



Executive Committee of The Graduate School  
February 16th, 2022 3:00PM – 5:00PM Meeting Minutes  
Via WebEx Conference

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Date: Wednesday, February 16th, 2022

Location: WebEx

Subject: Executive Committee (EC) of The Graduate School meeting minutes

Attendees: Mary Anne Amalaradjou, Kristin Bott, Abigail Campbell (Ex-Officio -- Secretary), Maria-Luz Fernandez, Mitchell Green, Kent Holsinger (Ex-Officio, Chair), Barbara Kream (Ex-Officio), Etan Markus, Betsy McCoach, Kathy Segerson (Ex-Officio), Judith Thorpe, Penny Vlahos

Absent: Charles Mahoney

Guests: Kirstie Farrar, Lendra Friesen, Stephen Stefano

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1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 3:01PM.
2. Presentation and vote for past meeting minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes from the January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. Announcements: No new announcements.
4. Presented for consideration and voting –22-11545 (*Change Course Title and grading SLHS 5282 & 5482*)
  - a. Both courses are clinical placements. The titles are being changed to better reflect a more general title that encompasses various areas included in this area. The grading system was also changed from graded to S/U. The reason is because many placements are off-campus in different areas, and students participate three semesters of the year (Fall, Spring, Summer). In each placement, they have a supervisor who can grade differently. The program felt it would be easier to change the grading scheme to S/U. The governing association has also modified needs for clinical proficiency. Overall, this grading system would be easiest and best for the courses. An S/U grading system is acceptable to the accreditors.
  - b. A motion to approve the proposal was made. The motion was seconded. The proposal was passed unanimously.
5. Presented for consideration and voting – 22-LACH-57XBS4 (*4+1 BA/MA Program in Communication*)

- a. The program is proposing a 4+1 master's program in the communication department. Fast-track communication programs are gaining popularity across the nation. This emerged as a method to retain top undergraduate students, as well as expand enrollment in the existing master's program. There would still be a two-year master's program offered that external applicants can apply to. This program would be meant for existing undergraduates and allow them to begin graduate credits during their undergraduate career, and continue taking them for one year after. The requirements for the master's would be the same, whether in fast-track or externally. There is an optional master's capstone project that would be offered to both external applicants and fast-track students.
    - i. Capstone course was approved previously and included in this GPAR as an exit option. The options are now thesis, exam, *or* capstone. If a student does the capstone, the capstone credits count towards the 33 credits required for the program. If a student does not do the capstone, the student has to take a full 33 credits of coursework. The current language suggests that a student could choose between an exam, thesis, or capstone. However, there is an advisory committee involved in the choice. More language is needed to clarify that the advisory committee will guide students to the best route for academic success in the program.
      1. The GPAR also mentions an option to offer an internship exit option. It is not an option for exit, only an option for credits.
    - ii. Students in 4+1 program have to apply to the program, and at the end of undergraduate program they need to apply again to the MS portion through The Graduate School. Language should be clear that the program is only available to undergraduates from UConn.
    - iii. Standardized testing was included as a requirement due to drawing structure from another 4+1 program. There was a suggestion to remove standardized test requirement.
    - iv. The ability to credit-share is tied to courses that are required. Language regarding credit-sharing qualification needs to be revised.
  - b. A motion was made to vote on the proposal. The motion was seconded. The proposal was passed, conditional on revision of the proposal to address the issues/concerns that were raised.
6. Presented for consideration and voting –*CAR-22-11745 (Applied Capstone in Data Science)*
    - a. This is a course proposal rather than a program-related proposal. The Graduate School functions as the C&C committee for the MS in Data Science. The proposal of this course was approved by the Data Science steering committee, and is coming to the Executive Committee as a curriculum committee. The course is similar to an undergraduate senior design course. In order to complete the MS, the student will take an integrative course as a required component of their degree

program that allows them to integrate everything they have learned throughout the various courses they have taken to solve a real-world problem. Students will work with potential employers to solve a problem, and present the solution to the outside source as well as a panel of faculty.

- i. The program is structured so that for the next year or two at least, Dean Kent Holsinger is the director for the master's program and instructor of record for this course, but Dean Holsinger will not be leading the teams. Instead, there will be faculty experts from a variety of departments who will lead teams based on the nature of the project as well as the student interest.
  - ii. Is there confidence in nearby employers buying in? Other departments already have similar ties. Dean Holsinger is confident there will be interest and involvement.
  - iii. There are many concentrations in data science. Are teams envisioned as across concentrations, or from the same concentration? They would be most likely within a concentration, although in some cases a team may involve students from multiple concentrations. The goal would be to have them within the concentration.
- b. A motion was made to vote on the proposal. The motion was seconded. The proposal passed unanimously.

#### 7. Report/discussion items from the Dean

- a. Thoughts on mentoring graduate students. The Graduate School is trying to focus on developing guidelines for best practices in mentoring students, which is similar to the production of the Annual Review of PhD/MFA students that was produced previously. Changes may require a change in the by-laws or catalog. Both changes concern graduate faculty status.
  - i. Currently the only place where being a member of the Graduate Faculty matters:
    1. Ability to serve as a major advisor on the appropriate committee in the appropriate field
    2. Any advisory committee should have two members of the graduate faculty
  - ii. Cases of improvement: requests for tenure-track faculty is streamlined. For non-tenured track professors, there is an additional examination for the faculty member to serve as part of the Graduate Faculty.
    1. Dean Holsinger presented two suggestions for improving faculty advising/mentoring:

- a. A video/training module focused on the specific rules advisors should know when advising and resources related to those rules.
      - b. A short 1-2 hour training module to provide an introduction to best practices for advising and mentoring of students with a focus on mentoring and advising of graduate students who come from marginalized/disadvantaged backgrounds.
    - 2. Concept would be to require new graduate faculty members to complete these modules.
  - b. UConn does not currently have a method of removing abusive faculty advisors. There is no explicit mechanism. An approach could be adjusting the by-laws of the University, The Graduate School, or the Graduate Faculty Council to reflect that the Dean of The Graduate School appoints advisor. This would allow some authority to tell a graduate faculty member that they are unable to serve as a graduate faculty advisor.
    - i. There was a discussion about exploring developing this type of mechanism.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 4:09PM. The next meeting of the Executive Committee of The Graduate School will be held on [insert date here].