

Graduate College

**University Graduate Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 18, 2020
3:00-5:00 - Online Via Zoom**

Members Present: Dawn Clifford, Chair (Public Health), Rebecca Best (Earth and Sustainability), Viacheslav Fofanov (Informatics & Computer Science), Sandy Stewart (Clinical Speech-Language Pathology), Gayle Blanchard (Educational Leadership), Lena Gaddis (Educational Psychology), Anne Medill (Social Work), Laura Sujo-Montes (Educational Specialties), Colleen Byron (Organizational Leadership), Catherine Gehring (Biology), Mohamed Mohamed (Applied Sociology), Halit Tagma (Political Science), Truong Nghiem (Informatics & Computer Science), Vedran Dronjic (Applied Linguistics), Brettania O'Connor (Public Health), Jon Torn (Communication), Michelle Parsons (Interdisciplinary Health), Emery Eaves (Anthropology), John Heick (Physical Therapy & Athletic Training), Nicole Price (Spanish), Ann Vert (Nursing & PL), Emily Hoppe (Music), Kristen Waring (Forestry), Heidi Feigenbaum (Engineering-Mechanical), Chelsey Johnson (English-Creative Writing), Brendan Russo (Engineering-Civil), Nancy Wonders (Criminology & Criminal Justice), Mahendra Joshi (Business Administration), Bahattin Yildiz (Mathematics & Statistics), Tarang Jain (Physical Therapy) Vicki Ross (Curriculum & Instruction), Lara Taggart (Occupational Therapy), Bettie Coplan (Physician Assistant Studies), Kerry Thompson (Anthropology), Michael Gowanlock (Computer Science), John Fegyveresi (Climate Sciences), Laura Noll (Psychology), Karina Collentine (Ex-officio: Graduate College Associate Dean), Maribeth Watwood (Ex Officio: Graduate College Dean), and Sneha Vissa (Ex-officio: Vice President of Academic Affairs, for GSG President, Savannah Berry).

Members Absent: John Gibbs (Applied Physics), Gretchen McAllister (Elementary Education), Katsuya Oi (Applied Sociology), Erik Schiefer (Geography, Planning & Recreation), Matthew Gidley (CEIAS), Paul Dutton (History), Franklin Vernon (Parks & Recreation), Tyler Robinson (Astronomy & Planetary Science), Corina Kellner (Anthropology), Rebecca Frantz (Educational Specialties), Stephanie Hurst (Chemistry), Laura Noll (Psychological Sciences), Erika Konrad (English-Professional Writing), Calinda Shely (English-Literature), Melinda Trembl (Ex Officio: Curriculum and Assessment Director).

UGC Chair, Dawn Clifford, welcomed everyone to the third meeting of AY2020-2021, and the meeting came to order at 3:00pm MST.

1. **UGC October 2020 meeting minutes – ACTION:** Motion to approve the UGC October 2020 meeting minutes as distributed with one edit on Page 3, clarifying “Jason Wilder is making the commitment to make sure that all labs in **CEFNS** will have the necessary masks and floor signage,” motioned by Colleen Byron and seconded by Emily Hoppe; it was approved unanimously (0 ‘no’ votes and 0 abstentions), via zoom chat box.

Reports:

I. **Dean Watwood**

- a) Dean Watwood announced that at the Provost Academic Leadership Committee meeting held today, that President Cheng reported that by the end of the week, NAU

will have conducted over 33,000 Covid-19 tests. The testing program has gone very well, and NAU's positivity rate is significantly lower than the city's positivity rate.

- b) Dean Watwood heartfully thanked all the UGC committee members for working with the Graduate College during this challenging semester, and especially for their patience and flexibility.
- c) Dean Watwood reported that one of the issues that she thinks we will be discussing next semester, will be our policies related to admissions. She indicated there are programs in China, for example that will admit students to graduate programs who have an undergraduate degree that are three years in length. Dean Watwood stated we are going to have more discussions and further examine our policies.
- d) Dean Watwood updated the UGC members that NAU is currently conducting interviews for a new Director for Career Development.
 - i. Laura Sujo-Montes asked how the three-year programs for example, from China will work for NAU, and wondered if they will be online, in China, or Flagstaff? Dean Watwood explained there are a bunch of different models, such as the MPA programs in China, and that NAU is working with Beacon to collaborate programs in China. She stated that we don't have any real consistency in approach and believes it would be worthwhile to at least figure out the possible guardrails when we discuss admission requirements for graduate programs.

