

## Graduate Council Minutes

October 11, 2018

Attendance: Asai Asaithambi, Elissa Barr, Gaylord Candler, Sophie Filibert, Rob Haley, David Hoppy, John Kantner, Chau Johnsen Kelly, Megan Kuehner, Christopher Leone, Betsy Nies, Stephynie Perkins, Sarah Provost, Mohammad Rahman, Dawn Russell, Tulika Varma, Zhiping Yu

Dr. Kantner called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. and introduced a special guest speaker from the UNF Counseling Center. Using several screens from the Counseling Center's website, Dr. Andy King, provided a short overview about his organization. Some of the highlights were:

- Everything about the Counseling Center is located on the website (<http://www.unf.edu/counseling-center/>).
- The Center distributes information on topics such as self-help, depression/anxiety, nutrition, stress via social media etc. (Facebook, Instagram etc.).
- The Center is a full-blown mental health facility with a fully licensed staff.
- Everything the Center does is "privileged" communication unless a waiver is signed.
- The center conducts individual, group and crisis (walk-in counseling).
- The staff and their credentials are posted on the website: (<http://www.unf.edu/counseling-center/Staff Page NEW.aspx>).
- The Center has an internship program for licensed mental health counselors and future psychologists.
- The Center has an Art Therapy Program ([http://www.unf.edu/counseling-center/Art\\_Therapy.aspx](http://www.unf.edu/counseling-center/Art_Therapy.aspx)) with a registered art therapist.
- The Center provides a list of free phone apps to assist with various conditions and issues (<http://www.unf.edu/counseling-center/Apps.aspx>).
- Starting soon, every Friday at 11:00 a.m. an open "Mindfulness Group" will meet.
- Students in crisis can walk in during normal operating hours. This has resulted in a 20% increase in usage.
- The "Supporting Our Students (SOS) Program" enables faculty members to identify and submit a referral for someone that may need help ([https://www.unf.edu/counseling-center/Emergency\\_Services.aspx](https://www.unf.edu/counseling-center/Emergency_Services.aspx)).
- Students can reserve a relaxation room ([http://www.unf.edu/counseling-center/Relaxation\\_Room.aspx](http://www.unf.edu/counseling-center/Relaxation_Room.aspx)).
- The Center's services are exclusively for students.
- The Center's phone number is X2602 and someone can always be reached. Even after hours, students can reach a "live" licensed therapist by pressing 2 after dialing X2602.

After Dr. King's presentation, Dr. Kantner went on to discuss the listed topics on the distributed agenda sheet:

***Announcements:***

➤ **Graduate School Fair, 10/30, 1-3 p.m., SU 3703**

Dr. Kantner relayed that everyone should have received information already about the Graduate School Fair later this month. Megan Kuehner sent out sign-up forms to all the programs.

➤ **Graduate School website revisions**

Dr. Kantner showed everyone the new Graduate School website (<http://www.unf.edu/graduateschool/>) that his staff member, Paige Lilley, transformed over the last few weeks. He welcomed the council members to submit any concerns, corrections or ideas on how to improve the site.

➤ **International degree equivalency guide**

Dr. Kantner highlighted the section for international students ([http://www.unf.edu/graduateschool/prospective/admissions/International\\_Requirements.aspx](http://www.unf.edu/graduateschool/prospective/admissions/International_Requirements.aspx)) and the capability to look up UNF degree equivalencies for different countries. He stressed that this list does not relieve international applicants from having their foreign transcripts evaluated by an authorized evaluation agency. He also commented that, while most universities have seen a decrease in international student enrollment as of late, UNF's enrollment has remained flat or even increased slightly.

Dr. Kantner also demonstrated the website's new search function, whereby a user can input key words into the "Search Programs" box and a corresponding list of graduate programs is then listed. This has been implemented to assist students to filter and focus on a particular set of graduate program options.

**Agenda Items**

➤ **Approve September minutes**

Dr. Kantner called for a motion to approve the September 2018 minutes and they were unanimously approved by the Graduate Council members.

