



Graduate Studies, Recruitment, Admissions & Financial Aid Committee

Meeting 4 Minutes | November 12, 2020 | 1 - 3pm | Zoom

- **Members Present:** Hannah Schertz (chair), Ellen Vaughan, Kyungbin Kwon, Vic Borden, Danielle DeSawal, Stephen Hiller, Lucinda Carspecken, Leslie Chrapliwy
- **Members Absent:** Marjorie Manifold
- **Ex-officio Present:** Sarah Lubienski
- **Staff:** Matt Boots, Tracey McGookey, Kirstin Helström

I. Voting Items

- A. Review of GSC Minutes
- Ellen moved to approve the minutes.
 - Leslie seconded.
 - All in favor.

II. Information Item

- A. Interpretation of GRE Scores for Master's Degrees Policy in SoE
- Last spring, SoE approved Policy 20.42, which revised the minimum GRE requirements for doctoral degrees and eliminated the school-wide default minimum required GRE score for master's and specialist degrees. However, there is confusion about whether this change implies that these programs no longer need to require that students take the GRE. Hence, master's and specialist programs have continued to spend time requesting waivers and drafting policies to remove the GRE requirement, and GSO staff have continued to work with faculty on these.
- To clarify and eliminate this inefficiency, Sarah proposed the following interpretation, with the aim of ascertaining GSC's support for it and, if supported, alerting Policy Council as an information item (unless PC objects to this): *The GSC approves the following implementation of Policy 20.42: The Graduate Studies Office interprets this policy as indicating there is no school-wide GRE requirement for SOE master's and Ed.S. applicants. With approval from the program-area faculty and department chair, master's and Ed.S. programs may alter their GRE requirement without approval from GSC or PC.*
- Vic moved to approve the interpretation.
 - Danielle seconded.
 - All in favor.

III. Discussion Items

- A. Fellowship Subcommittee assignments
- Achasa Beechler Scholarship: Leslie Chrapliwy, Vic Borden, Kyungbin Kwon
Outstanding Dissertation Fellowship: Lucy Carspecken, Danielle DeSawal, Marjorie Manifold
Dean's Fellowship: Ellen Vaughan, Hannah Schertz, Kyungbin Kwon
Malvina McNeill Fellowship: Ellen Vaughan, Leslie Chrapliwy, Hannah Schertz

B. DEI Policy Review

The following policies were determined (through anonymous survey of GSC members) to require the most immediate and substantial discussion:

[Guidelines for Grades in Graduate Education Courses \(14.39\)](#)

GSC Policy Reviewer concerns (from the survey):

- My primary concern is my question about whether this aligns with de facto grading practices in graduate courses, which seem to condense the scale criteria into the A-B grades (e.g. for many courses



a grade of "B" is more akin to C's or lower. Concern is that biases could result in lower grades than for others while faculty claim to follow the policy.

- The wording regarding continuation in the program could be altered to account for potential bias in grading by the instructor
- Should be noted that faculty can establish grading scales for their individual classes. To be clearer about what a guideline is in this respect would be helpful for DEI.
- I suggest wording that gives further consideration of students who are underrepresented or first generation university students. Upon first appearance of Cs being recorded, they might be more closely mentored and advised to address issues that confound or complicate their abilities to negotiate the university experience.

Sarah questioned whether this policy is needed at all. She also highlighted that it does not align with the GPA requirements for making adequate progress at the different degree levels (with a B+ being described in the policy as very good work/above average performance, yet a B+ average is not adequate progress in a doctoral program).

Danielle shared that this policy was a response to the study on grade inflation that IUB SoE was specifically cited as one of the highest average grades in the US. Vic added that that cited study was specifically referring to undergraduate grades.

Matt added that the discussion of this policy is documented on page 5-6 of [this Policy Council minutes document](#). Vic raised another [university-level grading policy](#) that is likely not implemented.

Several members recalled that this policy actually originated with the Faculty Development committee. Ellen mentioned that so much has changed since 2014, that this policy warrants serious reconsideration and discussion, in light of movements toward competency-based evaluation, as well as to prevent conscious or unconscious bias.

Stephen mentioned that his main concern was how the grade specifications potentially provides protection for faculty bias, and he raised whether any grade specifications were needed. The university-level grade policy does not specify grades. He also asked if current faculty even know of this policy.

Several members agreed that the wording at the bottom of the policy is problematic because it suggests that a C in one course should be viewed as an indicator of a student's ability to succeed in the program, without allowing for personal crises, grading bias, and other issues that could arise in a single course.

Hannah mentioned that if this policy was revisited with the Faculty Development committee, that grade inflation would need to be considered.

Ellen suggested perhaps creating an operationalized definition of each grade. Danielle suggested a narrative about grading more generally might be less problematic to replace the letter grade descriptions.

- Danielle moved to approval the "bringing of 14.39 to the faculty affairs committee for review for DEI, including the removal of the statement at the bottom and a look to see if the grade distribution may be replaced with a narrative that aligns with the university description on grade policy.
- Stephen seconded.
- All in favor

[Students in Online Programs Taking Courses on Campus \(18.08\)](#)

GSC Policy Reviewer concerns:

- This is an option only for those students that are near enough to take a F2F class. This wouldn't be equitable for students in fully online programs who are close to completing a program, but aren't geographically able to use this option to graduate in a timely manner.
- I think we need to revisit all policies related to online instruction given the blurring of lines
- This will create a comparative disadvantage for low income students who would benefit from social interaction with other students or with faculty but cannot afford the higher fees



[Students in Residential Programs Taking Online Courses \(18.09\)](#)

GSC Policy Reviewer concerns:

- If students in online only programs have specific sections set aside for them or have a window where registration is only available to them, this would be fine. I know this happens for some courses, but I don't know if this is the norm. Residential students have more options of F2F classes to complete their coursework.
- This policy is even more problematic for certain students
- This may impact international students who were saddled with unexpected visa requirements from the US government. It could also provide problems during times of Covid or other pandemics when a student is at high risk from an infection.

