



Graduate Council Meeting Summary

April 9, 2020
2:00 - 3:30 pm
WebEx

I. Approval of Minutes

The February 13, 2020, Program Directors Assembly meeting minutes were unanimously approved via a voice vote.

II. Discussion Items

1. Virtual Showcase

The Graduate Showcase is being moved to a Virtual Showcase format. Laura Ryman and Pam Bell, members of TGS, have been busy working on planning a Virtual Showcase, which will use an asynchronous format.

The schedule for the Virtual Showcase and associated awards are as follows:

April 17 – Deadline for student submissions

April 27 – Website (jmugradshowcase.com) goes live

April 27- May 1 (5:00 p.m.) Blog Q&A dates

May 6 – Judges will confer and select award recipients

May 7 – Award decisions will be posted and awards announced.

2. Temporary Policies

The Graduate Council (GS) has adopted some temporary policies that will help students and faculty address many of the challenges students are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The policies are now linked on the Graduate School's webpage. The intent of all the policies is to give students the maximum potential to complete their degree and all the components that renders the degree. Multiple grading options were developed as there are courses linked to certification and an S/U grade will not satisfy the licensure requirement in some programs. The temporary policies are intended to address the impact of the transition to the online environment in order to support students as they complete their courses and degrees efficiently.

The floor was open for members to ask questions about the temporary policies:

Question: The S/U option can be initiated by faculty. Can a student initiate the pass/fail option as well?

Answer: Any change in a grading scheme needs to come from the instructor of the course, a program director or academic unit head. There are courses linked to certification and an S/U

grade will not accomplish the licensure requirement. If a faculty member wanted to give students the option to self-select the S/U option, this will be permitted for individual course sections with the approval of the program director or academic unit head.

Question: Who needs to communicate to the Registrar's Office to make the change to S/U? Should the Instructor or the Program Director communicate the change to S/U with the Registrar's Office?

Answer: Mr. Burgess will follow-up to clarify with the Registrar's Office how the Instructor or Program Director should request changes to the grading system.

Question: Students in the School Psychology Program are required to take summer courses, and now they have to pay an additional fee. There has been some dissatisfaction expressed from these students as the University message about the additional fee read as though it was helping them, when in fact, it is costing them more. What kind of assistance might be available to these students and how should the additional fee be explained?

Answer: The fees supports the resources provided by IT. Unfortunately, the fee is not something that IT can waive. TGS sent out a message to help clarify the reason for the additional fee. Information about summer online fees are also posted on the FAQ page on TGS's website.

Question: The Master of Fine Arts Program has Graduate Assistantships during the summer. While tuition is covered, it is not clear whether the additional online fee is covered as well. How will the online fee be handled for students receiving Graduate Assistantship support?

Answer: Mr. Burgess will also take this question to Mr. Jason McClain for clarification.

3. Visas for International Students if programs are 100% online

International students will be facing two obstacles this fall that will hurt enrollment:

- The current Presidential order related to the COVID-19 pandemic limits international students from entering the country.
- Students cannot receive a student visa to begin an online program. (Online programs can be taken from their home country, but they can only receive a student visa if they need to take the classes in the U.S.)

It is not known when travel restrictions will be lifted or whether we will be offering in-person classes during the fall semester. The Graduate School is regularly e-mailing admitted students, encouraging them to plan to come to the US in August to begin classes and to contact Program Directors or Advisors if they have questions. We will let students know if our plan to resume in-person classes changes.

4. Deferred Enrollment

With permission of their Program Director, any student, including international students, can defer enrollment for up to one year. We encourage use of this option when appropriate. It might become the best choice for international students as the situation unfolds this summer. If the university begins the fall semester online, deferred enrollment is also a choice for any student wanting the traditional type of experience.

The floor was open for members to ask questions:

Question: If a student is already in the country and they need a new need visa, will they still be unable to enroll in a program that is 100% online?

Answer: Yes, even if the student is already in the US. If the student needs a student visa, they will need a new visa to start a new program.

Question: If a student uses the Deferred Enrollment that was in a Graduate Assistantship and there is not another student to fill that GA/TA, can that assistantship roll-over to the following year when student enters the university?

