

## Office of Graduate & Professional Studies

**University Graduate Committee Meeting  
Minutes Wednesday, October 16, 2024**

**3:00-5:00pm – Online Via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Colleen Byron (Organizational Leadership), Tiffany Cooke (Physician Assistant Studies), Marie-Christine Goodworth (Clinical Psychology), Brooke de Heer (Criminology and Criminal Justice), Catrin Edgeley (Forestry), Glenn Edgerton (PT/AT), Joshua Emery (Astronomy and Planetary Science), John Fegyveresi (Climate Science and Solutions), Marianne Fillhouer (Educational Psychology), Tom Finger (History), John Heick (CHHS, Physical Therapy), Susana Hernandez (Educational Psychology), Liza Holeski (Biology), Jeff Hovermill (Mathematics and Statistics), Stephanie Hurst (Chemistry), Mahendra Joshi (MBA), Stefanie Kunze (Sociology), Donna Lewis (Educational Leadership), Nanette “Gigi” Lopez (Interdisciplinary Health), Gretchen McAllister (Teaching and Learning), Stephen Meserve (Politics and International Affairs), Jose Moreno (Ethnic Studies), Keith Nowicki (Applied Physics and Material Science), Brettania O’Connor (Health Sciences), Michelle Parsons (Anthropology), Gillian Porter (Occupational Therapy), Natalie Randolph (UGC Chair, Social Work), Sara Rinfret (Politics and International Affairs), Richard Rogers (Communication), Brendan Russo (Civil Engineering), Samuel Severance (Teaching Science with Certification), Michael Shafer (Bioengineering), Sandra Stewart (Clinical Speech and Language Pathology), Nora Timmerman (Sustainable Communities), Ann Vert (Nursing & PL), Andy Walters (Psychological Sciences), Kyle Winfree (SICCS), Gavin Zhang (Business Analytics)

**Members Absent:** Joe Collentine (Spanish), Slava Fofanov (SICCS), Nicole Hampton (Educational Specialties), Katsuya Oi (Sociology), Luke Plonsky (Applied Linguistics), Nancy Sullivan (Kitt School of Music)

**Ex Officio:** Laura Bounds (Associate Vice Provost, Office of Graduate & Professional Studies); Jennifer Lee (Graduate Student Government), Debbie Mariage (Office of Graduate and Professional Studies), Maribeth Watwood (Vice Provost, for Academic Programming and Graduate Studies)

**UGC Chair Natalie Randolph welcomed everyone to the meeting and the meeting came to order at 3:05 pm MST.**

## 1. Announcements

- i. Maribeth Watwood, Vice Provost for Academic Programming and Graduate Studies
  - i. Maribeth welcomed everyone and extended her appreciation for the role and intention of an entity like the UGC. All members come with the same focus of doing well by graduate students and improving how we can support those students with well-considered policy and resources.
- ii. Laura Bounds, Associate Vice Provost, Office of Graduate & Professional Studies (OGPS)
  - i. 3MRP: After experimenting with a new event time of year that would have aligned with the 3MT national competitions, it was decided to move the 3MRP event back to the original spring schedule giving our students more time to further their research and compile data. The event will be held on Thursday, April 17, 2025 from 3:30-5pm.
  - ii. We are developing our OGPS Instagram social media efforts. Please share any stories, awards, etc. from your department/program and your students.
  - iii. **If UGC members have not yet signed up for their service option for AY24-25, please find the link to do so in the attached meeting documents.**
  - iv. The Graduate Coordinator Training was held on Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. Please contact the OGPS office if you would like a link to the recording.
  - v. Please look to the announcement attachment for professional development opportunities for your graduate students: Entering Mentoring; Resume, Cover Letter and Interview Tips Workshop; and Graduate Student Grant Writing Workshop.
  - vi. UGC members can find the 699/799 optional guideline contract template on the OGPS website under the Forms Index (link in announcement attachment).
  - vii. A reminder to please send updated Program Handbooks to [OGPS@nau.edu](mailto:OGPS@nau.edu) and [curriculum.assessment@nau.edu](mailto:curriculum.assessment@nau.edu) by the end of November 2024 to be included in the new OGPS Graduate student Handbook. Be sure that the revised date (reflecting the most recent review) is updated on the document prior to sending.
- iii. Norma Zheng – OGPS - Program Coordinator, Senior, Graduation
  - i. Fall 2024 Commencement Updates and Details (for any Summer 24, Fall 24 and/or Winter 24 graduating students):
    1. October 28: Graduate RSVP and Guest Tickets are live
    2. November 15: First round of ticket requests closes (Graduates can request up to 4 tickets in the 1<sup>st</sup> round)
    3. November 18: Second round of ticket requests is live (number of tickets graduates are able to request is TBD, based on how many tickets are claimed in the 1<sup>st</sup> round).
    4. December 6: Final deadline to submit the Graduate RSVP and all

requests for tickets.

