

Indiana University Graduate Faculty Council

November 16, 2020

1:00 – 2:30 pm

Present: William Allegrezza, Janice Blum, Dena Carson, Erika Cheng, Dakota Coates, David Daleke, Jill Fehrenbacher, Dominique Galli, Margaret Graves, Spencer Hall, Tabitha Hardy, Devon Hensel, Ed Hirt, Lisa Hoffman, Krista Hoffmann-Longtin, Jason Baird Jackson, Jon Macy, Larry Moss, Ben Perrin, Gloria Preece, Jeff Rutherford, Natalia Rybas, Nathan Schmidt, Scott Shackelford, Pravina Shukla, Rebecca Slotegraaf, Vincent Starnino, Justin Williams, James Wimbush

Agenda

1. **Approval of minutes** from GFC meeting on October 19 2020 ([link to minutes](#))

2. Updates from the Deans

Report of UGS Deans Meeting: Dean Wimbush began by providing a synopsis of the discussion at the UGS Deans meeting. The focus was on the many stresses faced by students and faculty. The plan is to have a webinar series in the Spring term that discusses these issues. The co-chairs for this webinar series are Randall Roper and Maria Hamilton-Abegunde.

Revalidation Limits for Masters Degrees: Next, he presented the issue of acceptance of graduate work toward masters degrees from five or more years prior. Janice and David noted that IUPUI and IUB handle this issue differently. Email communication on this issue has been forwarded to Spencer. Janice explained that IUPUI has many teachers coming back and trying to finish up masters degrees after long hiatuses and/or while working full time. Moreover, COVID has required several exceptional requests, which has been tough and taken staff a lot of time. David mentioned that this is not so much of a problem for IUB, for IUB trusts faculty to ok these decisions. Input from regional campuses would be necessary for any policy changes as well.

Action point for GFC: The consensus was that the APC should take up this issue and carefully consider it. Janice suggested we should look at PhD degrees as well, and the 7 year limit for revalidation.

Question posed – online GREs: Rebecca raised a question about students taking the GRE online, and asked about how scores have been affected. The policy has been for students taking the test online to have a webcam on for the entire time to ensure they are not accessing other materials. The assumption has been that scores are comparable, but we should find out whether this assumption is true.

4. Reports from Student Representatives

Justin – IUPUI Campus: Justin mentioned that over the summer, the IUPUI GPSG worked on getting a better structure. Efforts have been made to strengthen ties with the graduate office, as well as to build communication with the different schools at IUPUI. They are also working to increase their presence on social media, and to address the isolation experienced by graduate students during COVID. They have set up task forces devoted to diversity/inclusion, mental health, and sustainability. For diversity/inclusion, the task force is working with Dean Wimbush to improve tolerance and cultural competency. Their mental health task force is trying to make Headspace (a mindfulness app) free for

any student who wants it. The sustainability task force has composed a pilot project to deal with food insecurity issues, soliciting donations for a food pantry.

Dakota – IUB Campus: Dakota reported that the IUB GPSG has been quite active. Their general assemblies have been well attended and several new resolutions have been passed.

(i) *Marketing:* Effort have been made to [improve graduate student marketing](#), working to make sure that resources are aimed at graduate students, not just the undergraduate students.

(ii) *Title IX* has been another issue they have tackled.

(iii) *Access to technology for international students:* Another key issues has involved the tech challenges faced by international students (e.g., VPNs). US companies like Zoom are blocked in some other countries, making it difficult to keep up with courses.

Action point for GFC: Spencer suggested that Dakota and Justin get together with Scott and Jason on this. Scott expressed expertise.

(iv) *Timely access to course information:* The IUB GPSG has [passed a resolution to improve access to course information](#), requesting that faculty post syllabi, textbook information, and course readings earlier. For many graduate classes, this information is not posted on Canvas until 1-2 days before classes begin. This creates problems for graduate students at the start of the term.

Action point for GFC: Spencer has asked GIC to consider taking action on this issue.

