



Date: 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2023, 3:00 PM-5:00 PM

Location: [Virtual meeting via WebEx](#)

Subject: Graduate Faculty Council of The Graduate School (GFC) meeting minutes

Attendees: Mary Anne Amalaradjou (*Moderator*), Marina Astitha, David Atkin, Fakhreddin Azimi, Talia Bar, Mary Bernstein (*Ex-Officio, Associate Dean*), Christopher Blesso, Deborah Bolnick, Karen Bresciano (*Ex-Officio, Assistant Dean*), Kirstie Cope-Ferrar, Jack Corcoran (*Ex-Officio, Recording Secretary*), Lauren Corso, Thomas Craemer, Jose Cruz, Khaled “Axel” Djebbari (*GSS Representative*), Hannah Dostal, Nathan Fiala, Victoria Ford Smith, Adrian Garcia-Sierra, Neal Glaviano, Preston Green, Robin Grenier, Miao Guo, Thomas Hayes, Kent Holsinger (*Ex-Officio, Dean & Chair*), Michael Hren, Todd Kravet, Barbara Kream (*Ex-Officio, Associate Dean*), Anson Ma, Betsy McCoach, William Ouimet, Jeremy Pais, Dan Pejril, Heather Read, Diana Rios, Chadwick Rittenhouse, Alexander Russell, Beth Russell, Archana Sanjay, Kurt Schwenk, Reza Sheikhi, Tammie Spaulding, Luyi Sun, Helen Swede, Judith Thorpe, Penny Vlahos, Randall Walikonis, Andrew Wiemer, Alexander Woodward, Ping Zhang, Yuping Zhang, Xinyu Zhao

Absent: Heather Battaly, Zeljko Boskovic, Vasilis Chousionis, Monty Escabi, Meg Feely, Travis Grosser, Louis Hanzlik, Julia Kuzovkina, Jacqueline Loss, Elizabeth Mayerson, Michael O’Neill, Eugene Pinkhassik, Guillermo Risatti, Helena Silva, Prabhakar Singh, Aditya Tadinada, Carlos Trallero, Nathaniel Trumbull

Guests: *None*

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1. The meeting is called to order at 3:02 pm.
2. Presented for voting: Approval of the Minutes from the April 26, 2023, meeting.

- a. The minutes are approved unanimously by the Graduate Faculty Council.
3. Presented for Voting: Executive Committee Members
    - a. The council was presented with the two nominees for the Executive Committee of The Graduate School.
      - Marina Astitha, Civil and Environmental Engineering
      - Etan Markus, Psychological Sciences
 The nominees were approved to serve with a majority vote by the Graduate Faculty Council. Dean Holsinger will announce his appointment for the third vacancy at the October GFC meeting.
  4. Report from Graduate Student Senate
    - a. Khaled “Axel” Djebbari from the Graduate Student Senate did not have any new reports but plans to have more information for the October GFC meeting.
  5. Network for Enriched Mentoring
    - a. The Network for Enriched Mentoring (NEM) program has now launched for a pilot run. This UConn-wide, interdisciplinary mentor network will pair faculty mentors with graduate student mentees in order to support them outside of their studies and coursework. Mentors and mentees will be matched via survey results that outline their desires and similar experiences in navigating obstacles such as systemic bias, personal hardship, identity, and more. Members of the GFC were called to participate in the new program and to advertise it to their departments.
    - b. Adrian Garcia-Sierra asked if a faculty mentor would be able to present their mentee with their own formal advisees, and Dean Holsinger stated that this would be a great supplement to the program.
    - c. Marina Astitha expressed concern on the difficulty of a mentor’s position if a mentee sought them out for support after a grievance or bias-related incident. Karen Bresciano stated that all mentors should follow the standard mandated reporter procedures, and Dean Holsinger clarified that mentors would be matched with mentees primarily outside of their department in order to prevent any sort of conflict of interest.
  6. New Business
    - a. Proposed Bylaws Revision Re. Definition of “Full-Time” for Admissions
      - i. **Current by-laws language (Section III.E.c.):**  
 Except in exceptional circumstances, to be considered for admission to a degree or certificate program, prior coursework must be of at least the following quality:
        - A cumulative GPA for their most recent degree of 3.0 or higher for the entire degree, or
        - If the most recent degree is an undergraduate degree or the student has not yet completed their undergraduate degree:
          - A GPA of 3.0 or higher for the entire two most recent years of full-time undergraduate coursework, or

- A GPA of 3.5 or higher for the entire most recent year of full-time undergraduate coursework, or
- If a student has taken at least one semester of full-time study following the completion of the most recent undergraduate or graduate degree, a GPA of 3.0 or higher for all of their post-degree coursework.

