University Board of Graduate Studies  
Thursday, September 5, 2019, 2:30-4:00 p.m.  
Raynor, Lower Level, Conference Room C

Minutes

Present:  Ed Blumenthal (chair, present through his report), Scott D’Urso, Jim Hoelzle, Norah Johnson, Lisa Lamson (alternate for Sarah Kizuk), Dawei Liu, Farrokh Nourzad, Michael O’Hear (secretary), Jeff Starke (vice chair), Peter Staudenmaier

Present, non-voting: Carrianne Hayslett, Lars Olson (Senate liaison), Jenny Staab (note taker), Theresa Tobin, Doug Woods

Not present: Jill Birren, Sarah Kizuk, Paula Papanek, Carl Wainscott

I. Call to order. At 2:33 p.m. by Dr. Blumenthal.

II. Approval of minutes. May 2, 2019, minutes were approved electronically by a majority of the Board.

III. Reports.

A. Graduate School Dean. - Doug Woods

Fall 2019 enrollment. Compared to last year at this time, the Graduate School is up overall by 13% in first-year students. This is the third year in a row for an increase in first-year students. Total student enrollment is up about 6%. This is countering the national trend, which has been showing a decline in graduate enrollment. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, e.g., is down 6% in graduate school applications this year. The Graduate School of Management’s MBA program is down 7%.

Graduate School reading group. This past summer Dr. Woods had formed a reading group to discuss two books: Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education by Nathan Grawe, and The Graduate School Mess: What Caused It and How We Can Fix It by Leonard Cassuto. Dr. Woods will talk about these books at the Director of Graduate Studies meetings next week and potentially hold another reading group for them, so they can be thinking about things like what we should be doing with the PhD, the purpose of the master’s degree and demographic trends and their potential consequences.

New pricing models for humanities programs. Due to various factors, enrollment in MU’s Humanities MA programs has declined. Pricing concerns related to perceived value are believed to be one key factor in this decline. In an attempt to mitigate this factor, a three-year pilot program of adjusting tuition of all Humanities MA programs was proposed and approved to start in fall 2020. The new model will reduce the per semester credit hour rate by 57%, resulting in a $500 per semester credit hour. This will bring the cost of a typical 30-credit MA program down to $15,000. Concurrent with this tuition decrease will be the elimination of all unfunded financial aid for these programs. Concerns about perceived diminishment of quality tied to the lower price will be countered by a marketing campaign designed to demonstrate how this education is designed to showcase MU’s commitment to the Jesuit core of humanities education.

Graduate tuition scholarship policy for grants/external funds. The Graduate School and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs have been working on a new policy to deal with the awarding and allocation of tuition credits to support graduate students on grants and other external sources of support. The new policy has been approved and was put in place September 1 of this year. It provides greater flexibility for the use of unfunded school credits for PhD students and streamlines the process.
**Formation of graduate student task force.** President Lovell has charged Dr. Woods with creating a task force for the purpose of making recommendations to the administration on how to improve the lives of graduate students on campus. The task force will be surveying graduate students to find out what issues regarding their student experience are important to them, will benchmark those items against MU’s peer/aspirational institutions, and use this information to make recommendations to the administration, hopefully by the end of this semester.

**Staff reductions.** The reductions are happening on campus today and have included two members of the Graduate School staff. President Lovell will be sending an email out today explaining the necessity for this action and the logic behind it.

**B. UBGS Chair. - Ed Blumenthal**

Dr. Blumenthal introduced himself and the new executive committee—himself as chair, Jeff Starke as vice chair, and Michael O’Hear as secretary—and welcomed and thanked all the new and returning members. He encouraged all the members to be diligent throughout the year in communicating the actions of UBGS to their respective units.

He spoke briefly about the current UBGS bylaws and the proposed changes made by UBGS at the end of last year. These proposed changes will be brought to the University Academic Senate this month for possible approval. The UBGS will continue discussion on the bylaws at its next meeting and possibly future meetings.

