

Graduate Council
Minutes
President's Conference Room, 1/2800
April 25, 2017

Attendance: Alloway, Bruey, Caswell, Christie, Eggen, Hawthorne, Johnson T., Kantner, Mattice, Nies, Pascale, Provost, Tiryakioglu, Vose.

Dr. Kantner called the meeting to order at 12:15 pm by welcoming the members of the Graduate Council. He began his remarks by reminding everyone that this would be the last meeting of the academic year and that the Council would meet again in September.

In his first announcement, Dr. Kantner relayed that six UNF graduate students attended the Statewide Graduate Research Symposium at the University of South Florida in Tampa last week. He then went on to provide further background about the event. In the past, both UF and UCF have served as hosts and next year it will be held at FSU. UNF has been sending a contingent over the last couple of years. The concept behind this symposium is for each institution to send the best graduate students from their local research symposium to participate in the statewide competition (For UNF, this was the SOARS event conducted two weeks ago.). Graduate Deans from different schools and faculty from the host university serve as judges. They review the 50+ posters that are displayed and awards are given for each category. Dr. Kantner added that the vast majority of those competing at that level are students that are presenting research from their dissertations. Nevertheless, UNF students have always had a strong showing even though they have generally not had a chance to gather as much data as those that are collecting data for their dissertation. This year UNF sent six students to the symposium: Amber Brown (Biology), William Hackney (Computing), Rachel Underwood (Public Health), Angela Kitali (Civil Engineering), Brett Wallace (Psychology) and Kara Barker (History). Dr. Kantner highlighted that he had a chance to observe our UNF participants and they were all very professional and did a superb job representing the university. He also went on to say that for the first time this year UNF had a winner. Kara Barker (History) placed first in the State for the Arts and Humanities Section of the competition. Dr. Kantner passed on his congratulations to Kara and the History Department for this great accomplishment.

In his second announcement, Dr. Kantner relayed that The Graduate School was fortunate to be able to persuade the holders of financial aid fees to increase the amount of funding to support graduate scholarships that are allocated out of the fees collected for each graduate school credit hour. A couple of years ago, The Graduate School received \$100,000 to distribute. (This resulted in student awards of \$2,500 per semester for four semesters, as long as the awardee is performing at the expected level.) Dr. Kantner went on to say that Dr. Pascale and her team pulled together data, which were presented to the decision makers in order to illustrate the

great impact that these scholarships have had. It was conveyed that these scholarships have been a valuable recruitment tool to attract quality applicants. They have also helped to retain students and serve as motivation to pursue academic excellence. As a result, The Graduate School has been allocated an additional \$100,000 and Dr. Kantner indicated that rather than the previous 10, now 20 scholarships for each incoming cohort can be offered. He also noted that as the enrollments in the Graduate Programs increase, there will be more fees collected and The Graduate School will remain vigilant and attempt to “squeeze” as many scholarships out of those fees as possible. Dr. Kantner highlighted once more that the scholarships are really a valuable tool for the recruitment of high quality applicants and for motivating students to complete their studies in a timely fashion. Dr. Kantner added that because the additional funds came late in the semester, The Graduate School is using the same list with the best applicants that the Departments had previously provided. He commented that there are still many more applicants (approximately 270) than can be awarded and there will be no need to reduce the quality of the students that are given awards. The Graduate School will only need to select deeper into the first tier list. Dr. Pascale confirmed this and clarified further that the additional ten will be from the wait list.

In his third announcement, Dr. Kantner revealed that there will be some key personnel changes for his organization in the coming months. Sadly, The Graduate School will be losing its Director. Dr. Pascale will be moving on and has recently accepted a faculty position in the College of Education and Human Services, where she had been teaching higher education administration since her arrival at UNF. Dr. Kantner commented that this will be a great loss for The Graduate School and wished her all the best. Dr. Pascale is expected to continue in the office through June and the plan is to begin the vacancy pool process very soon. Dr. Kantner also relayed that Britt Stromquist, who serves as The Graduate School recruiter, will also be moving on to a new position in the private sector at the end of May. As a result, this summer The Graduate School office will likely be a skeleton crew until both vacancies can be filled.

In his last announcement, Dr. Kantner reminded everyone that the Graduate School Open House at MOCA will be scheduled for May 16. He added that there has been a good number of Programs that have requested to participate in this event thus far. He added that if there are any Programs that have not RSVP'd or have questions, they should contact The Graduate School.