Answer: (This question may not have been answered correctly during the meeting.) The answer is no. Assistantships are funded on a fiscal-year basis. A student who defers admission should be considered for graduate assistantships available during the fiscal year in which they enroll.

Question: Will the Graduate School be communicating with international students about these obstacles or should the Program Director provide that communication?

Answer: The answer is both. The Graduate School and Program Directors should be communicating to the students. The Graduate School has been sending communications to all incoming students; however, every program is going to need their own communication. All the communications that have been sent by TGS will also be forwarded to the Program Directors.

5. Online Program Advisory Group

Mr. John Burgess announced the formation of an Online Program Advisory group to study the landscape of how to run a successful online program and the best practices. The members will bring experience in their ability to manage outstanding programs that operate effectively in online and hybrid environments. The members of this group include:

Andrea Adams - Interim Associate Dean of Libraries

Cheri Beverly - Director: Educational Technology

Noorie Brantmeier – Director: Adult Education/Human Resource Development

Carol Dudding - Director: Online Speech-Language Pathology

Jeannie Garber - Coordinator: Doctor of Nursing Practice

Hossain Heydari – Director: Information Security

Fletcher Linder – Associate Vice President for University Programs

Sarah MacDonald – Assistant Dean, Professional and Continuing Education

Diana Meza - Director: Spanish Language & Culture

Matt Rutherford - Director: Business Administration

Michael Stoloff - Associate Dean of the Graduate School

The Online Program Advisory Group will start with fact finding: 1.) How do their programs work? 2.) What platforms do you use? 3.) Synchronous, asynchronous, or a combination of delivery? 4.) Fully online or hybrid? 5.) Where do their students come from? 6.) How do they handle students in different time zones? 7.) Do their programs attract international students? 8.) How do they handle advising? 9.) Do they use an OPM? 10.) How do they recruit

and market? 11.) Does out of state tuition limit their program? 12.) What are the challenges they face and obstacles they need to overcome in how JMU supports online education?

The ultimate goal for the Online Program Advisory Group is to create a template or handbook through a greater understanding of how to advise programs that are interested in using online education and virtual classrooms in their programs. Several of their programs are also designed to allow students to remain in their careers while pursuing degrees that will allow them to advance their careers. TGS feels programs that are able to do that reflect a vital area for JMU to explore.

6. Graduate Council Curriculum Committee

This was the first year that there was a Graduate Council Curriculum Committee (GCCC). There was rich conversations and success in moving approximately 80 courses through the approval process. The Council Curriculum Committee is made-up of one representatives from each college plus one member to represent master's and another member to represent doctoral.

According to the GC Bylaws:

Annually, each April, members of the Graduate Council representing each college will nominate a Graduate Faculty Member to represent their college on the Curriculum Committee. The Executive Committee will nominate one Graduate Faculty Member who will serve as Curriculum Committee member representing all doctoral programs and another who will represent all master's programs. The Graduate Council will affirm the membership of the Curriculum Committee with a vote during their final meeting of the academic year, for appointment starting the first day of the following fall semester.

Dr. Stoloff asked for Graduate Council permission to select the GCCC with the following procedure this year: We will ask all current GCCC members if they would like to continue, and if they do not wish to continue, they will be asked to help find someone else to represent their college or program level (master's or doctoral). Members of the GCCC will need to be available at the planned meeting times, the fourth Thursday of each month from 2:00-3:00. GCCC members do not have to be Graduate Council members or Program Directors. They need to be graduate faculty members. The Graduate Council will affirm the nominations at the May retreat.

Dr. Debbie Bandalos and Dr. Hussain Heydari Deborah requested to find another member from their colleges to serve on the GCCC. Dr. Christine Argenbright volunteered to serve on the committee, replacing Dr. Bandalos, as the representative for the College of Health and Behavioral Studies.

Dr. William Wightman moved to approve this selection procedure. There was no further discussion. The motion was properly seconded. An electronic vote was taken with all members typing in yes in the comment column of the WebEx meeting. The motion carried.