**Discussion Items**

➤ **Graduate faculty policy implementation**

Dr. Kantner provided a handout of the "Graduate Faculty Policy" and reviewed what the Graduate School hopes to accomplish with this document. He explained that the existing

active “Graduate Faculty Policy” allows for only one kind of graduate faculty member. These would be people that are permitted to routinely teach graduate courses and are allowed to serve on graduate student committees. According to the existing policy, they are faculty members who are on tenure lines and involved in research and in the education of graduate students. He went on to say that UNF has many programs and, in particular professional programs, that routinely use instructors for their graduate courses. This is appropriate, because many of them are engaged in clinical practice or in other ways involved in activities that are not tenure earning lines. Because of this, the Graduate School has had to routinely approve frequent exceptions for those faculty members to teach. Even if instructors teach every semester, they were required to go through an onerous paper driven process with numerous approvals to be the instruction of record for their graduate course.

Last year, the Graduate Council discussed and reviewed the policy draft (Handout - “Graduate Policy Membership and Membership Renewal”). This allows for two types of faculty: research graduate faculty and teaching graduate faculty. Both have slightly different requirements and terms of how long they can maintain their graduate faculty status and, in the end, it is really only a distinction between tenure line faculty and instructors or lecturers that are routinely involved in graduate instruction.

The Council members have seen this policy before and it had actually been approved. Because of the collective bargaining process, the faculty union had proposed changing the title of instructors and lecturers, as well as reconsidering some of their responsibilities. As a result, Dr. Kantner relayed that he did not want to put this policy in place until the Collective Bargaining Agreement was finalized and this was scheduled to take place today.

Dr. Kantner stated that he would now like to move forward with this policy again and commented that there was really nothing substantive that changed since the Council last viewed it. He asked the attendees for any last comments and concerns and a lively discussion ensued. Several questions were raised and comments made concerning various sections of the policy. Based off the feedback received, Dr. Kantner committed to make several revisions and send the document back to the Council members via email. He commented that since it had been approved already, if substantial changes are necessary, it would probably need to go through the revision process again. However, his hope would be that only editorial changes will be made and this will not be necessary.

Dr. Kantner also addressed the timing to implement this policy. He estimated that it would take about a month to be approved and described the steps:

It would be announced to the Department Chairs that there are now two categories of faculty and it would be proposed that the Chairs respond to the Graduate School on how they would like their graduate faculty assigned. Then, the Departments could provide new nominations at any time for faculty falling in any category. Dr. Kantner commented that the timing is key, because it would be important not to negatively impact course scheduling.

➤ **Allocations of graduate assistantships to colleges**

Dr. Kantner provided the attendees with a second handout (“Revised Graduate Assistantship Program”). This document was prepared two years ago and outlines how graduate assistantship money is allocated and how it could be used. Part of the reason for creating this document was to make a case to the administration for more resources to support graduate assistantships. This has been partially successful in securing additional stipend and more tuition waivers. Dr. Kantner stated that he wanted to share this, because the Graduate School is now in the process of working the allocations to be announced this month for use in academic year 2019-2020.

Dr. Kantner went on to explain that there is a formula used by which the Graduate School examines three years of the weighted average of undergraduate FTE and graduate headcount for each of the Colleges. That result is used to proportionally distribute about \$700,000 of graduate assistantship money. Those figures are provided to each Dean’s office and they in turn respond back to the Graduate School on how they would like to allocate it.

The Graduate School would prefer that these be packaged into full graduate assistantships, which would amount to 20 hours per week. Dr. Kantner stated that a large portion of waiver can be offered for this and stressed that it is really at the discretion of the Colleges. He added that some Colleges prefer a larger number of smaller graduate assistantships and also mentioned that BCOH even has some that they put aside as scholarship money, but this is something the Graduate School has tried not to encourage.

Dr. Kantner relayed that the Graduate School has attempted to have more control over this, because it seemed that graduate assistantship money was not being used effectively in the past. In order to make a case for more money, the Graduate School needed to propose a way to create more competitive packages that could be used to attract students to UNF.

Dr. Kantner mentioned again that each college creates their own allocation. How that is done is a question for the individual Dean’s offices, because each does it differently. In COAS, for example, the primary criterion is the use of graduate assistants in the classroom. In CCOB, graduate assistants are all used as research assistants in Departments. Dr. Kantner commented that the Graduate School has not tried to impose any particular rules on the Colleges, except to attempt to incentivize them to create larger stipend packages rather than smaller ones.

