3/23/2020 GAC Minutes

Minutes of the Graduate Academic Council meeting of March 23, 2020, 9:00 AM via Zoom meeting. Approved by the Council by vote of 10-0-0 on April 10, 2020.

In attendance: G. Berg (Chair), S. Appe, D. Card, A. Dawson, S. Faught, D. Li, O. Lunin R. Morse, K.N. Stanwicks, C. Wolff, W. Zakrzewski, K. Williams (ex officio member), S. Kent (staff), S. Pease (staff), C. Davis (staff), J. Deden (staff)

Guests: Dr. Boris Goldfarb – Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Mathematics and Statistics
Dr. Janell Hobson – Chair, Department of Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies
Rachel French – Registrar's Office

1. Chair asked the members if there was any other business to be added to today's agenda. There was none.

1. Consideration of the draft minutes of the GAC meeting of 2/24/2020 was tabled until the April meeting.

2. Dean's Report – Dean Williams summarized different aspects of the current status of academic continuity in regards to COVID-19. These included support of faculty in teaching online and via blackboard, use of asynchronous teaching to preserve bandwidth, and handling of internships. There was clarification of unexpected issues such as FERPA and content being posted elsewhere. Priority being given to research, data collection and physical lab and animal maintenance, which are required for doctoral completion of requirements.

3. Counseling services are available to assist anyone having trouble with the new 'normal'. Financing and funding of students are being monitored. Graduate degree conferral is being carried out as normal. Commencement is still an unknown at this time. Possible virtual hooding being considered.
   Graduate Course drop deadline has been extended to May 1st. Students are being told to check with advisors before dropping. Dropping with a grade of "W" retains enrollment status and doesn't affect loan deferment, but it does affect international student visa status.
   Approximately 700 students have petitioned to stay on campus. Disability Resources Center is working to assist graduate students affected by the move to online courses.
   ETS has come up with a way to administer the GRE and TOEFL testing at a student's home.

4. Chair's Report – none given

5. Report of the GAC Committee on Curriculum & Instruction – Sydney Faught, Chair of Committee on Curriculum & Instruction reviewed the proposals –
   a)   Public Health Fundamentals and Principles CGS Program Proposal
   b)   Public Health Surveillance and Preparedness CGS Program Proposal
   c)   Computing Education CGS Program Proposal
   d)   Curriculum and Instruction PhD Program Proposal

e) Women in Public Policy CGS Program Proposal

f) Social Welfare PhD Program Proposal

g) History MA and PhD Program Proposals

h) History MA GRE Program Proposal

i) Physics MS and PhD Program Proposal

The Committee on Curriculum & Instruction approved all nine proposals.
The CC & I also discussed the outstanding Public Health Ph.D. revisions. The committee requested more information from the department regarding the new teaching practicum course. The department provided a syllabus to the committee, but CC&I still has additional questions and thus the proposal has been tabled.

The Graduate Academic Council accepted the Committee's 9 proposals approvals by a vote of 11-0-0.

6. Proposals for three new Graduate Certificates –

   - Proposal for new online graduate certificate in Topological Data Analysis – Review and discussion with B. Goldfarb and K. Williams of the Mathematics and Statistics Department's proposals for new certificate program in Topological Data.
     Proposal was approved by the Graduate Academic Council by a vote of 11-0-0.

   - Proposal for new online graduate certificate in Machine Learning –
     Review and discussion with B. Goldfarb and K. Williams of the Mathematics and Statistics Department's proposal for new certificate program in Machine Learning. There was discussion regarding the name of the program, given that other departments have "machine learning" courses. The department explained that adjusting the title to include "Data Science" would be a misnomer regarding the curriculum. The department is maintaining the proposed title. Proposal was approved by the Graduate Academic Council by a vote of 9-1-1.

   - Proposal for new online graduate certificate in Global Gender Advocacy – Review and discussion by Dr. Hobson of the proposal's department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies. Proposal was approved by the Graduate Academic Council by a vote of 11-0-0.

7. New business – A. Dawson reviewed the status of the ad hoc GRE Committee assigned to assess the effectiveness of the GRE in the admissions process. The committee has collected data and will issue a memo shortly with the idea of giving guidance to departments wishing to remove the GRE from their requirements. The committee will send the memo to GAC first before sending it to departments.

