

**University Graduate Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, February 15, 2023**

**3:30-5:00pm – Online Via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Viacheslav Fofanov Chair (Informatics & Computer Science), Rebecca Best (Earth and Sustainability), Gayle Blanchard (Educational Leadership), Laura Bounds (Graduate College), Colleen Byron (Organizational Leadership), Joe Collentine (Spanish), Tiffany Cooke (Physician Assistant Studies), Emery Eaves (Anthropology), Joshua Emery (Astronomy & Planetary Science), Heidi Feigenbaum (Engineering-Mechanical), Thomas Finger (History), Jeffrey Foster (Biological Sciences), Peter Friederici (Sustainable Communities), Michael Gowanlock (Computer Science), Nicole Hampton (Special Education), John Heick, (Physical Therapy & Athletic Training), Stephanie Hurst (Chemistry), Chelsey E. Johnson (English/Creative Writing), Mahendra Joshi (Business Administration), Chesleigh Keene (Educational Psychology), Gretchen McAllister (Teaching & Learning, Curriculum & Instruction), Leslie Mitchell (Informatics, Computer Science), Truong Nghiem (Informatics & Computer Science), Laura Noll (Psychological Sciences), Brettania O’Connor (Public Health), Luke Plonsky (Applied Linguistics), Natalie Randolph (Social Work), Sara Rinfret (Public Administration), Rich Rogers (Communication), Brendan Russo (Engineering-Civil), Erik Schiefer (Geography, Planning & Recreation), Janine Schipper (Sociology), Sandra Stewart (Clinical Speech and Language Pathology), James Swift (Mathematics and Statistics), Ann Vert (Nursing & PL), Andy Walters (Psychological Sciences), Kyle Winfree (Computer Science), Nancy Wonders (Criminology & Criminal Justice), Brittany Blanchard (Library), Maribeth Watwood (Ex Officio: Graduate College Dean), Rebecca Seeger (Ex-officio: GSG President), Melinda Treml (Ex-officio: Curriculum and Assessment).

**Members Absent:** Dave Auty (Forestry), Hal Tagma (Politics and International Affairs), Jose Moreno (Ethnic Studies), John Gibbs (Applied Physics), Nancy Sullivan (Music)

