

Graduate Student Employment Committee (GSEC)

Minutes of June 17, 2020 meeting

Voting members present – Fuhrman, Jung, Handschy, Scialacqua, Skuodas, Tranel, Walker-Cecil, White.

Voting members absent – Goldberg, Jepsen, Lingo, Norling.

Non-voting members present – Campo, Danger, Kiser, Welter. Guests – Jan Waterhouse, Christine Getz.

The meeting was called to order by Associate Dean Campo @ 9:04 AM.

- 1) Meeting minutes for April 2020 meeting are forthcoming.
- 2) The Graduate College understands COVID19 is impacting graduate students in multiple different ways.
 - a) COVID19 has caused financial distress for students. Grad College funded all Division for Student Life and Office of DEI requests from graduate students. The Graduate College has made this commitment through the fall.
 - b) Teaching assistants have not received guidance yet on fall teaching plan. CLAS committee recommends not putting all face to face teaching burden on graduate students and to be mindful that time commitments from graduate teaching assistants should not be greater than normal. Center for Teaching working on a plan to provide material for teaching assistants.
 - c) All employees with health considerations would be allowed to petition for an accommodation. Per HR the process is under review. The office handling the requests for graduate student employees would go through Disabilities services.
 - d) Research ramp up - Associate Dean Campo restated announcement that VP for Research is in Stage 3 of the research ramp up. Prevailing thoughts are that the next steps will be addressing needs of nonlaboratory scholarly activities in the near future.
 - e) Travel to campus is difficult for students located internationally. For two months the Graduate College has been collaborating with International Programs to discuss issues related to crossing the US border, obtaining student or work visas, payroll tax for employees outside of the US, The need may arise for creating a formal deferral process for international graduate students unable to enter the US for Fall 2020.

Dean Keller wrote a message in support of University of Iowa diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement – Dean Keller’s message was distributed to Graduate Faculty and graduate students yesterday. All members are encouraged to read the statement if they have not already done so.

GSEC membership changes - Faculty seat held by Dan Tranel will be appointed by Faculty Senate this summer. The other faculty seat was filled by Anita Jung. Graduate Student Senate (GSS) seats were not filled in April, therefore, GSS will work to fill the seats in the early fall. Please reach out to prospective committee members and encourage them to self-nominate. COGs seats were voted upon, but have not yet been ratified by Graduate Student and Professional Government (GPSG)

- 3) A question was raised whether faculty been surveyed about teaching preferences? Graduate student employees report not having been surveyed about teaching preferences. Human Resources

did not survey faculty, but Faculty Senate did. Graduate students were surveyed on their spring experiences, but was not specific to teaching preferences. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences created a webpage form to intake concerns. This webpage was advertised in an email to CLAS grad students, post docs, faculty, and staff.

- 4) Family leave – To launch discussion KaLeigh White provided a spreadsheet related to parental leave at peer institutions and Board of Regent institutions. There are limitations to the spreadsheet as some details are not clear unless one reads the content at each link. For instance, Michigan State benefits are different for the birth parent vs adopted parents. Some institutions limit leave to once throughout the career, some require graduate employee be beyond their first year. Most institutions provide at least six weeks of paid leave to the birth parent while nonbirth parents are provided some leave (may be unpaid). At the University of Iowa graduate student employees may use family care giving and/or parental leave which is limited to five days per year. It appears the University of Iowa has one of the weakest parental paid leave policies for graduate student employees. Iowa State is a BOR institution and has not prohibited ISU graduate student employee paid policy. The burden of funding such policies most likely falls upon the institution.

The several members stated they believed the current parental leave policy is inconsistently applied across the institution. The committee would prefer to reduce parental leave disparity amongst graduate student employees at Iowa. For example, there is disparity when distinguishing adopted parent from nonbirth parent from birth parent. The committee also voiced concern over policies using ambiguous policy language such as “highly encouraged.” Concerns were expressed about leaving decisions in the hands of individual faculty or departmental negotiations. When students don’t approach central offices, they are more vulnerable to varying attitudes and interpretations in how to apply policy.

In July 2017 the The Carver College of Medicine discussed this issue with students and postdocs. A parental leave policy was drafted based on peer benchmark and NIH-specific rules (eight week paid leave policy for either parent). The draft document was shared, then stalled. Council for Status of Women did a lot of work on the topic of parental leave and created a policy recommendation. Professor Jung will try to locate that document to share.

Campo called for a working group on the subject. KaLeigh White (chair), Kezia Walker-Cecil, Sydney Skuodas, Dan Tranel, Anita Jung, Christine Getz. Campo further requests the group commit to meeting to work on the project before the July GSEC meeting.

- 5) Fall planning –
 - a) Fees discussion. Throughout Spring 2020 many discussions were held in GSEC related to various fees charged to graduate students and graduate student employees. No formal recommendation was written after those discussion. Next agenda will include recommendation on fees.
 - b) Discuss development of summer healthcare education campaign on when/how charges are applied for fellowships/assistants. Ask Benefits to attend meeting and address the question. Can it be written or shared in a way that prepares students for this charge.
 - c) Review and discuss GSEC bylaws for further refinement.
 - d) CIMT and other emergency planning committee should include a graduate student representative. Policy is written into the Operations Manual 16.6 – and it excludes Deans, Faculty, graduate students. If no regular representative is possible, then at least understand how

shared governance groups can pass along their concerns (liaison vs voting member). Campo will email Kevin Kregel that GSEC is asking for a way to provide input to CIMT return to campus decision makers.

Meeting adjourned at 10:03 AM.