Meeting adjourned without opposition at 10:30A

End of GAC 3/23/2020 Minutes

Graduate Academic Council

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Meeting supplements

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Committee on Curriculum and Instruction

March 20, 2020

Committee Members: Sydney Faught (chair), Billy Zakrzewski, Alec Dawson, Susan Appe, Dylan Card, Keith Chan, Stephen Weinberg, Christopher Wolff

Staff: Colleen Davis

Proposals reviewed: Public Health Fundamentals and Principles CGS, Public Health Surveillance and Preparedness CGS, Computing Education CGS, Curriculum and Instruction PhD, Women in Public Policy CGS, Social Welfare PhD, History MA and PhD, History MA GRE requirement, Physics MS and PhD

Public Health Fundamentals and Principles CGS Program Proposal

The School of Public Health is requesting the following changes to their Public Health Fundamentals and Principles CGS program:

· Remove HEPI500 from the course options. Currently the program requires either HEPI500 or HEPI501. The change removes HEPI500. This course is no longer offered. The total number of credits will not change.

Based on the department's justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (8 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

Public Health Surveillance and Preparedness CGS Program Proposal

The School of Public Health is requesting the following changes to their Public Health Surveillance and Preparedness CGS program:

· Remove HEPI500 from the course options. Currently the program requires either HEPI500 or HEPI501. The change removes HEPI500. This course is no longer offered. The total number of credits will not change.

Based on the department's justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (8 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

Computing Education CGS Program Proposal

The Department of Educational Theory and Practice has submitted a prior proposal during the Fall 2019 semester that was approved. In that proposal, the concentration of instructional technology was removed, in addition to requesting that the program become a licensure qualifying program. The department is removing the licensure qualifying request and submitting an additional program change request. They are asking that the program name be changed to Computer Science Education. The department feels that this name is more recognizable to potential students. Students can still request initial certification in computer science, without making this program a licensure qualifying program, which is why that program change request was removed.

Based on the department's justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (7 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

Curriculum and Instruction PhD Program Proposal

The Department of Educational Theory and Practice is requesting the following change to their PhD program:

· Remove the specialization/concentration names from the official Graduate Bulletin description. The specialization/concentration requirement of 15 credits still exists, but the specified names are out of date. The department allows doctoral students to craft their specialization/concentration courses based on their interests/research and evolving faculty research.

· Change the language for the Doctoral Qualifying Exam requirement from "portfolio" to "pilot study." The department no longer uses a portfolio and instead utilizes a pilot study. This change better prepares doctoral students for research and assessing their readiness to move onto dissertation proposal and research.

Based on the department's justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (7 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

Women in Public Policy CGS Program Proposal

Rockefeller College is requesting the following change to the Women in Public Policy CGS program:

· Reduce the overall requirement from 18 credits to 15 credits. The college will be changing the course credits from 4 to 3 credits for the majority of their courses and this change is in line with this program proposal request. The students will still need to take 5 courses, but the total credits will be reduced due to the overall credit change of individual courses.

· Add two courses as options to the core seminar requirement (WSS/PAD 604 Inequality and Public Policy; POS 509 Citizen Participation). These courses are relevant to the program and provide more options for students.

· Remove PUB 507 (1 credits) from the requirements. This course is no longer offered by the department.

Based on the department's justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (7 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

Social Welfare PhD Program Proposal

The School of Social Welfare is requesting the following changes to their doctoral program:

· Remove the Predissertation research requirement.

· Remove the Qualifying Exam requirement.

· Adjust the current Doctoral Essay (literature review essay) to be a Comprehensive Essay requirement.

· The doctoral program committee conducted an extensive review of the curriculum (which included interviews and surveys with current students and alumni) and decided that the Predissertation research requirement, combined process of 3 Qualifying Exams, and the Literature Review Essay were no longer desirable means for assessing students' entrance into candidacy.

· The Qualifying Exam requirement assessed core advanced knowledge within social work; the Doctoral essay assessed specialized knowledge in an area of the student's choosing. The new Comprehensive Essay requirement will measure these two requirements while demanding greater rigor (i.e. demonstrating mastery of Social Policy, Research and Social Work Practice, and student's mastery of a specialized subject matter). Within the new Comprehensive Essay requirement, students will need to write a research proposal which eliminates the need for the Predissertation research requirement.

Based on the department's justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (7 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

History MA and PhD Program Proposals

The Department of History is requesting the following change to their MA and PhD programs:

· Eliminate the various research seminar courses they offer; replace it with one course AHIS610. The current requirement for both the MA and PhD requires "one research seminar in the appropriate major field." This is being changed to "one research seminar."

· Many of the existing research seminar courses are no longer offered. Switching to one course, AHIS610, does not change the students' overall requirement. The student will still need to work on an appropriate and feasible research project with a faculty member.