*(At this point, Dr. Blumenthal left the meeting, and Dr. Starke chaired in his place.)*

**C. Graduate School Associate Dean for Strategic Innovation and Academic Program Development. - Carrianne Hayslett**

This body serves as the department for the Interdisciplinary PhD (INPR) program. The Graduate School has looked for guidance from the UBGS about how the INPR should be administered and has clarified some processes based on that feedback. Last year, Dr. Hayslett put together a group to revise the assessment plan for the INPR, and recommendations from that group will be brought to a future UBGS meeting.

**D. Graduate School Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Student Development. - Theresa Tobin**

Dr. Tobin gave an update on the pilot Teaching Assistants Orientation of August 15 and 16. She stated that it was a good first effort overall, and that she’ll be incorporating the feedback that orientation into future programs. She is planning to do more career diversity events this year.

She introduced Lisa Lamson, a PhD candidate in history and the president of the Graduate Student Organization (GSO) since January 2019. Miss Lamson gave an overview of the GSO’s plans for this year for supporting graduate students. This support will encompass areas such as professionalism, social/community aspects, and wellness—mental, physical and spiritual. The GSO, in its efforts to be the umbrella organization for supporting all graduate students, is also working with graduate students in the Law School and Dental School as well as the nursing students in the Pleasant Prairie program. The GSO has already held a number of events this year.

**IV. Business.**

**A. Action item: Policy update regarding thesis directives. - Carrianne Hayslett**

Departments have raised the question about non-tenure-track faculty serving as thesis committee chairs. The Faculty Handbook does not provide clarification, as non-tenure track faculty is not a specified faculty...
role/title. Rather, faculty are regular, participating or emeriti, with regular faculty being tenure-track/tenured. To align the proposed language with the Faculty Handbook, the question is three-fold. Should non-tenure track faculty be allowed to be chairs or co-chairs of thesis committees? Is the position of chair or co-chair open to all the participating faculty positions (14) listed in the Handbook? Should the language in the dissertation directives regarding emeriti faculty be reflected in the thesis directives?

Points mentioned during discussion included:

- We must be sure that we don’t jeopardize the accreditation status of our programs.
- The teaching load and practice of tenure-track faculty may limit their availability to serve as chairs.
- The more stable a thesis committee is, the better it will serve the student.
- Allowing a non-tenure-track faculty to co-chair with a tenure-track faculty could provide:
  - Stability to the thesis committee.
  - Expertise from the involvement of the participating faculty.
  - Protection for the student.
- If we allow for participating faculty to co-chair, add the language, “as approved by the department.”
- None of this would supersede the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidelines. The HLC guidelines should be included in the policy.

Dr. Hayslett will update the policy language based on the suggestions and bring it back to the next meeting for a vote.

B. Presentation: The future of higher education and implications for graduate education. - Doug Woods

Information from Dr. Woods’ presentation was based on two books, The Graduate School Mess: What Caused it and How We Can Fix It by Cassuto, and Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education by Grawe. Basically, for an institution such as Marquette located in Wisconsin, Grawe forecasts a significant drop in the number of undergraduate attendees from 2026 to 2032. Dr. Woods gave statistics of the possible impact such a decline (potentially 26%) in enrollment could have on Marquette in numbers of needed faculty and in net revenue. He invited the group to reflect on the possible implications to Marquette, what our priorities should be as a university, how to keep our mission central and how these predicted demographic shifts could impact graduate education, PhD programs, career focuses for PhD students and the growing of new programs and the reinvigorating of old programs. The UBGS could possibly think about establishing a Graduate School core to offer skills that PhD students will need, e.g., in industry, like financial literacy, budget planning for business, how to communicate effectively to broad audiences, the team approach to problem solving, etc.

V. Adjourn. Upon a motion from Dr. Staudenmaier, Dr. Starke adjourned the meeting at 4:03 p.m.

Scheduled meetings for 2019-20 Academic Year

| Thursdays, 2:30 - 4:00 pm. Meetings will be held in Raynor Library Lower Level, Conf Rm C. |
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| Oct 3, 2019 | Dec 5, 2019 | Feb 6, 2020 | Apr 2, 2020 |
| Nov 7, 2019 | Jan 16, 2020 | Mar 5, 2020 | May 7, 2020 |