**ii. Proposed Changes by-laws language (Section III.E.c.):**

Except in exceptional circumstances, to be considered for admission to a degree or certificate program, prior coursework must be of at least the following quality:

- A cumulative GPA for their most recent degree of 3.0 or higher for the entire degree, or
- If the most recent degree is an undergraduate degree or the student has not yet completed their undergraduate degree:
  - A GPA of 3.0 or higher for the entire two most recent years of full-time undergraduate coursework, or
  - A GPA of 3.5 or higher for the entire most recent year of full-time undergraduate coursework, or
- If a student has taken **the equivalent of** at least one semester of full-time study (**9 credits or more**) following the completion of the most recent undergraduate or graduate degree, a GPA of 3.0 or higher for all of their post-degree coursework.

**iii. Proposed New (Clean) by-laws language (Section III.E.c.):**

Except in exceptional circumstances, to be considered for admission to a degree or certificate program, prior coursework must be of at least the following quality:

- A cumulative GPA for their most recent degree of 3.0 or higher for the entire degree, or
- If the most recent degree is an undergraduate degree or the student has not yet completed their undergraduate degree:
  - A GPA of 3.0 or higher for the entire two most recent years of full-time undergraduate coursework, or
  - A GPA of 3.5 or higher for the entire most recent year of full-time undergraduate coursework, or
- If a student has taken the equivalent of at least one semester of full-time study (9 credits or more) following the completion of the most recent undergraduate or graduate degree, a GPA of 3.0 or higher for all of their post-degree coursework.

**b. Proposed Bylaws Revision Re. Provisional Status for Admissions**

**i. Current by-laws language (Section III.F):**

**a).** Occasionally, students who hold the baccalaureate but do not qualify fully for admission to regular status may give sufficient evidence of ability in their chosen field to warrant their provisional admission to a master's degree or certificate program only. Applicants cannot be admitted

provisionally to a doctoral program. In addition, students who require F-1 or J-1 visa sponsorship are not eligible for provisional admission.

**b).** Students admitted provisionally must have a cumulative baccalaureate grade point average of 2.6 or higher.

**c).** If a provisional student's initial 12 credits of completed degree coursework (excluding 1000-level courses) or 3 credits of completed certificate coursework meet the minimum scholastic requirement of The Graduate School, the student is accorded regular status. Otherwise, the student is subject to dismissal. In situations where special consideration is warranted, and only upon the specific request of the major advisor, the Dean of The Graduate School may approve changing a student to regular status if at least nine credits of advanced coursework have been completed with grades of A or A-.

**d).** Regular, not provisional, status is required for degree conferral.

ii. **Proposed Changes by-laws language (Section III.F):** Adds new section C and revises what is now section D.

**c).** **Students may be admitted provisionally to a certificate program if they have completed three credits of the certificate coursework with a 3.0 GPA or higher.**

**d).** If **the initial 12 credits of degree coursework completed by** a provisional student admitted to a master's program' ~~initial 12 credits of completed degree coursework~~ (excluding 1000-level courses) **meets the minimum scholastic requirement of The Graduate School, the student is accorded regular status. If the initial 6 credits of degree coursework completed by a provisional student admitted to a certificate program meet the minimum scholastic requirement of The Graduate School, the student is accorded regular status.** ~~or 3 credits of completed certificate coursework meet the minimum scholastic requirement of The Graduate School, the student is accorded regular status.~~ Otherwise, the student is subject to dismissal. In situations where special consideration is warranted, and only upon the specific request of the major advisor, the Dean of The Graduate School may approve changing a **master's** student to regular status if at least nine credits of advanced coursework have been completed with grades of A or A-.

iii. **Proposed New (Clean) by-laws language (Section III.F):** Adds new section C and revises what is now section D.

**c).** Students may be admitted provisionally to a certificate program if they have completed three credits of the certificate coursework with a 3.0 GPA or higher.

**d).** If the initial 12 credits of degree coursework completed by a provisional student admitted to a master's program' (excluding 1000-level courses) meets the minimum scholastic requirement of The Graduate School, the student is accorded regular status. If the initial 6 credits of degree coursework completed by a provisional student admitted to a

certificate program meet the minimum scholastic requirement of The Graduate School, the student is accorded regular status. Otherwise, the student is subject to dismissal. In situations where special consideration is warranted, and only upon the specific request of the major advisor, the Dean of The Graduate School may approve changing a master's student to regular status if at least nine credits of advanced coursework have been completed with grades of A or A-.

