

MONTCLAIR

STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate Council Meeting

Agenda: March 26, 2025

2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

SBUS 140

Attendees: **CCHL:** Amanda Birnbaum, Brad van Eeden-Moorefield, Matt Shurts, Meena Mahadevan, Alicia Rivera, Dana Levitt, **CEEL:** Erik Jacobson, Kayla O'Donnell, Sumi Hagiwara, **CHSS:** Anna Feldman, Tarika Daftary Kapur, Dominique Blake, Jessica Brandt, **CSAM:** Matt Schuler, Hao Liu, Scott Kight, **CART:** Ronald Sharps, **SBUS:** Rashmi Jain, Vidya Atal, Ethne Swartz, Nicole Koppel, Dejah Ndiya, **NURS:** Brenda Marshall, Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Jan Smolowitz, **TGS:** Chris King, Valerie Sessa, Michele Fisher, Stefanie Brachfeld, Laura Valente, Debbie Reynoso, Michael Stuhlmiller, **Grad Admissions:** Timothy Hart, Jennifer O'Sullivan, **Provost:** Kyle Dobbeck, **Guests:** Lynette Reitz.

- a. Opening remarks from GC leadership / approval of minutes from February 19th meeting
 - Rashmi opened the meeting with an announcement of her intention to step down as Chair of the Graduate Council at the end of this academic year. The election for the new slate of council officers will take place at the retreat in June (date to be announced).
 - Minutes from the February 19th meeting were **approved**.
- b. Reports: (5-8 minutes each)
 - Report from the Curriculum Committee, Chair (Vidya)
 - i. New program proposal for review:
 - a. [Doctor of Nursing Practice with Family Nurse Practitioner conc. and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner conc.](#) and [Executive Summary](#) (Janice Smolowitz)
 - This is an applied doctoral degree with a clinical focus to provide opportunity to grow and achieve higher levels of nursing practice. Once considered by GC, will go to the provost, BOT, and AIC. **Approved by the Council.**
 - ii. Program alteration proposal for review:
 - a. [MSW](#) (Lynette Reitz)
 - Replacing a few CHAD courses with ones that are more focused on Social Work. Also adding 3 CHAD electives related to child advocacy. **Approved by the Council.**

- iii. Information item:
 - a. Nomenclature change: From MA in Communication Sciences & Disorders with Speech Language Pathology conc. to MA in Speech-Language Pathology (This will be reported to the NJPC's AIC as an information item.)
 - This is the only concentration left in the degree, resulting in the change of the name of the program. **No vote necessary here.**
 - The curriculum committee will meet again this Friday, at which point they will revisit swing credits, then move on to policies for stackable degrees.
- Report from TGS (Stefanie, Laura)
 - i. Stefanie
 - a. Reimagining TGS to a Graduate Center: evaluating what is working and where the gaps are. One example is modernizing PDF forms (i.e. independent study) to a digitalized workflow for easier submission and tracking. Will share developments on how the reimagined center will operate once plans become more definitive.
 - b. Middle States Accreditation: facilitated two focus groups with graduate students yielding information on both positive experiences at Montclair and instances where they had been let down by the university.
 - c. Sense of Belonging: mentioned the presentation of findings from the 2024 Sense of Belonging Survey to 700 graduate students. There are some trends to be investigated further relative to structure of programs (i.e. cohort based or not) and the presence of non-academic community building opportunities. An open-ended question will be added to next year's survey "what do you need to be successful at Montclair?"
 - d. More specific to Graduate Council we should look for ways to involve graduate student representatives in our efforts to improve their experience at Montclair.
 - e. The micro-internship program has been initiated with a call for proposals going out to campus. Offers to selected graduate students have been made for several of the projects.
 - ii. Laura
 - a. The Graduate Student Development Conference is this Friday with speakers from across campus. Registration filled within 48 hours and there is a waitlist.
 - b. The Spring Graduate Education Summit is the following Friday with Leonard Cassuto as the keynote speaker on "Academic Writing as if Readers Matter" for the morning session and "Hawk Tank" after lunch. Groups will brainstorm on ideas to improve graduate education, the winning idea will be funded. Registration is flexible, can choose to attend the morning, afternoon or both sessions.

- c. The search for a communications coordinator is coming to a close. This person will be responsible handling outgoing invitations and engaging with graduate students on social media.
 - d. ATS is now open for recommendations for GA positions. If someone needs speedy approval (like to get a VISA), call TGS so that they can push the offer letter through more quickly. They are still considering distinguished GA positions for top candidates despite the December deadline having passed. Budget calls are not out yet, but it is likely that stipends and funding will remain the same. So, when talking to students we should cite current amounts. There was a question on the status of doctoral assistantships – those allocations have not been finalized yet.
 - e. Laura is working with a group from Val's class to develop and administer a survey on graduate student satisfaction and use of university services.
- Report from Graduate Admissions (Tim)
 - i. Fall applications for masters and doctoral programs are open with over 7,000 coming in and 18% accepted.
 - ii. Raised deposits to \$1,000 for international students – more confident that those confirming will come to Montclair. A pilot program in OGE instituting required orientations for incoming international students is adding to confidence and yield.
 - iii. The current political climate may have an impact on the international student population. Interest in the programs at Montclair is high but is difficult to predict ability to secure VISAs. There has been a trend for higher rates of rejection this spring from some countries.
 - iv. International students who are considering leaving the U.S. temporarily should contact OGE to ensure proper paperwork is completed. We are cautioning them not to leave, there is no guarantee that they will be able to return.
 - v. The Graduate Showcase marketing our graduate offerings to current Montclair undergraduate students is next Wednesday, over 100 have registered. The Graduate Open House in late February had 60% attendance from registrants.
 - vi. Under the unbound initiative we have added another company (Collegiate) to help with marketing and recruiting students for online graduate programs.

- Report from the Policy Committee, Chair (Chris)

The policy committee spent some time discussing changes to policies for allowable transfer credits and swing credits. The idea is to expand ability to accept credits based on the size of the program. A sliding scale emerged as follows:

Transfer credits: up to 6 for a 30 to 40 credit program, 9 for a 41 to 50 credit program and 12 for a 51 to 60 credit program. On average this represents 20% of the program.

Swing credits: up to 12 for a 30 to 40 credit program, 15 for a 41 to 50 credit program and 18 for a 51 to 60 credit program. On average this represents 34% of the program.

Will share with the curriculum committee to add to their deliberations before being brought back to full council. Tim added that many schools in the state are closing graduate programs and accepting a greater number of courses could make Montclair an attractive option for transfer students.

- Report from the Student Affairs Committee, Chair (Tarika)

The committee will meet in two weeks to work on a handbook of resources for graduate students to include information on housing, access to food, social life, transportation, etc. Could be set up as a series of FAQ links on the website. The office of commuter life and OGE may have resources that could be used.

- Report from the GC Ad-hoc Restructuring Committee, Chair (Michele)

The committee is focused on the processes for expanding eligibility of council representation to professional staff. Initial thoughts are that non-faculty who are members of the AFT bargaining unit would be eligible to run and hold up to one of the faculty positions per college/school. The procedure for elections would have to be reworked so that voting would include both faculty and professional staff. Additional considerations include NTP positions and professional staff outside of the college/school unit.

- c. Break-out discussion on “Promoting Innovative Curricular Design” Ran out of time.
- d. New Business
- e. Adjourn

Remaining GC Meetings for AY 2024-25: Apr 23rd, May 5th