Dr. Kantner's first agenda item was to discuss the Cross-Level Listing of Graduate and Undergraduate Courses Policy (handout). He mentioned that the 2019 reaffirmation of our SACS accreditation is slowly approaching. The purpose of the Cross-Level Listing of Graduate and Undergraduate Courses Policy is to ensure that UNF is complying with the requirements that graduate courses have much greater rigor and expectations of students and that this can be demonstrated to the reviewers that will be visiting campus to look at syllabi and other documentation. This policy has been in place for about a year. The understanding was that there

were certain places around campus that had been posting class listings, which may not have complied with the expectations of the policy. The Graduate School has been trying to work through that to make sure that the cross listings that were occurring at the 3000 level or below for graduate courses would be ceased all together. For the most part, this has been done, with some key exceptions that were allowable because of some particular circumstances. The other piece of this, which Shawn Brayton is particularly concerned about, is the Syllabi being able to demonstratively demonstrate the greater rigor expected of the graduate students in a cross level listed courses. She had her assistant pull out syllabi and compare them to those courses that are cross-listed. Dr. Kantner showed the Council members a list that was considered to warrant closer scrutiny, because the syllabi were either identical or vague. He underscored that UNF is approaching the two year window that is considered a “look back” period for the reviewers, so The Graduate School will be reaching out to the Programs when there appears to be questionable documentation showing the greater rigor expected at the graduate level of a cross-listed course. Dr. Kantner is looking to get things in place by the fall, when basically the window opens up. He mentioned that in some cases there are perfectly legitimate reasons for Programs to do things the way they are doing them. This list is just a quick look of how things appear to someone, who is assisting Shawn in the process. Dr. Kantner stressed the need to make sure there is proper documentation of the explanations and or approval by the Provost for courses that depart from the policy. Dr. Kantner plans to work on this over the summer and he will try to let Departments know as soon as possible that they may need to reach out to faculty members to make the necessary syllabi adjustments. He added that the Deans were also given the same message yesterday. Upon request, Dr. Kantner passed out the list for review. When asked a question about what action needed to be taken by the Program Directors, Dr. Kantner responded that he will contact the professors needing to make syllabi adjustments anyway, so nothing needed to be done by the Council members. He just wanted them to be aware of what is happening.

Dr. Kantner’s second agenda item touched on the topic of academic probation. He reminded the Council members again that the determination of good academic standing is now based upon the program GPA and not the level GPA. This will mean that a little bit of “hand monitoring” will be necessary by The Graduate School, because the university IT systems are programmed to monitor level GPA, which by regulation is used to determine financial aid eligibility. In the past, the Registrar would find everyone with a level GPA that fell below 3.0 and send out a bulk email to students warning them that they were on probation. Going forward, the Register will no longer do this. Instead, The Graduate School office will now take on this task in house. Students on probation will be identified and Dr. Kantner will send the Program Directors a list of the students in their Programs that have fallen below 3.0 for their Program GPA. Those students will automatically be put on probation regardless. The Program Directors can communicate back if there should be additional students added to the probation list based on their more rigorous criteria that they may have established for their Programs. When information is returned by the Program Directors, Dr. Kantner will send out an email (draft shown in the

handout) informing the students that they are on probation, the reasons why, what they can do about it, and what some of the consequences will be. Dr. Kantner stated that the text for the draft email was discussed during the last Graduate Council meeting and some recommendations were provided by the members. He went on to say that this process will actually not be executed for another couple of weeks and requested any additional feedback before then. He added that part of this procedure is also to inform Program Directors of who will be eligible for suspension. However, suspensions are at the discretion of the Programs. Directors can communicate back to Dr. Kantner on those individuals and he will pass on that information to the Registrar. In summary, there are two bits of information that Directors can return: Who do they want to add on the probation list and who needs to be placed on suspension. The appropriate emails to the students will be sent out after that. Dr. Kantner also pointed out that the “contact information” for the Program Director was added in the draft probation notification email, because in the past Program Directors wanted to play a greater role in helping the student to improve their academic performance. If a Program Director does not want their contact information provided, they should let him know. However, Dr. Kantner stressed that there are not a huge number of students in this category and the intent behind including contact information was to make the email more personalized and not quite so generic.

Lastly, Dr. Kantner touched on possible topics left over from this year that should be addressed further in the next academic year. One was continuous enrollment for graduate students, particularly those finishing thesis or dissertations. The suggestion from the Graduate Council was that there should be movement toward drafting a somewhat friendly, continuous enrollment policy that was not terribly punitive. Dr. Kantner stated that he needs more time to prepare something first and would like to defer this subject to the next academic year. A second issue that has been mentioned to him a number of times are the types of assistance graduate students can obtain, if they want to apply for fellowships or research grants etc. Dr. Kantner pointed out that, unlike some other institutions, UNF does not really have an operation to support this. He mentioned that it might be worthwhile looking into whether there is a need for something and how that need should be addressed. Dr. Kantner also stressed that there is generally an open slate for topics next year. If Graduate Council members can think of anything that the Graduate School could be doing or any deficits that may exist in graduate education in general at UNF, he requested that they let him know and those items would be added to the list.

There were no further issues raised by the Graduate Council members and the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.