II. Associate Dean Collentine

- a) Associate Dean Collentine asked if the UGC committee members would like to be included on the email list serve to receive the Graduate College's newsletter that is sent out twice a month. She explained the newsletter announces scholarship opportunities and other relevant graduate student information. If you do not wish to receive, you can unsubscribe.
- b) Associate Dean Collentine referred to her written report, and noted there is quite a list of announcements, and that she provided as many links for additional information as possible.
- c) Associate Dean Collentine announced that the College of Education's nominations for Student of the Month Recognition will be due by January 15, 2021.
 - i. Laura Sujo-Montes reported that she signed up for the Program Review committee, yet the committee has not met this semester. Dawn Clifford stated she will follow up with Melinda Trembl to see if there is anything the committee needs to review, etc. Dean Watwood indicated that priorities may have shifted this semester due to the University beginning the search for a new president.

III. GSG Vice President of Academic Affairs - Sneha Vissa

- a) Sneha announced that she had no items to add to her distributed report. If you have any questions regarding GSG, please email gsg@nau.edu.

IV. Informal polling and discussion regarding professional development for doctoral students – Associate Dean Collentine

- a) Associate Dean Collentine presented a PPT presentation summary on what NAU's Residency Requirement "is" and what it is "not." For example, it's not related to tuition, or the postgraduate training associated with a graduate medical education. It is the requirement that doctoral students be a FLGMTN campus resident for at least for a time, to take advantage of the professional development and collaborative opportunities available on campus. She explained that the problem is that physical residency doesn't ensure the intended goal, and it is impractical for some students.
- b) Associate Dean Collentine reminded the UGC committee, that the professional development requirement at the sister-state institutions, i.e., ASU and UA vary by program, and confirmed that there was no graduate college policy or university wide policy that stated all graduate programs have to do professional development a certain way. She researched and compared three programs at ASU and UA: English, Spanish, and Chemistry. Associate Dean Collentine reported examples of the types of professional development in those 3 doctoral programs from UA and ASU.
- c) Chair Dawn Clifford launched a Zoom poll to the committee members to determine what types of activities qualify as "professional development activities for NAU doctoral students." The top results of the poll were as follows: 1) attending professional conferences, 2) participating in program specific professional development, 3) engaging in funding efforts, and 4) participating in teaching experiences.
- d) Dean Watwood asked the UGC committee if anyone sees an argument for keeping the physical residency requirement? Associate Dean Collentine reviewed the current policy, #100805, and suggested possible changes to the name from "Residency Requirement" to "Professional Development Requirement." The committee discussed the outdated nature of the physical requirement.
- e) Chesley Johnson reported that for the MFA in the English department, online MFA students are not eligible for teaching assistantships, and the department maintains the residency requirement, for that purpose. The residency requirement and professional development varies across NAU programs. Slava Fofanov reported that due to COVID-19, most, if not all, his students are in the NAU Flex online classes, and there is no way of knowing if they are physically in Flagstaff, or in another state, or country. He wondered if because of this year, the residency requirement will not be enforced. Associate Dean Collentine explained that we would continue to be flexible with issues created by this pandemic year, and would note, into the future, when reviewing candidacy applications.

ACTION: Motion to change the language in the Residency Requirement Policy #100806 from "residency requirement" to "professional development requirement," and to re-visit this topic in terms of the possible aspects of professional development, motioned by Emily Hoppe and seconded by Slava Fofanov; it was approved unanimously (0 'no' votes and 0 abstentions), via zoom chat box.