Based on the department's justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (7 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

History MA GRE Program Proposal

The Department of History is requesting that the GRE admissions requirement be removed from their MA program. The department indicates they have strong anecdotal evidence that the GRE requirement discourages individuals from considering and applying to their program. Moreover, graduate programs across the country are increasingly eliminating the GRE for either MA or PhD applications so this change would put them in the company of a growing number of schools. Finally, the department views the GRE score as the least valuable element of the application and not a strong predictor of how a student will do in the program. They do not feel this change would hurt the quality of their incoming MA students; they feel it would net them more and possibly better applicants.

Based on the department's justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (7 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

Physics MS and PhD Program Proposal

The Department of Physics is requesting the following change to their MS and PhD programs:

· Remove the 3.0 GPA requirement for the elective requirement in the programs. Currently the department requires the following: overall 3.0 GPA (this is a University requirement), 3.0 GPA in the Core courses, 3.0 GPA in the elective courses. This has prevented students from graduating. The department wants to maintain the Core GPA requirement and overall 3.0, but eliminate the elective area GPA.

· In the MS (thesis route) program: Adjust the 12 credits of research (APHY695 or APHY699) to allow for elective credit with at least one course in APHY699. The restriction of these credits has limited flexibility for students.

· In the MS (non-thesis route) program: allow for APHY680 to count as a seminar. Currently the program requires 2 credits of APHY784 distributed over 2 semesters. Removing the semester restriction and allowing APHY680 to count in addition to APHY784 provides the students with more flexibility.

Based on the department's justification above, the committee voted to approve the proposed program changes (7 approve, 0 disapprove, 0 abstain).

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- Proposal for new online graduate certificate (AGC) in Topological Data Analysis

    The Graduate Certificate in Topological Data Analysis is designed to guide students through the foundations and latest applications of Topological Data Analysis (TDA), which is viewed as an integral part of the field of modern artificial intelligence. In addition to TDA proper, the courses in the program include the background needed to break into this advanced field and also develop practical skills using TDA in the data science pipeline.

    The program requires 9 credits with an average grade of B or higher.

    Requirements for admission: undergraduate degree (which is not necessarily in mathematics) and knowledge of calculus through a semester of multivariable calculus.

Program Description: The program starts with a background and necessary special topics from linear algebra, graph theory, and homological algebra. After this preparation, the students are taught the first major tool in TDA which is persistent homology. The students learn the precise meaning of this advanced feature of data sets, its properties, several modes of computation and state-of-the-art software packages. The students then learn basics of discrete Morse theory necessary for implementations of persistent homology in the "big data" setting. The last major topic in the program is the Mapper algorithm. In particular, the Mapper is applied to feature selection and feature generation in machine learning and to the architecture of artificial neural nets for deep learning.

Required courses consist of AMAT 522 – Linear Algebra for Applications; AMAT 583 – Topological Data Analysis I; AMAT 584 – Topological Data Analysis II.

- Proposal for new online graduate certificate in Machine Learning

  The Graduate Certificate in Machine Learning is designed to provide students with foundational skills in machine learning. Students will also develop practical working skills in this area. The program requires 9 credits with an average grade of B or higher. Required courses consist of AMAT 590 – Function Theory and Functional Analysis for Applications; AMAT 591 – Optimization Methods and Non-linear Programming; AMAT 592 – Methods of Machine Learning. These courses are currently part of our M.S. in Data Science program. This material builds a solid foundation for application of machine learning methods in practice and research. Requirements for admission: undergraduate degree (which is not necessarily in mathematics) and knowledge of calculus through a semester of multivariable calculus.

- Proposal for new online graduate certificate in Global Gender Advocacy

  Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University at Albany is an interdisciplinary field exploring social, cultural, and political issues that intersect gender, race, class, sexuality, and nationality through global and transnational perspectives. Educating on both undergraduate and graduate levels and providing opportunities for advocacy and activism that combine theory and practice, the Department is well positioned to launch a subfield in Global Gender Advocacy.

  The advanced online graduate certificate in Global Gender Advocacy prepares scholars, artists, community organizers, and professionals from a variety of fields to apply the skills and values of gender advocacy in global contexts, from feminist activism to anti-racist organizing to LGBTQ rights. The program is developed specifically for students who seek to expand their knowledge of women's, gender, and sexuality studies with cultural competencies across racial, ethnic, and national differences. Students will analyze social problems at the intersection of gender, sexuality, race, class, and nationality and also evaluate best practices for advocacy within and across national borders. Those who complete the certificate program gain the equivalence of 9-12 elective credits toward the Master of Arts in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, should they elect to continue their studies. These credits may also be transferrable to other graduate degree programs. Offered part-time for working professionals and international students, the Certificate in Global Gender Advocacy is a fully asynchronous online program, providing students with the flexibility of accessing course materials, discussion forums, and assignments during

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times that fit their schedule. Courses for the certificate will be taught by core, joint, and affiliated faculty in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.