- ii. Gretchen McAllister asked for the commencement doctoral protocol for several of her students in China. Debbie Mariage, OGPS Program Manager & ETD Coordinator, replied that doctoral students should have successfully defended their dissertations before attending a commencement ceremony. Gretchen will confirm the student details and reach out to both Norma and Debbie with updates.
- iii. Stephanie Hurst inquired to any policies surrounding the protocols for students that graduate late – students who have completed their degrees but were not able to participate in the Spring Commencement ceremony. Norma confirmed that those students can participate in the Fall ceremony, they need to send an email to [gradgraduation@nau.edu](mailto:gradgraduation@nau.edu) so that a commencement attribute can be added to their account. This ensures that they will be on the e-list to get information about commencement and guest tickets.
- iv. Graduate Academic Advising Report (AAR) Updates and Details:
  - 1. Norma directed faculty to the OGPS Graduate ARR webpage: <https://nau.edu/graduate-professional-studies/graduate-aar/>
  - 2. The OGPS was hoping to have all 160+graduate programs transitioned to the new AAR build, but unfortunately due to limited resources for the Registrar’s team (a redesign of the Undergraduate General Studies program), only 70 graduate programs were completed. There is a multi-wave production schedule. The first wave includes the initial 70 programs. Those programs were selected as they were determined to be the easiest of builds. The second wave currently lists 10 programs, and the third wave is yet to be determined. Please reference these lists on the webpage to determine which phase your program falls under.
  - 3. Each program in the second and third waves will have a transitionary period where both the Program of Study and the Graduate AAR will be used to ensure that all program requirements are met for a degree posting. First wave programs are just using the AAR. The end goal is for the AAR to replace the manual process of review and automatically award degrees.
  - 4. Students and faculty can find the newly created AAR guides on the website for assistance. Programs will determine who in their office will oversee the new system. Those individuals or teams will need to pass a quiz to confirm their understanding of the new system (including how to process exceptions).
  - 5. The full transition to the AAR is a complicated build and timeline. Every program will have a learning curve and we will most likely discover challenges as we work to accommodate all the exceptions into the system.
- iv. Debbie Mariage – OGPS – Program Manager & ETD Coordinator, ETD Canvas Format

Course:

- i. In an effort to reduce paper and manual processes to better serve graduating students in a timely manner, the OGPS office has created a canvas course in a student's dashboard for format checks to theses and dissertations. It is just a change in how Debbie receives the format check forms as she reviews for consistency and quality of end product of a student's final thesis or dissertation. This is a pilot project that we hope will result in better support and communication as a student completes the last of their milestones.
  - 1. Students that have 699 and 799 will see this course (zero credit) in their dashboard.
  - 2. The modules will contain information on timelines, frequently asked questions, format checklist and sample pages. These are all the same resources/documents that can be found on our website, but we hope that the canvas course makes it easier for students to find and understand the resources and timelines.
  - 3. Debbie is working to get faculty access to the course via a steward role.
- ii. Summer Dissertation Defenses: though summer defenses may be an option to help a student meet their final requirements, it does put a burden on faculty and campus partners. Faculty are not on contract, UGC reps are therefore not present and administrative offices are often scrambling to provide support. Historically, we have always seen a handful of summer defenses but this last summer (2024), we saw twenty plus defenses. Debbie thanked John Heick and Ann Leslie Vert for their tremendous help last summer to represent the UGC in as many defenses as they could cover. Tiffany Cooke inquired if she could include summer defenses as part of her UGC service commitment since she is a 12-month faculty member. She would look to spring and summer terms to complete her service commitment. If there are other 12-month faculty UGC members who would also like to adjust their commitment schedule, please reach out to Debbie at [etd@nau.edu](mailto:etd@nau.edu).
- v. Lexi Bornstein, Assistant Director, Admissions & Enrollment Service: tabled until the November meeting.
- vi. Dr. KT Thompson & Dr. Laura Umphrey, Graduate Ombuds Program:
  - i. The Ombuds Program serves as a confidential, independent, impartial and informal resource for faculty, staff and graduate students to discuss issues or concerns that impact their work, life or study at NAU. The office offers one-one- consultations, facilitated conversation or mediation coaching on interpersonal communication as well as a selection of workshops throughout the year.
  - ii. Their first annual report contained a population of graduate students with concerns or uncertainty to graduate processes, how to navigate

opposing views of faculty on their committees, etc. Drs. Thompson and Umphrey encouraged faculty to reach out to their office for suggestions for improved communication, clarity of processes and expectations. They also can assist faculty with a variety of conflict resolutions solutions for any issues with mentoring and advising a graduate student.

