

Graduate Council Meeting September 2, 2021

Present: Professors: Beck, Cwiertny, Doucette, Forbes, Gardner, Greyser, Hribar, O'Shaughnessy, Qian, Van Otterloo; Graduate Students: Harper, Post, Sells, Waldstein; Graduate College Personnel: Arbisi-Kelm, Danger, McKibben, Teitle, Thein, Varga.

Absent: Professors: Badovinac, Hoffman, Kang; Graduate College Personnel: Campo.

The meeting was called to order by Dean Thein @ 08:18 AM.

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Dean Thein began by introducing herself to Council. After working at the University of Iowa, she continues to find it an amazing place. She stated graduate and professional education plays a central role into what makes Iowa a flagship institution. She is honored and privileged to build upon the work Graduate Council does with the Graduate College. Subsequently, each Graduate Council member introduced themselves by name and college/program then shared something that interested them in serving on Graduate Council.

2. Minutes of the May 6, 2021, meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Review of Council duties and responsibilities.

4. A document from the Manual of Rules and Regulation was circulated prior to the meeting that outlined the duties and responsibilities of Graduate Council. Dean Thein looks to this advisory body to function as the executive committee of the graduate faculty. They can expect to see program or policy revisions, and asked to make recommendations. Furthermore, they may assist the dean in administrative matters or be asked to serve on ad hoc committees. Council is a key stakeholder and primary advisory body and may consult, provide feedback or input in matters related to graduate education. The Council represents a wide spectrum of campus colleges. Representatives, as collaborating partners, amplify the initiatives undertaken by the Graduate College.

5. Announcements and Updates from the Graduate College and Graduate Student Senate.

- i. Dean Thein has done a lot of listening with people across campus in her first eight weeks. Currently, she is in the process of meeting each collegiate dean and their associate dean for graduate education to discuss challenges and opportunities for the Graduate College to be a good partner to their college. She regularly attends Provost's Leadership Group, Dean's Council, and Graduate Student Senate (GSS) meetings. She has heard from the Postdoc Association, Board of Regents, and COGS; all have shared their concerns related to COVID.
- ii. GSS President Waldstein convened the General Assembly early this year to hit the ground running. Positions on committees needed to be filled, and progress has been made in this area. The Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) has been in discussion with GSS about increasing representation to better balance representation. Although certain characteristics are desirable for the GPSG seat, when seats are unfilled there is executive latitude in filling them with an interest in the position. More people involved in committee and representative work will bring more diverse perspectives to issues faced by graduate students. GSS leaders work to amplify the concerns of students; recently students have voiced concerned over social issues and racism.
- iii. Assistant Dean Teitle announced 1,500 new graduate students engaged with orientation activities which included both virtual sessions and in-person informational fair. A high rate of satisfaction and feeling more prepared was reported by students.

6. Listening Session.

As a former English teacher, who then prepared others to become English teachers, Dean Thein feels people learn best through discussion and dialogue. She asked Council to share issues they see for

graduate education in their college and what would they like to work on. Below is a list of topics shared at the meeting.

- i. Concern for graduate student teaching assistants who are navigating difficult social and political issues (free speech and racial justice) of the times, and the undue burden this puts on them.
- ii. It is becoming increasingly difficult to fill committees of five in an institution with decreasing tenured faculty members.
- iii. What are the enrollment trends? With pandemic restrictions on travel, international student recruitment and enrollment are of special interest.
- iv. Faculty with low enrollment courses feel pressured to cancel which reduced the types of offerings. What does it mean to right-size a program?
- v. Mask wearing and not wearing – students are feeling pressured on both sides of the issue, which impacts both their ability to perform their jobs as well as their academics.

The meeting was adjourned at 09:21 AM.