

APPROVED Minutes

**Graduate Programs Committee**

Date: October 18, 2024 | 2 - 3pm | Darland 520

Approval Date: November 1, 2024

Present: Latisha Brengman, Erik Brown, Chan Lan Chun, Dana Collins, Julie Ernst, Pedro Fernandez-Funez, Alec Habig (*Chair*), Alison Hoxie, Harsh Jain, Arshia Khan, Abel Knochel, Melissa Maurer-Jones, Catherine Reich, Raj Saxena, Andrea Schokker, Ariuna Taivan, Hua Tang, Jill Doerfler for Rebecca Webster, Sara Zimmer ([List of programs represented](#))

Absent: Manik Barman, David Beard, Lindzi Campbell-Rorvick, Lauryn Cartee, Jennifer Frisch, Michael Rother, Ping Zhou

Guests: Scott Lanyon, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School; Edgar Arriaga, Associate Dean of Faculty Initiatives

Called to order at 2:00pm.

After introductions around the room, Dean Lanyon and Associate Dean Arriaga shared some remarks as follows:

1. A search is underway for an Associate Vice Provost for Professional Education. The position will report to Dean Lanyon in his role as Vice Provost, and will advocate for [professional education programs](#). The position will be 25 - 50% and is open to faculty across the System. Some in-person presence on the TC campus would be required. GC members are asked to share any thoughts on what this role can do for professional education.
2. Systemwide Grad Fair is October 15. This is linked to the goal of increasing diversity in graduate education, and the Grad School will start to track the yield from this event. Though some graduate program disciplines have a culture of not admitting from within, this can limit opportunities for diverse candidates who might want to stay on to pursue a graduate degree. Dean Lanyon encourages programs to consider such candidates.
3. HLC Accreditation visit for TC campus - There is a great interest in student learning outcomes at the graduate level. Since Duluth has been doing this for many years now, GC members were asked to share their thoughts on

cataloging and tracking achievement of SLOs. It was generally thought to be a good practice, but reporting is burdensome. Some discipline-specific accrediting agencies require that SLOs be tracked, but it can take some work to align agency requirements with University requirements.

4. Dean Lanyon provided a reminder to all DGSs about holistic admissions training for Admission Committee Chairs.
5. Grad SERU - will be conducted in spring 2025. Programs are asked to encourage students to participate. More nuanced reporting is possible with larger numbers of responses. Minimum cell size is 5. Overall results indicate that students are happy with their graduate experience, but there is always room for improvement. Programs are encouraged to let students know what changes have been made as a result of survey responses. A new question this year is, "Have you received guidance from your program on appropriate and inappropriate uses of generative AI?" If your program is not yet providing guidance, it's recommended that you do.
6. Associate Dean Arriaga spoke about the Graduate School priority of improving the quality and effectiveness of graduate advising. A goal of his role as Associate Dean for Faculty Initiatives is improving relationships between advisors and students. A pilot program to provide training on best practices in advising will begin in November. There will also be initiatives to recognize excellence in mentoring/advising. Another part of his role is to provide guidance when behaviors that hinder student progress and success arise. It is also recognized that competing priorities can get in the way of good advising. Associate Dean Arriaga welcomes any thoughts or suggestions on these themes.

Questions from GC members included the following:

1. The idea of training advisors is good, but will take time. What about immediate problems? Programs could consult with specialized offices (disability services, Title IX, etc.) for urgent needs. It might also be a good idea to have this as a standing item at the monthly Systemwide DGS Conversation meetings. It's likely that other DGSs have encountered similar issues. The use of written [advising statements](#) is recommended to set expectations between student and advisor early on.

2. It was noted that some years ago mentoring training was offered to faculty, and suggested that this be revisited. This may have been through the NCFDD, which offers [faculty success training](#). The Clinical and Translational Science Institute offers [Mentor Training](#) for UMN faculty (primarily in the health sciences) periodically. It was also mentioned that in one program all students must have a mentoring contract, and mentor training is required for anyone who wants to advise graduate students. Other programs could make this a condition of being added to the Graduate Faculty Role List, though should be careful to avoid a double standard of requiring it only for faculty outside of the department.
3. Perpetuating pathway programs. Some UMD programs have developed relationships with counterpart programs on the TC campus in which borderline applicants might be referred to UMD to complete a master's before re-applying to the TC program. This is currently dependent on personal relationships that might not continue past the tenure of a DGS, so it was asked if there could be some scaffolding to support this over a longer term, perhaps through an additional bin in slate for applicants just outside the admission envelope could be placed and a checkbox on the application that would allow their applications to be shared. A written agreement between the UMD and TC programs would help perpetuate the relationship over time, and endorsement by the Graduate School would address policy questions around whether or not such relationships are allowed. Dean Lanyon will check with Grad Admissions about the possibility of adding a special bin in slate.
4. It was remarked that the tuition of research-based programs at UMD is higher than regional competitors and asked if there was any flexibility on the regular grad rate that is charged for all GRD programs. Dean Lanyon noted a single rate is preferable on the TC campus, but requesting a different rate for UMD would be the purview of the Chancellor on each campus.
5. A question was asked about the implementation of the federal government's [Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment \(FVT/GE\)](#) requirements that were mentioned during Dean Lanyon's visit last year. The regulation requires higher ed institutions to provide information about the cost of attendance for students in each program, which will be used to develop a ranking of the relative "value" of each program in terms of future earnings. Programs deemed to be "low value" will need to provide a disclaimer to

applicants. Deadlines to provide this data have been extended, so it's not something programs need to worry about just now.

The remaining agenda items were tabled until the November 15 meeting.

Next meeting: Friday, November 1, 2024 | Darland 520

Guest: EVCAA Rebecca Ropers

Adjourned at 3:00pm