

## University Graduate Committee

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

3:00-5:00pm

Online via ZOOM

**Members Present:** Michael Amundson (History), Colleen Byron (Administration), Ginger Christenson (Sustainable Communities), Dawn Clifford (Public Health), Karina Collentine (Ex-officio: Graduate College Associate Dean), Bettie Coplan (Physician Assisting), John Fegyveresi (Climate Sciences), Slava Fofanov (Informatics & Computer Science), Heidi Feigenbaum (Engineering- Mechanical), Matthew Gidley (Engineering, Informatics, and Applied Sciences), John Heick (Physical Therapy & Athletic Training), Rich Hofstetter (Forestry), Emily Hoppe (Music), Stephanie Hurst (Chemistry & Biochemistry), Maiah Jaskoski (Politics & International Affairs), Lynn Jones (Criminology & Criminal Justice), Frederick Lampe (Anthropology), Ji Eun Lee (educational psychology), Truong Nghiem (Informatics & Computer Science), Michelle Parsons (Interdisciplinary Health), Nicole Price (Spanish), Nancy Riggs (School of Earth and Sustainability), Danielle Ross (Science Teaching), Brendan Russo (Engineering – Civil), Laura Sujo-Montes (Educational Specialties), Lara Taggart (Occupational Therapy), Melinda Tremel (Ex Officio: Curriculum and Assessment Director), David Trilling (Astronomy & Planetary Science), Ann Vert (Nursing & PL), Sneha Vissa (Graduate Student Government), Maribeth Watwood (Ex Officio: Graduate College Dean), Bridget Wipf (Ex-officio: Library).

**Members Absent:** Vedran Dronjic (Applied Linguistics), Jay Farness (English – Literature), Rebecca Frantz (Educational Specialties), Lena Gaddis (Educational Psychology), Catherine Gehring (Biological Sciences), John Gibbs (Anthropology), Robert Goodman (Psychological Sciences), Mike Gowanlock (Informatics & Computer Science), Sibylle Gruber (English – RWDMS), Erika Konrad (English – Professional Writing), Gretchen McAllister (Teaching & Learning), Ann Medill (Social Work), Mohamed Mohamed (Sociology), Ishmael Munene (Ex-officio: Faculty Senate), Katsu Oi (Applied Sociology), Grace Okoli (Educational Leadership), Sue Pieper (Curriculum and Instruction), Sandra Raymond (English – Education), Vicki Ross (Teaching & Learning), Kathryn Savage (Business), Erik Schiefer (Geography, Planning, & Recreation), Janine Schipper (Applied Sociology), Anna Sosa (Communication Science & Disorders), Jon Torn (Communication), Franklin Vernon (Parks & Recreation), Nicole Walker (English – Creative Writing), Bahattin Yildiz (Mathematics & Statistics), Lydia Wielgus (Business).

The meeting came to order at 3:00pm

1. Emily Hoppe – Welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Motion to Approve meeting minutes for February – approved – unanimous, 0 ‘no’ votes, 0 abstentions.
3. Dean Watwood

- a. Dean Watwood discussed the ongoing situation with COVID-19 and explained that the Graduate College is willing to be as flexible as possible to help students get through this unique time.
  - b. Nancy Riggs asked if there has been any discussion about postponing the April 15 accept/reject date. Dean Watwood responded that she will look more into it but that everyone should be flexible with the deadlines that students are faced with.
4. Associate Dean Collentine
  - a. Associate Dean Collentine began by announcing that Debbie Mariage is the new ETD coordinator at the graduate college.
  - b. Slava Fovanov asked about summer master defenses and if the student will still need to enroll in one credit hour? Associate Dean Collentine responded that she expects that students will not be required to enroll in the credit but that a decision has not been made yet.
  - c. Maiah Jaskowski asked when the deadline is for spring graduation. Megan Bechtel responded that May 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline.
5. GSG Co-President Sneha Vissa
  - a) Sneha expressed that many graduate students are concerned about needing to go to campus to conduct research. Dean Watwood responded that students, if able, are encouraged to conduct their research remotely.
  - b) If you have any questions on her report, you can email her directly at sv468@nau.edu
6. Graduate College Presentation – Master’s-in-passing and master’s fall back
  - a) Masters-in-passing – Associate Dean Collentine explained that the goal is that students leave NAU with both a masters and doctoral degree. In order for students to qualify, students must be in good academic standing, fill out a form, and get the department’s approval. The student will get the master’s degree as soon as they complete the requirements, not when they get their doctoral degree. Megan then explained that students will not have to apply for the master’s degree nor pay for the application. However, the student will need to apply for graduation and pay the graduation fee. Once they have applied for graduation, the degree will be awarded during the normal graduation timeline and the student will then continue on with their doctoral degree.
  - b) Laura Sujo-Montes asked if a student would still have to publish a thesis in Proquest if the master’s program requires it? Associate Dean Collentine responded if it is a requirement, then it will still need to be done. Dean Watwood stated that eventually the goal would be for a non-thesis track.
  - c) Melinda Tremel explained that there is a lot that goes into creating a masters program for a doctoral program but that her office can help with the production of it.
  - d) Masters Fall Back – Associate Dean Collentine explained that this is for current doctoral students who no longer want to pursue their doctoral degree and want to change to a master’s degree. The student would still have to complete all of the requirements for the master’s program. Megan explained that the student will first have to fill out a form and get it approved by the department. Then Graduate Admissions or CIE will make the change in LOUIE. Megan also explained that the student will still have to apply for graduation and pay the graduation fee.

