Iowa State University Graduate Council MEETING MINUTES

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| ***Meeting: Graduate Council*** | ***Key Roles*** |
| Date: November 30, 2023Place: 3150 Beardshear Hall | Meeting Leader: Ajay Nair, Chair |
| Start Time: 3:15 pm | Support: Natalie Robinson, Alberto Lara |
| End Time: 4:30 pm |  |

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| TIME | TOPIC | DISCUSSION LEADER |
| 3:15 | Call to Order* Attendance and seating of substitute council members
 | Nair  |
| 3:20 | Announcements and Remarks* Graduate Council Chair, Ajay Nair - no specific announcements, talking about restructuring Council
* Graduate Dean, Bill Graves - Natalie not here. Introduced Alberto. News that Michelle Soupir is not interim anymore. Michelle was brought in as Interim Associate Dean for graduate operations. Explained how Michelle came to the Graduate College and what a great job she did in the operations study between Huron Consulting and Iowa State. Study has had many impacts. Support packages from assistantships are in the pathway for enhancements. It is a 3-year plan. We are in year 1 and year 2 has been approved. Later in new business will talk about what steps the Graduate Council could take to prepare for year 3. Give Graduate College the authority to make appropriate updates to handbook if president approves. No approval yet for year 3. Could come anytime. The moment it happens, Graves wants the Graduate College to be ready to add language to the Handbook. Simple sentence to add or modify.
* Graduate College Associate Deans: Elena Cotos, Heather Greenlee, Michelle Soupir - no additional updates
* Graduate College Office, Natalie Robinson – (Nair) on behalf of Natalie, working with college of engineering, especially GCCC, working on new program.
 | Nair, Graves, Cotos, Greenlee, Soupir, Robinson |
| 3:30 | Consent Agenda* Agenda for November 30, 2023, meeting
* Minutes for October 26, 2023, meeting
* Items from Grad Catalog Curriculum Committee:
	+ No items ready for review
 |  Nair |
| 3:35 | Old Business* [Restructuring Graduate Council](https://1drv.ms/w/s%21AgHkWPEKrtNngYx_hi0s8AXzMZJ65g?e=13UZTz) update
	+ Nair - hope everyone had wonderful Thanksgiving break. Two weeks and the semester is over. Lots of excitement on campus. In terms of the restructuring proposal, all graduate faculty should have received an email from Faculty Senate for a vote. Didn’t have many people come to town hall. People talked about proposal. Second townhall did have faculty come in and give feedback. No substantial change.
	+ Freeman - Changed one or two sentences. Clearly described benefits for faculty but did not clearly describe benefits for graduate students. So, we added a sentence about making the work of the graduate students more visible. Changed nothing in proposal itself.
	+ Nair – So, the vote is going on right now ending December 8. Encourage faculty in your departments to vote and encourage others to vote.
	+ Freeman – as of 30 minutes ago, 330 faculty had voted. 90 percent in favor. List of graduate faculty was about 1600 when we started it. Brought it down to 1297 who actually received the opportunity to vote. P&S staff who are rank-only faculty did not get chance to vote. And our Affiliate faculty who don’t work for ISU did not vote either. In conversation with the Provost Office, since it was a faculty governance issue, only faculty should be allowed to vote. Still a lot of people have not voted.
	+ When the vote when out, received several emails from DOGES asking if there would be further discussion on proposed representation. There is some concern or desire for more discussion. They were wondering if there would be another forum.
	+ Freeman – if vote is positive next Friday, the process would start over in the Faculty Senate. It will eventually be voted on the floor of the Senate. Every department will have a vote because it will be a change in the Senate bylaws. Plenty of opportunity in Spring to modify. Rare to get something through the Senate without any changes. It will work its way through the normal Senate structures.
	+ Graves - What would happen if after all that Senate debate and discussion, if proposal would change drastically? There’s no going back on faculty vote.
	+ Freeman – Every graduate faculty who votes now has a representative to voice their vote on the floor of the Senate. We should continue to have conversations. A majority of faculty are graduate faculty.
	+ Morgan – When Senate votes on it will it be folded into language of what we are proposing or will Senate take care of that?
	+ Freeman – You don’t have to be a Senator to be on Graduate Council. Current proposed structure means you won’t have to be a Senator to serve. We are proposing that Senate committees be elected by graduate faculty.
