



Graduate Studies Advisory Committee (GSAC)

AGENDA

Thursday, October 19, 2023

10:30am-12:00PM

10:30-10:31: Call Meeting to Order – Chair, Dina Perrone
Called at 10:32

10:32-10:34: Review and Approve Agenda

Motion to approve: Virginia Gray

Second: Rod Smith

Vote by acclamation - approved

10:35-10:37: Review and Approve September [Minutes](#)

Motion to approve: Kevin Sinchak

Second: Rod Smith

Vote by acclamation – approved

- Megan Griffith Pina – abstained

10:38-10:48: Update on GSAC Chair and Charge, Pei-Fang Hung

- GSAC is chaired by Director of Grad Studies and reports to Academic Senate. Senate committees are typically chaired by faculty. Prior to the Associate Dean position, an MPP, Graduate Studies had a Director of Graduate Studies who was faculty. That Director chaired this committee. Since Graduate Studies no longer has a Director, Senate Executive Committee strongly supports a faculty to chair the committee. They are allowing GSAC to decide between two options:
 - Option 1: Having 1 faculty member chair GSAC with Associate Dean support
 - Option 2: Co-chair with the Associate Dean
- Senate Exec will hold on making revisions to the charge until GSAC finalizes the leadership structure
- Discussion:
 - Dina Perrone – She does not want Grad Studies to drive the committee and its agenda. Rather, she would like it to be driven by the concerns and needs of faculty and their graduate student issues.
 - Questions:
 - Kevin Sinchak: What would the co-chair be doing? Are units involved, buyout?
 - Response:
 - Consider discussions to bring to the group for consideration (IE: Enrollment Deposit, and Repeat Delete)
 - Research across CSUs to frame the conversation
 - The committee chair will report back to Senate, policy work and any questions.
 - Complete end of year report for Academic Senate
 - Assigned time only happens with Councils. Senate work is considered ‘service’.
 - List of those eligible
 - All faculty members on the committee
 - Action: Determine which option and then send an email with the duties and the eligible
 - Motion: Support Option for Co-Chair
 - Motion: Babette Benken
 - Second: Kevin Sinchak
 - 92% Yay, 8% Nay

10:49-10:51: Create Appeals Subcommittee, comprised of – at minimum - one faculty member voted by their college, one staff with graduate students/programs in portfolio, one MPP, and one student.

- GSAC is the final appeals review for those decisions made by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Both the student and the program can appeal to GSAC.
- The GSAC subcommittee reviews the appeal and meets to make a decision.
- Dina writes the draft letter and the committee reviews before sent to Jody.
- No rule of the composition of the committee, Dina sought to have representation of all members on the subcommittee.
- Ask: looking for committee – appeal currently with CED, so no one from CED can participate
 - Lindsay Sterk
 - Virginia Gray
 - Dina Perrone
 - Student: Absent, Dina will reach out to them.
 - If tied decision – Dina will reach out to another to obtain a final vote.

10:51-11:01: *Graduate Student Pulse*: Alejandra Romo & Aishwarya Chauhan

- No students present

11:02-11:25: *Discussion Topic*: [AI in Culminating Activities](#), Cecilia Paredes

- The Thesis and Dissertation Office considers it beneficial to establish guidance on AI since this will be an ongoing topic of discussion.
- AI is a relatively new technology, and we are not exactly sure of future implications. The goal is to place CSULB in a better position to address as potential issues arise.
- GSAC seeks to the discussions that occurred at the department level (college level)
- Discussion:
 - Erin Biolchino – CED sees two issues: 1, the general use of AI, and 2, how we guide students on the use of AI. There has been a small subcommittee in CED about how to navigate AI. Currently, the Signature Page statement is asking faculty to certify that AI was not used in the thesis/dissertation. CED faculty argue that there is no way to verify this and thus, do not feel comfortable signing it.
 - Dina Perrone – The thesis and dissertation office had an issue this summer with a submission in which the references and citations did not match the content and references that did not exist. Because the signature page only had the faculty statement, the Office sent it back to the program.
 - Jody Cormack – Reminded GSAC that the University created a taskforce to devise guidelines on the use of AI. She suggests holding on making a statement at this time and suggests relying on the Academic Integrity Policy to address plagiarism.
 - Andrew Wright – Commented that AI is fast but inconsistent in its responses to the same questions and unreliable.
 - Dina Perrone – Added that content is not only unreliable but also generated using someone else’s words. Essentially, it is plagiarizing someone else’s text. As result, CED asked for GS to make a stance.
 - Babette Benken – In CNSM, she has not heard much of an issue at the master’s level. A lot of theses are lab-specific in CNSM, which may mean that AI is less helpful. She suggests having a student statement indicating that they are aware of the plagiarism policy. The policy should be a link in the document.
 - Virginia Gray - CHHS had so much curriculum to get through in CHHS in our last Grad Advisor meeting, I only had time to mention this topic in the meeting. I can collect more thoughts and practices in our next meeting.
 - Colleen Dunagan –Because faculty can use tools like Turnitin and since Turnitin won’t be able to identify all AI generated text, students should sign a statement about plagiarism that includes not copying AI text. Responsibility to not plagiarize should be on student rather than advisor.
- Cecilia Paredes: She suggests changing the thesis advisor statement to a verification that they have discussed academic integrity with their student as it applies to our departmental and university policies.
- Pei-Fung Hung: Friendly amendment: “I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis/project report/dissertation does not contain plagiarized material.”