- vii. Drs. Stefanie Kunze and Melanie Hildebrandt (Department of Sociology):
  - i. They have partnered with Indigenous Educators to create the Care for Nahasdzaan (Care for Mother Earth) program. It is a 7.5-week program open to undergraduate students offered as a Study Abroad program through the Center of International Education. Interested students must apply: [nau.edu/nahasdzaan](http://nau.edu/nahasdzaan). The program aims to connect with Dine/Navajo and Hopi communities to understand the gap between mainstream, western and traditional indigenous lifestyles. Students travel to various locations in Arizona to participate in traditional projects and critical discussions.
- viii. Dr. Susan Purrington, Associate Teaching Professor, Geography, Planning and Recreation:
  - i. Dr. Purrington announced that their department launched a Graduate Certificate in Recreational Therapy this fall. This is a new program that will allow graduate students to pursue a career in community-based or health care setting providing recreation services. The certificate is a 1-year online program: 3 courses in the fall and 3 in the spring. There is international curriculum built into the program and students will be going to Italy this year. She is asking UGC reps to share this with their departments. Information zoom sessions:
    - 1. October 29 at 4pm and November 6 at 10am.
- ix. Dr. Natalie Papini, Evidenced-Based Teaching in Higher Education (Assistant Professor, IHPHD):
  - i. The IHPHD program have developed a course for students to get additional training on teaching courses in higher education. This is often a barrier to entry for a lot of students in getting their first academic job. It is a 16-week, 1-unit elective for any graduate students. They hope to be able to change the course to a 3-unit elective in the future.

## 2. Current Business

- i. Chair Elect Presentation/Discussion:
  - i. Dr. Sara Rinfret has had to withdraw her name for consideration due to participating in an annual accreditation conference.
  - ii. Natalie extended the opportunity to other UGC representatives to consider the Chair Elect role.
- ii. April Meeting Minutes
  - i. Motion to approve the UGC September meeting minutes as distributed was made by Ann Vert and seconded by Kyle Winfree. **Minutes were approved** (26 aye, 2 abstain, 0 nay), via chat box.

- iii. Proposed Revisions to Bylaws (second view):
- i. Motion to approve the name change of the Graduate College to Office of Graduate & Professional Studies in the bylaws was made by Kyle Winfree and seconded by Colleen Byron. Motion carried (24 ayes, 1 abstain, 0 nays).
  - ii. Motion to approve 4.1.1, "Voting members of the University Graduate Committee shall include faculty members, as defined by the Faculty Senate Constitution, *"up to one representative per program..."*" Motion to approve was made by Kyle Winfree and seconded by Colleen Byron. Motion carried (20 ayes, 2 abstain, 0 nays).
  - iii. Motion to approve 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.1.4 pertaining to the Officers of the Committee. Motion to approve was made by Kyle Winfree and seconded by Colleen Byron. Motion carried (25 ayes, 1 abstain, 0 nays).
  - iv. Motion to approve 6.1 pertaining to Duties of Membership. Added language to the Duties of Membership to include the following responsibility, "Review topics and applicable policies with appropriate department representatives". Motion to approve was made by Kyle Winfree and seconded by Colleen Byron. Motion carried (20 ayes, 1 abstain, 0 nays).
  - v. Motion to approve 6.2 word change from "expected" to "required" for service commitments/needs. Motion to approve was made by Colleen Byron and seconded by John Heick. Motion carried (21 ayes, 3 abstain, 1 nay).
  - vi. Motion to approve 7.3 language added to the Meetings section of the bylaws, "Member may attend remotely; a calendar invite will be provided prior to the meeting". This edit was needed as the meetings are no longer in person. Motion to approve was made by Kyle Winfree and seconded by Colleen Bryon. Motin carred (21 ayes, 1 abstain, 0 nays).
  - vii. Motion to approve 7.5 was tabled "Meetings are open to the public to voting members, ex officio members, and invited guests". Motion to table was made by Colleen Byron and seconded by John Heick. Motion **carried** (20 ayes, 0 abstain, 0 nays).
  - viii. UGC representatives asked if we could move the voting items to the beginning of the meeting.
3. Motion to Adjourn the meeting: Kyle Winfree moved to adjourn, seconded by Colleen. Motion carried (9 ayes, 0 abstain, 0 nays).

**The meeting adjourned at: 5:05 p.m. MST.**