	+ Nair – Hoping this will bring more transparency. Still operate as Council as we are, but just working with Faculty Senate.
 |  Nair |
|  4:15 | New Business* + Graves – We are in year 1 of the 3-year GA enhancement plan. In the current year it means we have been giving certain fee scholarships to GAs. This is the only change this year. Fall of 2024 those fee scholarship will continue. Some new fee scholarships will be added. The required tuition scholarship for master’s students will start to change. Effective next fall a half-time GA pursuing a master’s degree will be eligible for 75% tuition scholarship instead of 50% tuition scholarship. If a GA is on a quarter-time appointment, the scholarship will be 37.5% instead of 25%. Then, if year 3 is approved, effective Fall 2025, there will be another addition of the final installment of the fee support and the second step of getting to 100% tuition coverage for master’s students would take effect (quarter-time GAs would receive 50% scholarships). Discrepancy between master’s and doctoral students would disappear. This would align us with our peers in a much more strategic and competitive way. Huron study showed that we were the only institution that didn’t provide master’s students with 100% tuition scholarships. We have examples of students who come here for master’s degrees but are advised to apply for a PhD. As a Ph.D. student, they get superior tuition benefits, and then they switch to become a master’s student shortly before they graduate. We are uncompetitive in recruiting master’s students. There’s a financial burden, but all our peers are doing this. The president was particularly concerned about our competitiveness with mandatory fees, and the 3-year plan would bring us to about the mid-point of our peers. Over the summer Graves requested a special vote of Council to update handbook language so PIs could budget for these expenses. Now, Graves is asking the Council to consider giving the Graduate College authority to update the handbook language again immediately if year 3 of the plan is approved.
	+ Here is the sentence Graves is asking to be approved: “Because the financial terms of graduate assistantships at Iowa State University need to be competitive, the Graduate Council endorses updates to the Graduate College Handbook consistent with approved changes to tuition and fee coverage described in the GA support enhancement plan for academic years 2024, 2025, and 2026.”
	+ If passed, this will represent Council’s endorsement of the plan to increase our competitiveness and will allow PIs to budget for the expenses in grant proposals as quickly as possible.
	+ Freeman – I am not only very supportive of that, but those issues are not really Graduate Council issues anyway. This is a presidential decision.
	+ Marquart – Let’s consider a vote online for this. December 21st?
	+ Freeman – We could vote on it today.
	+ Weinstein – **Motion** to suspend the rules and do it over emails to have a chance to look over the text.
	+ Marquart – second
	+ Favor of motions. None opposed. Motion carries.
	+ Graves will send out email soon explaining the change.
	+ Nair - Starting Fall 2025 the fee scholarship will be on the grant. Only 50%.
	+ Weinstein – OSPA will not sign off on something that is not in the handbook. Not an uncommon issue. New policy coming down. Is this something that has legal bases. Is this a university policy or an OSPA policy? Is this something where digital flexibility could allow the university to anticipate better?
	+ O’Neal – Writing grants for future students.
	+ Weinstein – There have been cases where somebody has submitted renewals and faculty don’t find out until a couple months later. Reason faculty don’t know is because OSPA can’t do anything about it.
	+ Freeman – This is ISU’s interpretation of a federal policy, and I do not believe that other institutions have the same interpretation. But it is Iowa State’s interpretation, so they are not going to change it.
	+ Weinstein – The question is can we build something into the policy to allow flexibility?
	+ Freeman – How many of other peer institutions have that level of detail in their policies?
	+ O’Neal – another issue of students on grants written for previous policy. Tuition policy RAs, if they are supporting student on RA and don’t have enough money for the full tuition under the policies, can they use another account to cover the balance?
	+ Freeman – The answer is yes. If it’s a flexible account.
	+ O’Neal – I can support tuition from both of those combined? Or it has to be only one?
	+ Can be both if one is a flexible account.
	+ Freeman – Can’t use different grant to pay tuition.
	+ Weinstein – if student split between two different federal grants, then can split tuition.
	+ Nair – only covered 50% for master’s student.