Combined 18.08 & 18.09 discussion:

Matt commented that the spirit behind these policies was to point to the additional SoE fees for taking online courses. A related issue is that residential students fill online sections of courses (like Y520) before online students have a chance to register. CEP used to allow students to register according to their online/residential standing, but that process has not been implemented in recent semesters.

Sarah added that fundamentally, the 50% rule and the OOE fees are not within SoE's control. Kyungbin and Vic supported reviewing policies for DEI issues, even if those policies are not within GSC's authority to be changed. GSC could still raise them as concerns with UGS and other levels. Danielle supported that initiative, along with transparency in policy implementation for students.

Kyungbin asked if there was a big need for either population of student to take online/residential students. Matt responded that there has not been a huge need for either population, but rather students have been surprised by extra tuition costs. Vic and Matt added that there are reduced fees currently due to Covid for residential students taking online courses.

Kyungbin noted that international students typically have additional restrictions on the number of online courses they may take, and the policies, as currently stated, could mislead these students.

GSC proposed the following amendments:

For policy 18.08, this sentence should be added at the end: *"International students should check with the Office of International Services about online course enrollment restrictions."*

For policy 18.09, this paragraph should be added: *"In accordance with ICHE program definitions, students in residential programs may take online courses, but on-campus courses must account for at least half of the credits taken toward their degree. Online courses don't count towards the residency requirement. Information on tuition and fees can be found on the Bursar website. International students should check with the Office of International Services about additional online course enrollments restrictions."*

- Ellen moved to approve the changes.
- Kyungbin seconded.
- All in favor.

[Policy on Re-application \(16.19\)](#)

GSC Policy Reviewer concern:

- It can be problematic if dismissal is biased, so that needs to be determined

Matt stated that this policy came from a situation where a student was dismissed from a SoE program, and then proceeded to shop around in other SoE programs for readmission. Ellen commented that if DEI issues in that situation were attended to, then this policy would not raise a DEI concern. Sarah added that students can appeal once they are warned or notified of a dismissal. Matt added that [Policy Council minutes](#) state that within the College, a dismissed student is permanently banned from applying



to the same department, but it does allow them to apply to other college programs. This SoE policy is actually less restrictive than the College policy.

[Change in Admission Policy \(99.32\)](#)

GSC Policy Reviewer concerns:

- While this policy gives the Associate Dean for GSO and faculty leeway in admitting students with marginal credentials, I don't remember having this discussion during GSC. I believe once the Annual Review process is in place for all students, this will be a great mechanism for monitoring, tracking, and reporting on these admissions.
- The second paragraph is odd
- The language should emphasize advising and mentoring rather than monitoring.

Sarah interpreted this policy to mean that the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies reports to GSC on what she has done to support and confirm adequate advising of conditionally admitted students. Vic raised the issue that this policy does not actually contain a policy to follow or state what had been implemented previously. Sarah commented that annual review should assist and/or solve the tracking of students. Matt added that with new Gems, reports on conditional-admit students should be much easier to gather now. He will connect with Keith McCorvie on this. Sarah added that it would be good to monitor students in light of the removal of GRE scores alongside the annual review process as well.

Ellen commented that the difference between conditional-admit and post-matriculation requirements could be a DEI issue as well. Conditional admittance can make students feel like they do not belong. Matt confirmed that post-matriculation requirements is the standard practice now – not just for international students. No changes to the policy were proposed.

[Changes to IRB Review- Human Subjects- EdD \(18.17\)](#)

GSC Policy Reviewer concern:

- I honestly don't understand why this exists in this format. It is confusing and is a barrier to navigating the process, especially for students are first generation. Don't the research policies say that you can't conduct human subject research without approval apply in this instance? If this is primarily about the need to submit documentation, then it needs to be rewritten to indicate that simply this is a need to submit the IRB. IF this is about ensuring that a student does not do an entire dissertation and then find out they needed IRB - needs to be reworded to indicate that is the actual goal.

[Changes to IRB Review- Human Subjects- PhD \(18.18\)](#)

GSC Policy Reviewer concern:

- same as above

Combined 18.17 & 18.18 discussion:

Vic commented that the IRB definitions of what constitutes “human subjects” research changes so frequently that these policies are difficult to interpret. Matt shared the history of these policies: Barry Chung had recognized that the IRB approval for doctoral research was delaying many students’ progress, so GSO changed the requirements to allow the faculty to determine if IRB approval was needed for the student’s research, and if so, to require approval at the last step (the proposal) before the defense. Matt interpreted Vic’s concern as the faculty may be unsure if IRB approval is needed, because of the variation in responses from IRB.

Ellen raised the issue that this is particularly a DEI issue for protecting research participants. Tracey added that the previous process often prevented students from getting their research committee approved, which could pose a different DEI issue.

Hannah asked if it would make faculty more comfortable to require an IRB document to state its approval or unnecessary review. Tracey added that, when that process was in place, GSO received some



pushback from faculty who felt that their own review of the research proposal and their certainty that it wasn't required should be enough, rather than also needing IRB's confirmation. Hannah stated that IRB approval would provide an added layer of protection for the faculty member. Matt and Vic added that there were some universities (Duke and UI Chicago) that lost federal funding because of their violation of IRB approval processes.

Due to time constraints, this discussion will be continued in the next meeting.