7. Discussion of Pressing Needs/Issues Programs are Facing

Members were asked to please move forward with filling Graduate Assistantships for next year and to work with Boris Escalona and their appropriate divisional points of contact. Mr. Burgess will take the importance of continuing to support the Graduate Assistantships to the Provost and Senior Leadership.

Dr. Tammy Gilligan explained that the assistantships in her program are out of her control, as they reside in other divisions. She would like for TGS to send a message to these other divisions advocating for filling 2020-21 assistantships as soon as possible. TGS will advocate for filling assistantships in other divisions. Mr. Boris Escalona and Mr. John Burgess will follow up.

The university's new R2 Status should help to protect the doctoral assistantships. Mr. Burgess is hopeful that if there is a temporary reduction in assistantships in order for the university to survive, that it is not a permanent reduction. Mr. Burgess will continue to advocate for the importance of the assistantships and keep members apprised of any changes.

Dr. Brooks Hefner noted that "one big issue is that the decision deadline for students is April 15. That is next Wednesday. If units do not know if they have assistantships to offer, they lose all effectiveness as recruitment tools after the deadline passes. So, these decisions are extremely time sensitive." Concern was also expressed about graduate assistantship in other offices that are not tied to a college/department, where the office puts up the funds for the stipend. Mr. Boris Escalona is quite willing to work with departments on any assistantship matters, so please contact him directly (escalobd@jmu.edu).

If we are 100% online in the fall, what happens with GA positions? If we run into that, Mr. Burgess is hopeful that we can repurpose positions to address other critical needs of the university. As information becomes available, TGS will keep both Program Directors and Graduate Faculty informed.

The Occupational Therapy (OT) program requires their students to complete six months of clinical practice. The second year OT students are scheduled to go out to their clinical sites in June. OT has been communicating with their accrediting bodies and colleagues of what might happen if the students are unable to complete their clinical. These are complex, multi-facet issues. TGS will assist where able to help find alternate solutions that accrediting bodies will support.

Many students in the Computer Science program are working professionals whose jobs have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This program is concerned whether their students will have the ability to continue in the program. There is always the possibility that the outcome could be a strong up-tick in enrollment of students who want to advance their career while they are in delicate limbo with their current position.

Is TGS helping to create virtual events to support students? THRIVE will host some online social events. Conversations have taken place with Student Affairs about the virtual events they have offered to students. Student Affairs has not had the best response on the events that they have

created. The belief about the low participation in virtual events is that students are still trying to figure out this new way of living. TGS is hoping that by continuing with the Showcase students will want to participate.

Conversations about commencement are ongoing at the University level and include: 1) the possibility of a replacement ceremony, 2) is there a way to do smaller celebrations that are program by program and that gives students the opportunity to interact with their cohort and faculty where their experiences actually happened and 3) what a virtual ceremony might look like?

Members were encouraged to let TGS know of challenges programs are facing and how the TGS might be able to serve as their advocate.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Attendees Graduate Council Virtual Meeting - April 9, 2020		
Christine	Argenbright	Voting
Debbie	Bandalos	Voting
Pamela	Bell	Guest
Chelsey	Bollinger	Non-voting
Noorie	Brantmeier	Voting
John	Burgess	Guest
Julia	Carr	Voting
William	Dabback	Voting
Rachelle	Dorne	Voting
Cheryl	Doss	Guest
Jeff	Dyche	Voting
Boris	Escalona	Guest
Karen	Ford	Voting
Tammy	Gilligan	Non-voting
Steven	Holloway	Non-voting
Brooks	Hefner	Voting
Hussain	Heydari	Voting
Corey	Hickerson	Voting
Michael	Klein	Guest
Scott	Lunsford	Voting
Sarah	MacDonald	Guest
Fred	Mayhew	Voting
Lynette	Michael	Guest
Yvonne	Miller	Guest
Daniel	Morales	Voting
Nancy	Nichols	Voting
Ayasakanta	Rout	Voting
Laura	Ryman	Guest
Kristi	Shackelford	Guest
Michael	Stoloff	Guest
Stephanie	Wasta	Voting
Angela	Webb	Voting
Cole	Welter	Non-voting
William	Wightman	Voting
Roshna	Wunderlich	Voting