	+ Graves – The sooner we get this into the handbook the fewer incidences/issues we will have.
 | Nair |
| 4:25 | Other Items/IssuesMarquart – This might be specifically an LAS issue. This has to do with interface between polices on dissolution of graduate programs. The way dissolution of program policies are written, administrators approach faculty in that program. Described as collaborative. But my understanding is that faculty are the only ones that can dissolve a program. Struggled with this at LAS. Faculty hires impact graduate students. They might come to do the research or teach, but if they don’t have faculty to study with, it is an empty agreement. Wondered if Graduate College could create some kind of mechanism to do wellness check for graduate programs. Just to look at what kind of resources are being funneled to those graduate programs. Are they being supported in the way they should be in faculty to student ratio? Marquart has seen a lot of pressure in LAS to put very qualified teaching professors into those roles. We’re coming up on accreditation. Might be a good time to visit this question. Have some leverage because coming on accreditation.* + Freeman – same issue for undergraduate programs. Because administration holds resource lines, it can create a situation where major disappears because there are no faculty to support it. Every department should look at it in their 7-year reviews. Not sure how it works for interdisciplinary programs.
	+ Graves – for most interdisciplinary programs we have had external reviews.
	+ Everett – Example, history department no longer here because undergrad students no longer taking history courses. Can we do wellness check? Case study on history department would be interesting. How did that happen?
	+ Marquart – We have new dean in LAS who is a historian. Freeman to answer your point, undergrads could walk away and go to other institutions. Graduate students have a more difficult time going to other places. Problematic or ethical issues on who faculty bring to the university and mentor that are specific to graduate education. Don’t want them bound in this disingenuous contract. So just thinking that there might be something with this new moment that we’re in with new dean coming and accreditation. That is a process that does have some teeth. External reviews, no one places attention to them.
	+ Graves – I think we could engage in something along those lines. A challenge could be what metrics to use? Faculty-to-student ratio, we have a lot of people on the graduate faculty roster and tremendous variation in their activity with graduate students, so there would be a lot of noise with that metric.
	+ Everett – Example, 3 faculty left to go to other institutions, and they haven’t replaced those positions. Saving money on budget, but personally lost tech comm guy that hasn’t been replaced. Two others who haven’t been replaced. Working within the budget to make these changes.
	+ Graves – We have an Associate Provost. It would be appropriate for her office to be engaged in what should be done. Graduate programs are considered within 7-year reviews.
	+ Marquart – We did develop rubric in English dept to see if some programs should be discontinued. It was a painful and controversial process, but it is possible to come up with a rubric. Only LAS or other programs too? Something we should pay attention to. It impacts faculty workplace issues, grad students work place issues. Trajectory of university itself is impacted.
	+ Weinstein – I agree that it impacts all those things. One interesting thing about proposal, that there are broader affects. Other departments could look at what’s happening with certain departments and see it as a start of a trend. Faculty losses have been happening even in the sciences department. Even if it’s only affecting parts of graduate education, the effects will spread. If we don’t treat problem holistically. It should be considered a common issue that could affect all of us.
	+ Freeman - Not just LAS issue. In CALS we have had a 20% budget cut in 2 years. And where that 20% comes from is reduction of faculty members.
	+ Nair – In horticulture, 2 faculty and 1 staff retired, we did not fill those positions. How much involvement does the Graduate College have when a department goes through an external evaluation?
	+ Graves – Graduate College Dean is invited to all exit meetings. I ask questions about their findings regarding graduate programs. I’m also invited to meetings after about 3.5 years to look at progress being made.
	+ O’Neal – We just had our review, you were in the exit part. We the DOGEs and support staff had meeting with the review team about graduate programs. Times where questions were grad college policy. Questions less about students and more policy. Would be better if someone like Dean or Associate Dean would be there and not just at the tail end. Effective use of your time
	+ Graves – That’s an idea that could be considered.
	+ O’Neal – wouldn’t the review committee meet with every program DOGE?
	+ Freeman – We set our itinerary with the external review team. Department Chair was able to sit in. Talking about strengths and weaknesses, wrote a lot about that in their report. I thought we were in charge of the schedule.
	+ Marquart – Not sure if it constitutes new business. Wondered if maybe the Dean would like to get rid of those departments that could create problems like that. Which is exactly what you wouldn’t want to do in a university. Not sure if new business. Willing to talk about it.
	+ Graves – If you could send me examples of new metrics and we can look into it.
	+ Nair – Any other items anyone would like to bring up?
