



MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

The Graduate Council

Minutes: March 16, 2022

Brian Abrams, Amy Aiello, Vidya Atal, Amanda Birnbaum, Stefanie Brachfeld, Jessica Brater, Katy Bulkley, Marybeth Duffy, Michele Fisher, Jeremy Fox, Nina Goodey, Sumi Hagiwara, Scott Herness, Kathleen Hughes, Rashmi Jain, Christopher King, Daniel Mengara, Helen Roberts, Betsy Rosini, Matt Schuler, Laura Valente.

1. Report from The Graduate School

- a. Graduate School restructuring: Dean Herness informed the Council that the admissions and operations unit of TGS may be transitioning to Enrollment Management. This means that 14 individuals would leave TGS, leaving 11 in the staff. This type of structure is typical at many universities. Consequences: An inadvertent consequence of this move is that the org chart doesn't show the full complexity of the TGS organization. As a result of TGS's historical organizational structure, the Graduate Student Service Specialists (GSSS) staff of 4 reside in the Admission and Operations unit but provide customer service for both prospective and current students. All of the GSSS staff will move to enrollment management, leaving no one in TGS to answer the phones or respond to the emails for current students. Starting Monday, March 21, anyone calling the Graduate School will be routed to a phone tree answered by Red Hawk Central. Graduate students' issues tend to be complex and require a good deal of attention. Red Hawk Central lacks the content expertise to handle these calls. We are thus concerned about this transition.

We have invited Provost Gonzales to join the Graduate Council meeting in April so that the Council can share its concerns and questions about this organizational change.

Council members expressed concern about the potential impact of these changes of graduate admissions moving out of Academic Affairs on the relationship between faculty and admissions in their respective programs. A question was also raised about how these changes impact the role of the Graduate Council and its connection with graduate programs and graduate education overall at the institution.

Dean Herness reminded the Council that an important reason for this structural change is concern in the upper levels of the administration about fall 2022 enrollment.

b. Doctoral Programs Directors restructuring

Dean Herness shared an email he received about an idea from the Academic Sub-Committee from the Senate to restructure doctoral programs so that Doctoral Program Directors will report to the Department Chair and that doctoral faculty status be eliminated. His initial reactions: this would be an unusual model, and some of our doctoral programs don't belong to a single department. This model would deprive the DPDs and the program to decide who has the necessary qualifications to work with doctoral students. Additional comments from Council members:

- Concern that this has not been thoroughly thought out
- Concern that this started with a concern by a single DPD, and the feeling is this is not a strong sample
- Highly unusual model – not replicated in universities across the country
- Doesn't fit because many of our doctoral programs don't exist within a single department, and some originated in departments that no longer exist. Feels like taking a step backwards – we should be making more interdisciplinary programs, not reinforcing silos. Disenfranchises faculty teaching / advising doctoral students who are in other departments
- Deprives DPD of the ability to say who has the necessary qualifications to advise or work with the doctoral students in their program
- This recommendation seems to reflect a lack of understanding of how Doctoral programs operate
- Concern around how this would impact faculty and staff resources for doctoral programs
- Concern around how this would impact funding for doctoral students
- A DPD in the room did not understand recommendations and was concerned that this was circulated for feedback from DPDs only recently
- Disappointing that the senate did not refer this matter to the Graduate Council
- Concern around process where Grad Council was not consulted earlier, as it is the governance body in charge of overseeing graduate education at the institution.

A group from the Council will work on a formal response for the Academic Affairs Committee.

2. Report from the Curriculum Committee

a. Alteration of combined programs with the MBA (the alteration is of the graduate portion of the program):

- BS Applied Mathematics and Statistics
- BS Biology
- BA Classics
- BS Earth and Environmental Science
- BA Economics with Asset Management

- BA Economics
- BA Gender, Sexuality, and Woman Studies
- BA Geography, Environmental, and Urban Studies
- BA History
- BA Hospitality, Sports, Events, and Tourism
- BA Humanities
- BA Philosophy
- BS Physics
- BA Psychology
- BS in Public Health (2 concentrations)
- BA Religion
- BS Sustainability Science
- BA Writing Studies

These program alterations were unanimously approved by the Council.

b. Stackable degrees guidelines document

Chair Roberts gave an update on the draft of guidelines for development of stackable programs. She presented the following question to the Council: Current transfer policy allows a maximum of 6 credits to be transferred, what do we do if a student earned a certificate at another institution (e.g., 12 credits which would be 40% of a 30 credit program) or 15 credits (50% of a 30 credit program) and wants to transfer it into a program? How does this differ from a student just wanting 4 or 5 courses from another institution to count? Council members made the following comments:

- Are there exceptions currently in place? Yes, students can appeal to transfer more than 6 credits, up to 9.
- Is it possible to think about looking at them on a case by case basis? Decided program by program?
- If the program includes a certification that is tied to a certificate, can departments make those decisions based on their expertise?

Chair Roberts mentioned that the Graduate Curriculum Committee will meet next week and will prepare a final draft for Council approval in its April meeting.

3. Report from the Policy Committee

Chair Fisher informed that the Committee stepped back from the grade policy survey and is working on the policy to repeat courses with a C at the graduate level. She is planning to present a draft of the policy at the April Council meeting.

4. Reminder: Graduate Council Meeting: April 13, 2022.