

USA Graduate Council Minutes

10/14/19 @ 3:00 PM

Student Center Terrace

Members Present: Susan Gordon-Hickey, Eric Loomis, Gwendolyn Pennywell, Debra Chapman, John Kovaleski, Robert Cloutier, Kathy Bydalek, Treena Finney, Elizabeth Adams, Marie Migaud, Tim Sherman, Kevin West, Kimberly Feagin, Bettina Riley, Todd Andel, Harold Pardue, Lorene Flanders, Norma Jean Tanner, Kelly Osterbind, LaSonya Toney, DeAnna Cobb

Members Absent: Christopher Keshock, Mark Taylor, Gayle Davidson-Shivers

Guests: Ashley Gibson, Thomas Glover, Brittany Seals

Agenda and related materials distributed prior to the meeting.

1. **Minutes from previous meeting (2.7.19):** Minutes motioned, seconded, approved.
2. **Graduate Dean's Report (Harold Pardue)** – Dr. Pardue shared an ACHE update showing additional graduation program status in the ACHE approval process. Program Portfolio Prioritization slides were also highlighted, which compared our individual graduate programs to market forces (market size, available jobs, saturation, competitors, earnings, growth projections, etc.) This study pinpointed master's level graduate programs in which to monitor, maintain, evaluate, and invest. Expected budget cuts would be discussed in the upcoming Dean's Council, which will involve strategic planning for the projected decline in enrollment in a few years. A Graduate Council subcommittee formation for strategic planning was floated. The Alabama ASSET Program was discussed. The program is a state wide initiative in response to specific state workforce needs expressed by local industry. This program has the support of the governor's office. Members were encouraged to think about what programs could be created at USA to be a part of the ASSET program. A Task Force subcommittee to formulate/manage stackable certs was suggested.
3. **WebAdmit Update (Norma Jean Tanner):** The new application cycle is open through Fall 2020. The Council was advised that the url's change with each academic year and to remind students to check for the correct url if they are having issues applying/getting messages that the system is closed. Brittany Seals was introduced; she is replacing Payton Marinello in the Graduate Admissions office. Also as a solution for the transcripts issue, work is in progress for the students to upload their own transcripts. A common issue is that if the transcript comes to the University instead of through WebAdmit, it does not show in the system as complete to the student if our Admissions office has uploaded it.
4. **EMP Update (Eric Loomis):** Dr. Loomis stated this cost effective platform was purchased for our first centralized graduate school marketing effort. Web pages have been made for each graduate program and can be modified as desired. The next focus for marketing is to our own undergraduate student population. Individual programs can set notification levels, purchase and utilize other marketing lists, which can be electronic or print. Postcards have been found to be surprisingly effective. Programs should coordinate efforts with USA Marketing to observe USA branding guidelines. Tutorial videos can be found in the EMP help section. Graduate students could be hired to assist with marketing efforts and can sign a nondisclosure agreement.
5. **NISP/Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Doctoral Degree (Dr. Thomas Glover and Dr. Kevin West):** Drs. Glover and West introduced this interdisciplinary PhD program "to prepare individuals to apply mathematical and scientific principles to the design, development and operational evaluation of systems at the interface of chemical engineering and biology, with an emphasis at the molecular level . . ." (quoted from the ACHE NISP). Faculty would be from various USA colleges/schools and the program would be housed in the Graduate School with our other interdisciplinary programs. Few new resources are needed and mostly existing courses would be utilized. Motioned, seconded, approved.

6. **Proposed Change to Thesis/Dissertation Due Dates (DeAnna Cobb):** Several programs have requested the due dates be moved closer to the end of the semester to better accommodate students and faculty. As a possible solution, a one-page T/D committee chair checklist was distributed so that theses and dissertations would reach the Graduate School in better form and need considerably less time to process. Spring 2020 was suggested as a trial run to see if this strategy would be effective. As Summer terms are short as is, the due dates could not be shifted to any great degree. Our student theses/dissertations are uploaded to ProQuest on the internet as is standard practice with many universities. This solution was met with mixed responses and other solutions are welcomed.
7. **Graduate Assistant Policy (Harold Pardue):** Dr. Pardue proposed another category of Graduate Assistants be created in order to meet grant needs for health insurance for our doctoral level GA's. Avenues for health insurance for all GA's are being explored, but currently funding does not exist at that level. A United Health insurance pool for all Alabama GA's in this category is being considered.
8. **Graduate Student Time Extension Policy Review (Harold Pardue):** Dr. Pardue asked the council to review the proposed policy for streamlining time extension requests. It was suggested that the Faculty Advisor be added to the initial steps. This policy will be revised and emailed out for review.
9. **English Proficiency/Countries (Harold Pardue):** A list of countries not requiring the English proficiency exams for our undergraduate students was disbursed. These students must however take a standardized text to establish proficiency levels. A policy will be created and emailed out for review.
10. No new business.
11. Meeting adjournment.