	+ Morgan – end of meeting last time we had discussed the hourly work policy in the graduate handbook 3.2.3 Assistantship policies and procedures. We had floated the idea that we would revisit, or reconsider hourly work restrictions and the complicated process of working around it. I was under impression it would be on this agenda. Making sure it doesn’t’ fall off the radar.
	+ Nair – Discussed this with Natalie earlier and Bill explained how he handles it.
	+ Morgan – Bill had said he discussed this with other peer institutions ,and we are the only institution with these restrictions. Maybe considering rewriting this to make this hourly work restriction more flexible.
	+ Intent was to avoid graduate abuse.
	+ Marquart –Was it also the case that the policy doesn’t match the process you undergo?
	+ Graves – Council could also weigh-in from the other direction and say the policy is what the policy is, and we endorse that and we don’t want you to be working around that in any way. I try to adhere to the policy as closely as possibly but offer flexibility with students on hourly job if it’s available, as long as they understand differences between GAs and hourly work.
	+ Discuss bachelor’s-masters programs. Bachelor’s degree students who are doing concurrent master’s are excluded from some of the things they have a right to like hourly employment.
	+ Everett – the exploitative part will go away if 3-year plan goes through with tuition coverage for master’s. Hope on the horizon.
	+ Freeman – I think the exploitive piece will get worse. Grad students who didn’t want to pay 50% put on hourly and makes it cost less with faculty. When it starts costing faculty more to have a graduate student, they will figure out more ways to reduce cost.
	+ Marquart – Coursework useful for professional careers.
	+ Graves – Policy adjustments could be made specifically for concurrent bachelor’s-masters students.
	+ A discussion among several council members followed on issues and opportunities related to concurrent bachelor’s-master’s students. Consensus was that this topic should be discussed more next semester.
	+ Nair- Natalie will reach out and find time and date that works for us for next meeting.
	+ Nair – Susana from seed science, her schedule doesn’t allow her to come to these meetings. Natalie will try her best to schedule next meetings.
	+ Nair – Next meeting is virtual.
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| **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Discipline Area** | **Aug** | **Sept** | **Oct** | **Nov** | **Dec** | **Jan** | **Feb** | **Mar** | **Apr** |
| Ajay | Nair | Biological & Agricultural Sciences, Chair | P | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Gretchen | Mosher | Biological & Agricultural Sciences | P | P | A | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Alyssa | Emery | Social Sciences & Education | P | P | A | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Petruta | Caragea  | Physical Sciences, Math & Engineering | P | P | P | A |  |  |  |  |  |
| Chunhui | Xiang | Social Sciences & Education | A | P | A | A |  |  |  |  |  |
| Matt | O’Neal | Biological & Agricultural Sciences | P | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Emily | Morgan | Arts & Humanities | P | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Carolyn | Cutrona | Social Sciences & Education | P | A | P | A |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jae-Hwa | Lee | Arts & Humanities | P | P | A | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Susana | Goggi | Biological & Agricultural Sciences | P | A | A | A |  |  |  |  |  |
| Iddo | Friedberg | Biological & Agricultural Sciences | A | A | A | A |  |  |  |  |  |
| Degang | Chen | Physical Sciences, Math & Engineering | P | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Debra | Marquart | Arts & Humanities  | P | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jin | Tian  | Physical Sciences, Math & Engineering | P | A | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Amanda | Weinstein  | Physical Sciences, Math & Engineering | P | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Steven | Freeman | Faculty Senate Representative | P | P | A | P |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Post Doc  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Post Doc  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Christine | Cain | GPSS Pres/Grad Student – Social Sciences & Education | P | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ryan | Everett | Graduate Student | A | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eddie | Mahoney | GPSS VP/Grad Student-- Physical & Math Sciences & Engineering  | A | P | A | A |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Ex-officio** |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bill | Graves | Dean of the Graduate College | P | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Elena  | Cotos | Associate Dean | A | A | A | A |  |  |  |  |  |
| Heather | Greenlee | Associate Dean  | P | P | P | A |  |  |  |  |  |
| Michelle | Soupir | Interim Associate Dean, Graduate College | A | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |
| Natalie | Robinson | Assistant Director of Academic Services, Graduate College | P | P | P | A |  |  |  |  |  |
| Alberto | Lara | Student Services Specialist II, Graduate College | P | P | P | P |  |  |  |  |  |

Key: P = Present, A = Absent