Talia Bar asked about The Graduate School's minimum GPA requirements for post-undergraduate degree course work, and what would occur if it was too low. Associate Dean Bernstein clarified that as long as the previous degree was above the standard 3.0 minimum. The department can consider the other low GPA as part of its holistic review.

- c. Proposed Bylaws Revisions Re. co-major advisors
  - i. **Current by-laws language (Section VIII.A.c.):**

Occasionally, it may be desirable or appropriate for a student to have co-major advisors (not more than two). Each co-major advisor must hold an appropriate Graduate Faculty appointment in the student's field of study and area of concentration (if applicable).
  - ii. **Proposed Changes by-laws language (Section VIII.A.c.):**

Occasionally, it may be desirable or appropriate for a student to have co-major advisors (not more than two). Each co-major advisor must hold an appropriate Graduate Faculty appointment in the student's field of study and area of concentration (if applicable). **Only one co-major advisor must be from the student's home department. Co-major advisors outside the student's home department must be approved by the student's home department.**
  - iii. **Proposed New (Clean) by-laws language (Section VIII.A.c.):**

Occasionally, it may be desirable or appropriate for a student to have co-major advisors (not more than two). Each co-major advisor must hold an appropriate Graduate Faculty appointment in the student's field of study and area of concentration (if applicable). Only one co-major advisor must be from the student's home department. Co-major advisors outside the student's home department must be approved by the student's home department.
  - iv. **Adds language (Section VIII.A.f): Regarding resignation of a major advisor.**

In cases where a student has co-major advisors, the other co-major advisor becomes the advisor if they are in the student's home department.
  - v. **Current by-laws language (Section VIII.A.i.):**

If the advisory committee consists of three members, decisions must be unanimous. If the advisory committee consists of four or more members, decisions are considered adopted if there is no more than one negative

vote, although the major advisor must always vote in the affirmative. For Ph.D. students, advisory committee decisions involving the outcome of the General Examination, approval of the Dissertation Proposal, oral defense of the dissertation, or approval of the dissertation itself, must be unanimous.

vi. **Proposed Changes by-laws language (Section VIII.A.i.):**

If the advisory committee consists of three members, decisions must be unanimous. If the advisory committee consists of four or more members, decisions are considered adopted if there is no more than one negative vote, although the major advisor **or both co-major advisors** must always vote in the affirmative. For Ph.D. students, advisory committee decisions involving the outcome of the General Examination, approval of the Dissertation Proposal, oral defense of the dissertation, or approval of the dissertation itself, must be unanimous.

vii. **Proposed New (Clean) by-laws language (Section VIII.A.i.):**

If the advisory committee consists of three members, decisions must be unanimous. If the advisory committee consists of four or more members, decisions are considered adopted if there is no more than one negative vote, although the major advisor or both co-major advisors must always vote in the affirmative. For Ph.D. students, advisory committee decisions involving the outcome of the General Examination, approval of the Dissertation Proposal, oral defense of the dissertation, or approval of the dissertation itself, must be unanimous.

viii. **Current by-laws language (Section VIII.A.k.):**

If deemed appropriate by a graduate student's major advisor, the major advisor may request that a suitably qualified external associate advisor be appointed to the student's advisory committee. Such requests should be made in writing to The Graduate School. The request should be accompanied by a curriculum vitae for the individual being recommended for appointment. Such appointments are made on the basis of advanced training and significant experience in the field of study. An appointment as external associate advisor is limited to an individual student's advisory committee and does not imply in any way membership on the Graduate Faculty of the University. Ordinarily, not more than one external associate advisor is appointed to any master's or doctoral student's advisory committee. The major advisor and at least one associate advisor on any doctoral student's advisory committee must be members of the University's Graduate Faculty.

ix. **Proposed Changes by-laws language (Section VIII.A.k.):**

If deemed appropriate by a graduate student's major advisor **or both co-major advisors**, the major advisor **or both co-major advisors** may request that a suitably qualified external associate advisor be appointed to the student's advisory committee. Such requests should be made in writing to The Graduate School. The request should be accompanied by a curriculum vitae for the individual being recommended for appointment.



