenda Items
 - a. Christopher Beetle: The New Program Request for the PhD in Neuroscience should definitely go on the Action Agenda.
 - b. Robert Stackman: Suggested the Program Change Request for the PhD in Mechanical Engineering should be placed on the Action Agenda since the new concentration is in Neural Engineering but Neural Engineering is an elective course.
 - c. Chis: Ok with this being on the Consent Agenda.
 2. A motion was made to place the PhD in Neuroscience on the Action Agenda and the remaining curricula items on the Consent Agenda.
 - a. This motion was seconded.
 - b. Approved by the UGC committee.

V. Additional Discussion Items

A. Admissions Process for International Students – Mihaela Metianu, Erin Hari & Liana Smith

1. Erin: Not really prepared to do a presentation but happy to answer any questions regarding this process.
2. Carla Calarge: When we recruit international students, they obviously come from a different learning system than ours. Many students in these systems take specialty courses, equivalent to 3000 and 4000 level courses here, yet they are being denied admission here. It seems to affect Masters students more than Bachelors students.
 - a. Mihaela: many 3-year international programs are being accepted as Bachelor's equivalents.
 - b. Erin: When doing these international transcript evaluations, I always try to stay in line with generally accepted practices in the field. When applicable, we use the same processes as NACES and/or other Florida institutions.
 - i. Reminder that, per U.S. Education standards, a Bachelor's degree is 120 credit hours over 4 years.
 - ii. If a transcript is coming from an institution that is part of the Bologna process, we can equate that to a U.S. Bachelor's degree.
 - iii. We, unfortunately, cannot simply make a blanket statement when dealing with international transcripts as to U.S. equivalency. Each case is unique.
 - c. Eric Berlatsky: Is there an appeal process, after the fact?
 - i. Chris Beetle: Is this an accreditation issue or an internal FAU policy?
 - ii. Liana Smith: The Graduate College will always consider additional documentation, in conjunction with Erin's evaluation, when applicable. Departments can always submit a memo to the Graduate Dean requesting a waiver for student to allow admission.
 - d. Mihaela: A lot of work goes into these transcript evaluations. Erin utilizes many resources in order to prepare them. We need to be cautious with the use and frequency of these reviews in order to maintain the integrity of the process.
 - e. Erin: I'm always happy to take a second look at an evaluation and, if available, additional documentation. If evidence shows and supports a revision, I am happy to submit a revision.
 - f. Carla: This is not an indictment of you, Erin, or your process but the fact remains that this is a very real factor for us in the recruitment of international students.
 - i. Erin: So, what happens if you receive a NACES evaluation that says the same thing? What would you do then?

- ii. Erin: I will do some research on other country's secondary education process to see if any of those credits could be accepted.
 - g. Liana: Echoed Erin and Mihaela in that we want to be careful about going more toward the appeal process route.
 - h. Erin: I am an FAU employee but, when I do these transcript evaluations, I always try to be unbiased and use processes widely accepted and used by NACES and other institutions in the field.
 - i. Chris: We should always err on the side of admitting students who are prepared to enter a Graduate level program. Erin is doing a tough job and doing it well! If a department feels a student is ready for a Graduate program, should that be a part of this process?
 - i. Liana: The university-wide policy states that a student must have a U.S. Bachelors, or evaluated equivalent, to be admitted to a Master's program.
 - j. Carla: The bigger issue is with recruitment of these students. We are basically telling them that they need a Master's degree in order to get into a Master's program here! Why would they do that?
 - k. Liana: Suggested setting up another meeting to continue this discussion and consider what options, if any, are available.
- B. Extension of the Temporary GRE/GMAT Waiver – Bob Stackman
- 1. The Graduate College proposes extending the current waiver to and through Fall, 2022.
 - a. Chris: I agree. This would allow time to gather more data as to the validity of these scores.
 - b. Bob: If approved, the Graduate College will reach out to departments regarding opting in or out.
 - c. Anita Pennathur: Would, or does, this apply both Masters and PhD programs or just one or the other?
 - i. Previously, it applied across the board to all programs. That would continue under this extension.
 - d. A motion was made, and seconded, to move this forward to Senate Steering for discussion and consideration.
 - i. Approved by the UGC committee.
- C. Discussion of Diversity Initiative – Bob Stackman
- 1. This is an opportunity to think about diversity on a University-wide basis.
 - 2. Marianne Porter: At Provost's coffee last week, it was brought up that there are very few "gender neutral" bathrooms available across campus. This is becoming an issue, particularly with Graduate students who tend to be on-campus after-hours and on weekends.
 - a. Eric: This is something the University was made aware of a few years ago and, basically, nothing was done.
 - b. Marianne: Many colleges have no "gender neutral" bathrooms at all.

3. Brian Hodge: Any thoughts about reaching out to Academic Affairs regarding this?
- D. Graduate College Governance Document – Paul Peluso
1. The next step is for the UGC to vote on this and, if approved, it would then need to be sent to the entire Graduate faculty body for consideration.
 - a. Motion and second to approve the Graduate College Governance Document.
 - b. Approved by UGC committee to go to the Graduate faculty body.
 2. Paul Peluso opened the floor for nominations for 3 Graduate Faculty UGC members to be on the Election Committee.
 - a. In addition to Paul, David Newman and Manny Gonzalez offered to serve on this committee.
 3. Bill Kalies: The Provost’s office is still asking for an identifier, date of birth or Social Security number, for Affiliate Faculty appointments.
 - a. Liana: In meetings with the Provost, SSN is NOT required but DOB would be in order to enter the information into Banner.
 - b. Brian Hodge: Confirmed that DOB is required.
- VI.** Roundtable
- A. Chris: Shared SB 264, currently being considered by the Florida State Senate, which would allow anyone to record what goes on in a classroom and post it to the internet. This is being considered, ostensibly, to fight liberal indoctrination in the classroom.
1. This could create issues of intellectual property being compromised.
 2. Chris recommended that Paul raise this at the March 18th Steering meeting to see what the Provost thinks or know about this.
- VII.** Meeting adjourned by UGC Chair, Paul Peluso at 3:37 p.m.

The final University Graduate Council meeting for 2020-21 is March 31, 2021.