V. Discussion of the policy on graduate courses taken by undergraduate students – Associate Dean Collentine

- a) Associate Dean Collentine started the discussion regarding Policy #100327 on graduate courses taken by undergraduate students and reviewed the policy and the three issues.
- b) Associate Dean Collentine explained we have consulted with Provost Stearns, and Provost Stearns confirmed that NAU must be in compliance with ABOR policy. Associate Dean Collentine reported, we have proposed that accelerated students be allowed to take 600-level courses, since they are *de facto* graduate students, as they are completing components of their program, even though they are still officially in an “undergraduate career” and are not (yet) technically graduate students in our “system.” We are continuing to work on this issue; please stay tuned for more information in the months ahead.
- c) Associate Dean Collentine presented the second issue regarding the interpretation of a single 600 course, and whether it’s a single course per semester/year/career. Chair Dawn Clifford explained her suggestion (A) in terms for non-accelerated students would be to allow the student to take up to 12 units, which is as many units as a non-degree seeking graduate can use toward a graduate degree upon admission. The other Suggestion, (B) that was mentioned by Slava Fofanov for non-accelerated students, would be to allow up to 9 units, as (most) master-level students can transfer in 9 units from another institution.
 - i. Laura Sujo-Montes commented, she disagrees with Suggestion A, allowing up to 12 units, because non-degree seeking students already have a (Bachelor's) degree, and that’s why they need to enroll in the Graduate College to become a degree-seeking student.
 - ii. Salva Fofanov presented his comments for and against Suggestion B. He explained that he likes the Suggestion B, because it allows for the same policy to work for multiple programs with different number of total units, and it allows the same policy to work for both the master’s and a PhD program; however, undergraduates don't pay the program fees that graduate students pay. Not only is this not fair, but these program fees go to fund various initiatives for graduate students that these undergraduate students might also be benefitting from but not paying for.
 - iii. Emily Hoppe explained the issues this creates in the Music Department, and how difficult it will make it for their students.
 - iv. Hal Tagma mentioned that the tuition costs are about the same for an undergraduate degree vs. a graduate degree. (Link to tuition costs: <https://nau.edu/admissions/tuition-and-cost/tuition-expenses/>). Colleen Bryon explained that is probably because undergraduates take more classes than graduate students, while graduate student take fewer classes and the cost per course, is higher.
 - v. Associate Dean Collentine reminded the committee that nothing is finalized, and we are working towards determining if we can allow accelerated students to take 600 level classes, or not. She reported with continued conversations, she hopes we will have a clearer idea in

January, as to whether we'll be able to make the exception for accelerated students.

- d) Associate Dean Collentine presented the third issue, that the interpretation is and has been that it is open to seniors only (i.e., students with 90+ units), but it's unclear who has enforced this, if anyone. Associate Dean Collentine presented her suggestion to open 600 classes to non-accelerated seniors only, with approval, and noted this does not apply to accelerated students. She explained that possible approval could come from the undergraduate advisor, instructor, or department, depending on what is decided, as necessary.
 - i. Slava Fofanov commented that he views undergraduates participating in graduate level course as a talented undergraduate, or "take at your own risk." He is uncertain if we should limit our students who want to challenge themselves. Several committee members commented in the Zoom chat box, that they agree that undergraduate students should at least have the instructor's approval to take a 600-level class. Dean Watwood commented that the Graduate College can make exceptions.
 - ii. The committee will re-visit this topic at the next UGC meeting in January, 2021.

VI. Live Well NAU – Melissa Griffin

- a) Melissa Griffin from NAU's Health Promotion office, which is part of Campus Health Services gave a presentation about assisting our graduate students with their health and well-being. Melissa thanked Dawn Clifford for working on and collaborating with her on this new initiative.
- b) She reviewed the services that Campus Health provides to students, faculty, and staff including all medical and mental health services.
- c) Melissa introduced a new tool called Live Well NAU, that helps students and staff prioritize wellness or maintain a certain level of wellness. Live Well NAU provides a framework for eight dimensions of wellness, which begins with taking a self-assessment, and then guides the student or staff on how to set SMART goals, and then provides possible action items to assist with the identified area of need. The website also lists NAU and Flagstaff specific community resources. All information can be found on the website: <https://in.nau.edu/livewellnau>.
- d) Melissa reported the need to advertise this valuable resource by distributing the Live Well NAU handbill, downloading the icon for marketing communications or events to identify it as Live Well NAU event, that promotes wellness for all students, faculty, and staff across the University.
- e) The group discussed specific ideas on how we can best inform our graduate students about Campus Health resources and them getting connected.
- f) Slava Fofanov explained the various health issues and concerns that are surfacing regarding international students, because they are not able to travel back to their home country for health and dental services due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. He asked Melissa for any options or recommendations for international students. Melissa reported that unfortunately, vision services are not offered on campus, but the Dental

Hygiene Department has a clinic on south campus, that has low cost, or free services for students. She encouraged students explore health insurance options.

The meeting adjourned at 4:48pm MST.