- e) Rich Hofstetter asked if a student that doesn't pass their comprehensive exam qualifies for this Masters fall back. Megan responded that yes they qualify, they will just need to complete any requirements for the Masters degree.
  - f) If you have any further questions on these two processes, reach out to Associate Dean Collentine or Megan Bechtel.
7. Presentation from the NAU Counseling Center – Megan Gavin, Director and Counselor, Carl Dindo, Clinical Coordinator and Counselor
- a) Megan Gavin began by giving some statistics on mental health issues in graduate students nationwide. She reported that 65% of graduate students feel overwhelming anxiety, 45% feel so depressed it was difficult to function, and 13% had thoughts of suicide. She explained that NAU seems to be on par with these statistics. She explained that there are many social factors that are impacting the mental health of students and that a major one is racism.
  - b) Laura Sujo-Montes asked if there is support for students with PTSD and Megan responded that there is and that they treat students with it frequently.
  - c) Carl Dindo began by inviting member to recall the feelings they had and how people treated them in a time of personal crisis. He explained that it can be difficult to know what to say when a student is in crisis but that you don't need to have a Ph.D. in counseling to know what to do. He invited members to pull from their personal experiences to know what to say.
  - d) Carl then discussed how to identify students in distress. He explained how there are both typical and atypical concerns. Typical concerns include: life adjustments, managing multiple roles, relationships, home/family concerns, academics, financial stress, conflicts with faculty, and work-life balance. These stresses are normal, and it is expected that students face these. Atypical concerns include: dramatic changes in academic performance, excessive absences, changes in mood or behavior, or marked change in dress/hygiene. These are atypical signs that the student may need help.
  - e) Carl continued by discussing ways to support students in distress. He said first you should think back to your personal crisis and use that experience to sympathize with the student. He also said you could consult with other faculty/supervisors/chairs and seek advice from them. Lastly, he stated that you can call Counseling Services and they can help advise you on what to say/do to help the student.
  - f) Heidi Feigenbaum commented that Counseling Services is understaffed and that students can't get appointments. Carl responded that they are working on finding ways to reach out to more students and that they recently hired six new therapists to help manage the workload.
  - g) Next Carl and Megan discussed how to talk to graduate students. They stated that conversations should be held in private unless the student is not comfortable with that. They also explained that you should not promise confidentiality. Cases of sexual abuse or discrimination have to be reported. Lastly, they explained that the simplest way of helping student is by providing an ear and being present with the student.
  - h) Carl and Megan concluded their presentation by discussing what specifically to say to students. They stated to begin by expressing care and concern and to listen to the student's concerns without judgment, interruption, or advice giving. It is also important that you ask the student directly if they are thinking about hurting themselves. They also explained that currently all appointments are via telehealth.

- i) Lara Taggart asked what services are available for students not on the Flagstaff Mountain campus. Carl responded that any student can call and receive help via telehealth.
- j) Emily Hoppe asked how to approach students who don't want to go to Counseling Services? Megan said that you could begin by referring students to medical services, which will get them in the door for counseling.

Meeting adjourned: 5:04pm