- Babette Benken– She thinks that the signature page should keep something for the advisor. It is not the job of the Thesis and Dissertation Office to verify the content. The thesis advisor plays a role in legitimizing the work. She is in favor of Pei-Fang’s amendment.
 - Via Chat: Colleen Dunagan and Laura Portnoi like Pei-Fang’s suggestion
- Kevin Sinchak– He is concerned that many students who are on GS700 and no longer enrolled in a course will not be able to upload their thesis to Turnitin, as GS700 does not have a Canvas linked to it.
 - Colleen Dunagan – Suggestion, create a program/department Canvas page to which students and PIs have access. Thesis students could upload there, and PIs could review.
 - Dina Perrone – Another suggestion is if the PI is teaching a thesis course, then they could add their GS 700 students to the course even if they are not in the course that semester.
- Dina Perrone called a vote to edit the thesis advisor statement
 - Vote: Changing the language to the thesis advisor statement to “I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis/project report/dissertation does not contain plagiarized material.”
 - New language was voted in favor 82%, oppose 6%, abstain 12%
- Vote:
 - To Remove the AI from the student’s statement, and add a statement about the university’s academic integrity policy
 - Virginia Gray – She does not think we should remove AI, as it is a good reminder to have a conversation. It is not perfect but if we take it out, it could create a hole.
 - Babette agrees.
 - New language (yes – keep it as is, and no- taking it out)
 - In favor 39%, opposed 28%, Abstain 33%
 - Simple majority wins. On the Senate floor, cannot abstain.
 - Comment:
 - Ho Wook Shin – He commented that many use Chat GPT and other AI tools for copy editing services and to update grammar. This is not enforceable.
 - Dina Perrone agrees, the point of the statement is that a student did not copy a whole passage.
 - Babette Benken- She also agrees in that the statement clearly says, “I’ve not copied others.” We will keep this statement until the university makes a formal stance.

11:26 -11:50: *Discussion Topic:* [Repeat and Average](#) Grading Policy, Dina Perrone

- [Found in 2.3 of 14-01](#)
- [Found in 09-05 Lines 24-25](#)
- John Brevik – would like to revisit this policy for the following reasons:
 - a. There is a uniform grade forgiveness for undergraduate students.
 - b. The way the averaging of grades is done for graduate students is not really averaging because they are both counted.
 - c. A study was done a few years ago conducted by registrars, showing that master’s degree granting institutions have some form of grade forgiveness.
 - d. This is not expected to be a common issue. It is for those students who do not attend classes or complete work for a few weeks, which then harms their grade and their GPA.
- CNSM is in support
- Babette Benken – She presented a scenario that sometimes occurs in which a grad student earns a C early in their program, spend many semesters trying raise their grade, they then must use CPaCE courses to be re-admitted.
- Dina Perrone compiled data across the 20 of the 23 campuses
 - 16 do not allow grade forgiveness, only 4 CSU’s are allowed with conditions.
 - Three of the 4 allow only 1 course, and Bakersfield allows 2 for forgiveness
- CED: 75% of their master’s and doctoral program faculty support forgiving. In contrast, they would only forgive with approval for those students in credential programs (1 course).
- Dina Perrone: Law and medical schools generally calculate all courses taken for the GPA, they do not forgive.
- Jody Cormack: She can see both sides and is most concerned about integrity of the degree. While she does not have a problem with the current policy, she recognizes that it is not student friendly and student success

oriented. If we were to recommend repeat delete, she would advise it to be 1 course and that it is automatic. She has concerns about the need for approvals, which could be at the whim of subjectivity.

- Meghan Griffith-Pina: For the Enrollment Services perspective, the CO provides guidance at the undergrad level of how many courses students can repeat. She asks GSAC to consider additional layers – including whether this will be on an exception basis and what happens if a student repeats the course and earns a lower grade.
- CHHS – Likes the idea of a limit of one course without subjective approvals
- COTA – would be in support of one course
- Kevin Sinchak - Many times, the courses are not offered every semester or even year. So, the two semester requirement to move out of academic warning is insufficient.
- Vesna Terzic – COE thinks it is reasonable to have 1 course with option for forgiveness. While she would like to have more, she recognizes the potential issues that come with no limits.
- COB - Advocates for more than one course. They talk to every student on academic warning to figure out their schedule moving forward. Almost every student that does poorly, does so because of personal reasons rather than course difficulty. And, these personal issues tend to impact the entire semester of courses, which would mean that allowing more than 1 repeat/deletes would be most helpful.
- VOTE –
 - Do we offer forgiveness?
 - Yes 83%, No 17%
- Pei-Fang Hung – The master’s policy where this policy is housed will not make it to the Academic Senate until the Spring 2024 semester.

11:53-11:58pm: *What’s Happening at the Graduate Center*: Kim Scatton, Grad Center Director

- [Graduate Travel Fellowship](#) – Open for Spring 2024 Funding Application on November 1, 2023
- IRB Workshop for Grad Students – Monday, Nov 20, 5:30-6:30pm
- [The Graduate Writing Retreat](#)
 - Tuesday Nov 21 from 10am-7pm.
 - A full-day writing "get-away" for graduate students to make progress on a major writing task
 - Food and coffee are provided all day, registration required!
- [Statement of Purpose – GC Review](#)
 - Undergrad and grad students applying to graduate school this admissions cycle can obtain feedback on SOP and Resumes. 1-2 week turnaround.
- Info Sessions coming soon for Sally Casanova, Student Research Competition, and GradSlam

Announcements

- Sept. 22 - Nov. 3: [Fall 2023 Thesis Signature Page Submission Period](#)
- Oct. 27: [Grad Advisor Workshop on Projects and ScholarWorks @ 10am Hybrid](#)
- Fall 2024 Admissions
 - Accept/Deny + \$150 Enrollment Deposit
 - International Apps due March 15

11:58-11:59: Good of the Order?

12:00: Adjournment

At 12:03

Next GSAC meeting: November 16