Such appointments are made on the basis of advanced training and significant experience in the field of study. An appointment as external associate advisor is limited to an individual student's advisory committee and does not imply in any way membership on the Graduate Faculty of the University. Ordinarily, not more than one external associate advisor is appointed to any master's or doctoral student's advisory committee. The major advisor **or both co-major advisors** and at least one associate advisor on any doctoral student's advisory committee must be members of the University's Graduate Faculty.

- x. **Proposed New (Clean) by-laws language (Section VIII.A.k):**  
If deemed appropriate by a graduate student's major advisor or both co-major advisors, the major advisor or both co-major advisors may request that a suitably qualified external associate advisor be appointed to the student's advisory committee. Such requests should be made in writing to The Graduate School. The request should be accompanied by a curriculum vitae for the individual being recommended for appointment. Such appointments are made on the basis of advanced training and significant experience in the field of study. An appointment as external associate advisor is limited to an individual student's advisory committee and does not imply in any way membership on the Graduate Faculty of the University. Ordinarily, not more than one external associate advisor is appointed to any master's or doctoral student's advisory committee. The major advisor or both co-major advisors and at least one associate advisor on any doctoral student's advisory committee must be members of the University's Graduate Faculty.
- xi. **Current by-laws language (Section VIII.A.l):**  
The major advisor of any master's or doctoral student is responsible for coordinating the supervisory work of the advisory committee. Therefore, when the major advisor is to be on leave or is not in residence, it is the major advisor's responsibility to appoint an acting major advisor. The acting major advisor must be a member of the University's Graduate Faculty or be fully eligible for such an appointment. The acting major advisor will assume all duties and responsibilities of the major advisor for the duration of the appointment. The major advisor will inform The Graduate School of the appointment and provide any information that may be required concerning the credentials of the acting major advisor.
- xii. **Proposed Changes by-laws language (Section VIII.A.l):**  
The major advisor **or both co-major advisors** of any master's or doctoral student is **are** responsible for coordinating the supervisory work of the advisory committee. Therefore, when the major advisor is to be on leave or is not in residence, it is the major advisor's responsibility to appoint an acting major advisor. The acting major advisor must be a member of the University's Graduate Faculty or be fully eligible for such an appointment. The acting major advisor will assume all duties and responsibilities of the major advisor for the duration of the appointment. The major advisor will

inform The Graduate School of the appointment and provide any information that may be required concerning the credentials of the acting major advisor. **In cases of co-major advisors, the co-major advisor who is not on leave will be responsible while the other co-major advisor is on leave.**

- xiii. **Proposed New (Clean) by-laws language (Section VIII.A.l):**  
The major advisor or both co-major advisors of any master's or doctoral student is/are responsible for coordinating the supervisory work of the advisory committee. Therefore, when the major advisor is to be on leave or is not in residence, it is the major advisor's responsibility to appoint an acting major advisor. The acting major advisor must be a member of the University's Graduate Faculty or be fully eligible for such an appointment. The acting major advisor will assume all duties and responsibilities of the major advisor for the duration of the appointment. The major advisor will inform The Graduate School of the appointment and provide any information that may be required concerning the credentials of the acting major advisor. In cases of co-major advisors, the co-major advisor who is not on leave will be responsible while the other co-major advisor is on leave.

No questions were asked and no objections were raised.

- d. Proposed Bylaws Revisions Re. Advisory Committee Appointments by the Dean of The Graduate School
- i. **Current by-laws language (Section VIII.A.h.):**  
In addition to the three or more members of the student's advisory committee, another member, ordinarily a member of the Graduate Faculty outside the student's field of study but in a related field, may be appointed by the Dean of The Graduate School.
- ii. **Proposed Changes by-laws language (Section VIII.A.h.):**  
~~In addition to the three or more members of the student's advisory committee, another member, ordinarily a member of the Graduate Faculty outside the student's field of study but in a related field, may be appointed by the Dean of The Graduate School.~~

No questions were asked and no objections were raised.

7. Announcements & Information:

- a. A Timely Topics presentation titled, "Understanding the GPAR Process" presented by Associate Dean Bernstein will be held for faculty on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 11:00 am.
- b. Dean Holsinger announced that Lesley Salafia from the Office of the General Counsel will appear at the next GFC meeting to go into detail regarding the Supreme Court ruling regarding the college admissions process.



- c. Dean Holsinger also discussed the plans to search for his successor after he steps down next summer. Currently, the plan is to have at least 2-3 members of the Graduate Faculty Council serve on the search committee.
- 8. The Graduate Faculty Council meeting adjourned at 4:02 pm. The next GFC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 3:00 pm.