**UGC Chair, Viacheslav (Slava) Fofanov welcomed everyone to the meeting and the meeting came to order at 3:31 pm MST.**

**Guest Speakers:**

**Melinda Treml, Office of Curriculum and Assessment**

1. **ACTION -** UGC November 2022 meeting minutes: Motion to approve the UGC November 2022 meeting minutes as distributed was made by Colleen Byron and seconded by John Heick; **minutes were approved** (0 nay votes and no abstentions), via zoom chat box.
2. **UGC Reports – Maribeth Watwood, Laura Bounds, Maria (Masha) Kostromitina GSG** 
   1. Laura welcomed everyone back from the long winter break. She thanked those that served on oral defenses and encouraged the defense committee to look for new calls to serve as the end-of-semester defenses get scheduled. She reminded the committee about the upcoming 3MRP event on April 6th. We need 7 subcommittee members from the UGC to help with the event. We have 45 abstracts that have been submitted and are starting to receive the practice recordings. So as not to overburden the committee, she is hoping that 3 additional UGC members will sign up to help with the effort. She asked the UGC members to reach out to Slava or herself to be added to the 3MRP subcommittee. The reviews of the practice sessions are scheduled to take place between February 20th to March 5th. Help with the preliminary heat judging on March 21st and 22nd. An important deadline is coming up for the Graduate Assistant and Graduate Coordinator nominations. The nominations are due March 1st. Please put the word out to nominate a deserving Graduate Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant and/or Service assistant as well as Graduate Coordinators. Laura alerted the committee to the professional development opportunities scheduled for this semester. The window just closed for the Quayle and Graduate College Scholarship applicants. She let the sub committee for this task know that the information and rubrics would be coming soon in late March to assist with the review. Lastly, the Graduate College is working with the Registrar’s Office to initiate graduate academic advising report builds. For these first builds, we’re tackling masters programs that have straightforward curriculums and graduate certificates.
   2. Maria – Masha – Kostromitina introduced herself to the committee as the new GSG president. The GSG is finalizing the GSG Poster Symposium event. Today was the last day for students to submit their posters. Masha thanked the UGC members that have volunteered to judge the posters. The GSG is in the final fourth phase of the travel window – travel between mid-March to the end of the semester. They have received 30 applications for travel funding so far. The GSG is working on creating social events both on the Flagstaff Mountain campus and the extended campuses.
   3. Maribeth announced that her initial retirement date set for June 30th, 2023 has been extended to June 2024. She will be staying on in her dual role as Dean of Graduate Studies and Vice Provost. Progress is being made on the 100% Ready project. She would like input from all of the UGC on the use of software platforms that would provide services for students, faculty, advisors and staff to help with career planning. Right now her office is focusing on all undergraduate and masters programs. Maribeth also wanted to alert departments to an issue with tuition waivers. Next year’s allocations should be established by the end of February but the Graduate College has noticed that not all of the funds are spent. The worry is two-fold: deserving students are not getting assistance and these unspent funds get on the radar of the Provost Office which may question if these funds should continue to be awarded to departments at their current amounts. The Graduate College has increased the minimum stipend levels. Masters students will now receive $15,000 and doctoral students will receive $20,000. She finished with a wish of encouragement to the upcoming discussions regarding policy. She emphasized that we need to review and update policies that have become old and no longer serve our students now and help us all move into the future.
3. **Policy updates discussions- Guest Speaker, Melinda Treml. Office of Curriculum and Assessment**
   1. Slava set the approach for the policy discussion and the lens that he would like the UGC to look through while discussing these policy reviews: the goal is to understand why the policy is needed, why the change is needed and what are some of the potential implications for and against changing the policy. It may be that a vote is not possible today and if so, Slava asks that you bring these discussions to your departments to vet for additional implications and we will reconvene the discussion at the next UGC meeting.
      1. **Accelerated bachelors to masters (#100309, 1st discussion)**: Before digging into the conversation, Melinda reminded the UGC that her role is to oversee the Academic Catalog and that it aligns with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), ABOR policies, including Federal compliance as that is a part of our HLC obligations. It was brought to her attention via different entities on campus that some of the accelerated accepted practices may not be in compliance with HLC, ABOR and Federal policy. University Marketing noticed that our Catalog requirements were not aligned with the Accelerated programs and the Budget office noting that we are out of compliance in relation to our tuition and billing for these programs. The Graduate College is working with Melinda and the first order of business was to conduct an analysis of our peer institutions and how they manage accelerated programs. One of the more important aspects is to look at how many units can be shared between the undergraduate degree and the graduate degree. We need to remember how this drives tuition and financial aid and how it can negatively impact a student. Melinda presented the analysis. The analysis lists the current policy on the left of the table with the possible changes listed on the right. We would like feedback on the definitions. The policy should clearly set forth the student requirements so that we know what their academic level is in relation to tuition and financial aid. The admission requirement and administrative processes are separated out in the analysis. Nicole Hampton commented that her program is already being impacted by the proposed changes to the policy. Her program allows for 12 units of “double dipping” credit and it’s been their practice to allow students to complete more graduate coursework while in an undergraduate status but those additional credits are not applied to the accelerated program but to the graduate program. A lot of the issue has to do with the sequencing in their program. She is concerned as well if accelerated students cannot take 600 level courses. Melinda replied that currently, accelerated students can take 600 level courses as long as they have applied to the masters program and have been accepted. ABOR has set our graduate tuition and we cannot allow undergraduates to take an unlimited number of credits as graduates and not be charged as graduate students. If the program wants to accept more credits from the undergraduate level for the graduate program or if you want to expand the number of undergraduates who can take more graduate level courses, we can address that through a different policy. Nicole asked that the policy be clarified so it is easier to understand. Laura mentioned that some of the confusion may bet that non-accelerated undergraduate students are taking too many graduate courses. The vast majority of accelerated students are doing the 12 double dipping and graduating. Laura emphasized the intent of the accelerated programs; for a student to receive their undergraduate degree in 4 years and then take one more additional year to finish a masters program.
   2. **Undergraduates in Graduate Courses (#100309, 1st discussion):** If a student is a qualified senior NOT enrolled in an accelerated program, the student may enroll in up to 9 units of 500-level courses during the undergraduate career. This policy has been possibly misinterpreted with the accelerated policy. The Graduate College has noted the frequency of the non-accelerated undergraduate students taking the allowed 9 units of graduate coursework but then thinking it is permissible to add an additional 12 units of graduate coursework (from the accelerated policy). Slava asked that the UGC members take this back to their departments to see if there would be any operational implications.
   3. **In Progress or Incomplete Grades (100406, 3rd discussion):** Laura discussed the current status to the policy update. It would be to remove the entire paragraph and rather list out 3 scenarios as to how an Incomplete could occur and the steps associated with those occurrences - please see recording for those options or the documents attached to the agenda. We’ll vote on this at the next meeting.
   4. **598 Course Line for Independent Study (1st discussion):** We realized that we have independent studies at every level except the 500 level. We selected 598 because it was as close as we could get to 599 as 597 is already used. This can become useful when a unit wants to co-convene a 400 and a 500 course to offer as independent study for students.

**The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm MST.**

**Next Meeting:**

**April 19th, 3:00pm-5:00pm, Zoom**