

**Graduate Council Meeting**  
**Monday, February 26, 2024, 3:00 pm**  
**Winder Boardroom (300 Park Building)**

**Council Members Present:** Glen Schmidt, Tabitha Benney, Laura Kessler, Janet Lindsley, Donna Ziegenfuss, José Gutiérrez, Misty Smith, Patrick Panos, Aaron Kaplan

**Ex Officio Members Present:** Darryl Butt, Helene Shugart, Karen Paisley, Katrina Green

**Excused members:** Winston Kyan, Brijes Mishra, Adam Kotter, Katherine Beals, Joseph Andry, Katherine Beals

**Graduate School Staff Present:** Matthew Plooster, Mary Anne Berzins, Paula Spencer

**Welcome:** Darryl Butt, Graduate School Dean, welcomed everyone

**Proposal:**

Program Discontinuation – Geographic Information Science Certificate

Presenter: Summer Rupper, Department of Geography

Discussion took place about:

- There is low demand for program (only 5 students since 2018 - none currently).
- No courses will be discontinued.
- The Geographic Information Science master's program will not be affected.
- Discontinuation reduces administrative burden and "cleans the books."

**Motion to approve:** Janet Lindsley

**Second:** Glen Schmidt

**Vote:** Yes – 5, No - 0

**Abstain:** 0

**Action:** Move proposal forward to the Academic Senate.

**Proposal:**

Academic Reorganization - New Stand-Alone Divisions: Division of Occupational and Environmental Health and Division of Physician Assistant Education and Sciences

Presenters: Jeremy Biggs, Division of Occupational and Environmental Health  
Leigh Elrod, Division of Physician Assistant Studies  
Joe Allen, Division of Occupational and Environmental Health

Discussion took place about:

- Units were previously subsidiary divisions of the Department of Family & Preventive Medicine (DFPM).
- There are no financial implications as the units can support their own leadership. A "tax" that they previously paid to DFPM can now be used to hire additional staff.
- As stand-alone divisions, the units are better able to collaborate with other units in the School of Medicine.
- The PA Program is able to have stronger ties to subspecialties across the School of Medicine.

- The apparent interchangeability of the designations “division” and “department” across the university

**Motion to approve:** Glen Schmidt

**Second:** Janet Lindsley

**Vote:** Yes – 6, No - 0

**Abstain:** 0

**Action:** Move proposal forward to the Academic Senate.

**Call for vote:**

Name change of the Professional Master of Science and Technology (PMST) program to the Professional Science Master’s (PSM)

Darryl Butt briefly explained the rationale for the change, mainly that the changed name would be better aligned with the national norm for these programs.

**Vote:** Yes – 6, No - 0

**Abstain:** 0

**Policy Change:**

Change of Policy 6-225: Graduate Emphases

Presenter: Katrina Green, Curriculum Office

Changes accomplish the following:

- Clarifies difference between emphasis and track, concentration, specialization – only an emphasis will appear on a transcript.
- Defines process for approving an emphasis.
- Aligns better with USHE policy

Discussion took place about use of the term “major” in the policy, since “major” is typically a term for undergraduate studies. The Council suggested that “degree program” seemed more appropriate but that consistency with other policy language should inform the final determination.

**Motion to approve:** Glen Schmidt

**Second:** Janet Lindsley

**Vote:** Yes – 6, No - 0

**Abstain:** 0

**Tuition Benefit Program Changes:**

New guidelines introduced

Presenter: Matthew Plooster, Graduate Fellowships, Awards, and Benefits

Major discussion points:

- Professional degree programs will no longer be eligible
- Program will only accommodate 100% tuition benefit (no more 50% and 75%)
- Changes have been socialized with widespread support, including an endorsement from Finance

- Departments could benefit from an “information packet” that describes the Tuition Benefit Program and how it works.

### **7-Year Review:**

#### **Department of Biomedical Informatics**

Presentation by Ad Hoc Committee Chair: Laura Kessler

Discussion took place about:

- High demand for program graduates
- Sources of funding to support students and postdocs
- Need to rebuild tenure-line faculty ranks
- Funding will be a topic of discussion at wrap-up meeting.

**Motion to approve report:** Tabitha Benney

**Second:** Patrick Panos

**Vote:** Yes – 9, No - 0

**Abstain:** 0

### **Call for vote:**

It was proposed that the Graduate Council add as ex officio members: Erin Mason, University Registrar and Anthony Jones, Director of Scholarships & Financial Aid. They will serve in an advisement capacity, similar to their roles serving on the Undergraduate Council.

**Vote to approve:** Yes – 9, No – 0

**Abstain:** 0

### **Proposed Changes to 7-year Review Procedures:**

Presenter: Helene Shugart

The following items were discussed:

- Adjustments to working ideas presented at the last Graduate Council meeting were made in response to feedback from the Graduate Council and other entities, including the Council of Academic Deans, Health Sciences representatives, and a USHE representative.
- Submission of accreditation report or letter in lieu of program review, per USHE policy
  - Concerns were expressed about the ability of a programmatic accreditation review to address all the issues that are examined in a 7-year review. Specifically:
    - Not all programs are covered in the scope of the accreditation.
    - Are issues of equal representation addressed?
    - Are learning outcomes and assessment evaluated sufficiently?
- A joint single committee making a single site visit would be comprised of two external reviewers (2 minimum); and an internal committee that would consist of a (1) Graduate Council member serving as joint committee chair, and, as applicable, (2) either an Undergraduate Council member or an additional Graduate Council member. The joint committee would conduct a single site visit; the external reviewers would submit their report to the internal reviewers; the external review report would inform the final, Graduate Council report prepared by the internal reviewers.

- Although the number of Graduate Council review committee assignments would be reduced by the committee reconfiguration and acceptance of accreditation, concerns were expressed about the possible increased workload for members of the Graduate Council per the new model
- Changes to the formats for the review committee report format, dean/chair response, and the institutional response were discussed, and templates reflecting those respective formats were presented and discussed.
- Council members recommended that changes to procedures be evaluated one year after implementation

**Motion to approve new procedures with the conditions listed below:** Patrick Panos

**Second:** Tabitha Benney

**Vote:** Yes – 9, No - 0

**Abstain:** 0

**Conditions:**

1. The Council recommended that the default protocol would be that all programs undergo a 7-year review unless their programmatic accreditation review meets certain benchmarks. The Graduate Council would consider requests to use programmatic accreditation in lieu of a 7-year review each year at the beginning of the review cycle for all programs undergoing a review in the next academic year. A unit's justification for exemption would include such criteria as:
  - Whether all programs are included in the scope of the accreditation
  - Rigor of accreditation standards
  - Comprehensiveness of the review
  - Demonstration that there is sufficient consideration of learning outcomes assessment in the accreditation review
  - Support for exemption from the dean and cognizant SVP
2. The Council will review the new procedures in one year and make adjustments as necessary, followed by regular evaluation of the process.