(v) *Food insecurity:* [Food insecurity has been another key issue](#). The IU GPSG has been working with Molly Connor and others on a university wide approach to this issue. A grant request was recently submitted by IUB and IUPUI related to this issue. Scott provided some names of individuals who might help them in these efforts.

Action point for GFC: Spencer has asked GFC Chairs to brainstorm possible ways the GFC could advocate for this, particular as a way to combat mandatory fees.

5. Standing reports from regional campuses

East (Natalie) -- IU-East needs to establish more formal connections.

Kokomo (Gloria) – IU-Kokomo is working to maintain its programs in lieu of COVID.

Northwest (Bill) --- IU-Northwest is struggling with collaborative degrees. Who is in charge of the curriculum? Individualized marketing of these degree programs has been an issue.

South Bend (Lee) -- no report (not present at the meeting)

Southeast (Lisa) – IU-Southeast has been finding the graduate application process cumbersome.

Action point for GFC: David suggested that they inform the IUB office and get their help with the application process to address these issues. Janice said that Kim Bunch and Monica could give a presentation of the application portal to the GPC.

6. Standing Reports from Committees.

(A) *Graduate Initiatives Committee (GIC)*

Jill introduced a vote on the proposals to increase student representation on GPC committees. We reviewed some of the issues central to these proposals. One key issue is that of voting rights on some of the committees. It would represent a conflict of interest to have graduate student representatives vote on some committees. Moreover, with 2 grad representatives per committee, what are the ramifications? Jill proposed stepwise voting on seven proposals. The first proposal involved membership on the APC. No voting rights are requested in this proposal, as it would constitute a conflict of interest. No change in grad rep membership was requested for the Awards committee for obvious reasons of potential conflict of interest. The next proposals involved the GIC and separately proposed adding 2 grad student reps to the committee (one from IUB, one from IUPUI) and also giving those grad student reps voting rights on this committee. The following proposal involved the DEIC, which already includes grad student representatives, and just involved the stipulation of voting rights for those grad student reps. The final three proposals involved procedural concerns. The fifth proposal stated that GPSG representatives could nominate the grad student appointees, but that they needed to be approved by the Vice Chair of the GFC's Executive Committee (currently, Dena). The sixth proposal requested that these grad student reps have access to the GFC materials and be added as members to the GFC Canvas page. The final proposal considered whether these grad student appointees to the various committees be able to sit in on GFC meetings without invitation.

Prior to commencing the voting, several questions were posed. Would the terms be one or two years? Dakota suggested 1 year appointments. Another question wondered whether there were any sensitive issues on the Canvas page that should inform our vote for the sixth proposal. Finally, Jeff mentioned a point of clarification to remind GFC members that voting in subcommittees is not binding; it is simply advisory and the vote of the full council is the only vote that ultimately matters.

There was a move to vote. The vote for these seven proposals was then taken via a Qualtrics link. The outcome of [votes taken on amendments to our bylaws](#) was:

Vote 1: Two student appointees to APC – *passed* (20-3-0)

Vote 2: Two student appointees to GIC – *passed* (23-0-0)

Vote 3: Right of students to vote on GIC – *passed* (18-4-1)

Vote 4: Right of students to vote on DEIC – *passed* (19-3-1)

Vote 5: Nomination process (GPSG nominate, Vice Chair appoint) – *passed* (22-0-1)

Vote 6: Access of new student reps to GFC Canvas? – *not passed* (4-19-0)

Vote 7: Appointees can sit in for student reps on GFC (rephrased from original vote) - *passed* (19-4-0)

We'll update the bylaws and re-publish accordingly.

7. Discussion items

(A) Meeting times next semester: Spencer mentioned that we will be circulating a poll for possible meeting times for the Spring 2021 term (sent 17 November 2020).

(B) Also, we will be having a December meeting – scheduled 14 December. We need to get several things covered before the end of the semester, including a report from the Mental Health Task Force (Larry) and a discussion of the leave policy (Scott).

8. New Business –

No new business was discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:28 pm.