Dr. Kantner relayed that some Colleges also have their own pool of money that adds into the money that the Graduate School distributes. The Colleges then inform the Graduate School what they would do with that money, as well. Based on all the graduate assistantships that have been created, the Graduate School divides up the amount of in-state tuition waiver that is available. In the past three years since the Graduate School has implemented this process, there has been enough tuition waiver to cover 75% of the graduate assistant’s tuition costs.

Pointing to the points mentioned in paragraphs two and three of the handout, Dr. Kantner pledged that if a College knows that a Program is going to have a grant and there is money available for a stipend, but none available for a waiver, he would try to find waiver money to support those students.

Dr. Kantner mentioned that he often gets last minute (during the academic year) requests for waiver and, unfortunately, at that point he has normally allocated all the waiver that is available. The hope will be that all of this can be set several months in advance at the start of the academic year, so that the Program Directors will know what they can offer to attract prospective graduate students.

When asked, Dr. Kantner responded that the amounts allocated for each College has minimally gone up or down over the years, usually in the \$10,000 – \$20,000 range. The goal is to prevent radical changes from year to year.

➤ **UNF + Pathways and Express Application for UNF undergrads**

Dr. Kantner provided the attendees with a third handout (“Express Application Form”). He went on to explain that President Szymanski has been advocating for the idea that undergraduates should be encouraged to become graduate students at UNF, especially undergraduates that are entering UNF with college credits from AP, dual enrollment courses or with an associate degree. He sees these students as prime candidates to finish their undergraduate work quickly, perhaps in less than four years, and then move on to attain a graduate degree as seamlessly as possible.

Dr. Kantner indicated that President Szymanski is essentially looking for an opt-in option for undergraduates. Specifically, those that meet certain criteria will not be asked to “jump through onerous hoops” in the application process. Instead, if UNF would like these students to enter as graduate students, they should be able to opt-in.

Dr. Kantner went on to say that there are a number of these pathways that are in development. One is the accelerated “bachelor’s to master’s” option, which has been mentioned before. Some programs are already executing this. (When a graduate degree has more than 30 hours, the undergraduate student can start to take graduate courses that may count both toward fulfilling both the 120 undergraduate and the extra hours over 30 that the graduate program requires.)

Dr. Kantner stated that Dr. Szymanski realizes that there are some limitations to the accelerated option. For example, if a Graduate Program is only 30 credit hours, that Program would not be able to take advantage of this initiative. Nevertheless, the President would still like to see some easy methods for UNF’s undergraduates to seamlessly move from their bachelor degrees to master degree programs and he would like this to be implemented soonest.

The Graduate School is quickly trying to pull together some mechanisms to allow this to happen without it being really complicated. Megan Kuehner worked with her staff and other offices on campus to create the "Express Application Form" for undergraduates to ensure that this would be workable. Dr. Kantner also pointed out that if there is an impressive undergraduate student who the program believes would be a great graduate candidate, they can have them complete this form at the beginning of their senior year or at any point thereafter.

One feature of the form mentioned is that there would be no application fee. It would contain the minimal essential information that the Graduate School needs in order to get candidates approved as graduate students. As UNF students, there would be no need to collect transcripts and there would be no GRE or GMAT requirements. (If a program wanted to request test scores, it would be up to the program to collect that information and not the Graduate School.)

Dr. Kantner asked for feedback and another active discussion followed. He answered several questions from the attendees on how the form would affect their specific Programs. Additionally, numerous recommendations and ideas were presented concerning some of the wording, as well as some possible thoughts on the processes associated with the form.

Dr. Kantner committed to examine and rework the form with some of the suggestions made and share that with all of the Programs and their Deans to make sure that everyone is on board with the changes. In the meantime, he asked that the attendees contemplate if this is something they would like to do. He also requested that they think about the undergraduate programs that they would feel comfortable with in accepting a student without requiring letters of recommendation, GRE or other documents that are collected by the Graduate School on their behalf. Dr. Kantner closed by saying that he envisions possibly having a webpage that would depict a link of various bachelor degrees to certain master degrees.

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Kantner ended the meeting at 1:30 PM.