

# MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

## Graduate Council Minutes

Agenda: October 23, 2024

3:30 pm to 5:00 pm

STCT 419

Attendees: CCHL: Dana Levitt, Amanda Birnbaum Matt Shurts, Meena Mahadevan, CEEL: Sumi Hagiwara, Erik Jacobson, Kayla O'Donnell, CHSS: Jessica Brandt, Anna Feldman, Tarika Daftary Kapur, Emily Douglas, Dominique Blake, CSAM: Matt Schuler, Nina Goodey, Melissa Spigelman, CART: Ronald Sharps, Scott Richards, marcus d. harvey, Yi Luo, SBUS: Vidya Atal, Nicole Koppel, NURS: Joan Valus, Brenda MARshall, Elizabeth Fitzgerald, TGS: Chris King, Valerie Sessa, Michele Fisher, Kenneth Sumner, Laura Valente, Debbie Reynoso, Adriana Garcia, Victoria Speiser, Rebecca Newton, Michele McCormick, GR Adm: Timothy Hart, Jennifer O'Sullivan,

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- Opening remarks from GC leadership / approval of minutes from September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Sept minutes approved
- Time for networking (at tables)  
Icebreaker questions: Childhood celebrity crush, Jingle gets stuck in your head, favorite Halloween costume
- Reports from Graduate Admissions / The Graduate School

Laura V: 1.) Several in person GA full day training sessions (last week of aug). 2.) Those who teach had separate training with OAG. 3.) Nuts and bolts online, meet and greet in person. 4.) This week (Fri)—grad student professional development conference—day long. 5.) Upcoming: Nov 15: Grad education summit.

Timothy H: 1.) This Sun—graduate open house, 72 sessions for 200+ grad programs, 1,092 domestic and 2,068 international registrants. 2.) Graduate showcase for undergraduate students coming up, date to be announced. 3.) Registration for the spring starts on Fri (10/25).

- Report from the Curriculum Committee, Chair

Vidya: FYI—curriculum proposals, deadline Oct 31 for submission into the provost's office. We have not reviewed anything because proposals are bottle necked in the system. But we are meeting to discuss and write graduate program policies for stackable and dual degrees.

\*Laura V added: level of priority placed on some issues that seem in competition - marketable (revenue) vs academically rigorous vs best for student career path.

\* Jen O'Sullivan added: keep in mind downstream implications (workday, registration, involve Mike Stuhlmiller in discussions, admissions, state of NJ is pushing for them).

- Report from the Policy Committee, Co-chairs

Yi—co chairing committee with Chris. Haven't met yet (will this Friday). Ideas to work on this year: 1. Key milestones for progression of PhD students, 2. Cap maximum number of semesters that masters can register for thesis, and number of semesters students can do internship, 3. Health insurance for students forced into part-time status (for example, when students are on externships).

- Report from the Student Affairs Committee, Chair

Tarika—meeting soon, will send out an email. Funds available for projects.

- New Business (included in here are ideas discussed during small group discussions. These were not debriefed in the larger meeting as we ran out of time.)

**a. Work to restructure and expand GC**

Ken S.—the current structure of TGS as a school does not work (schools have faculty and curriculum that TGS does not possess.) Move to a grad Center model—focus on grad students and parallel the ways we think about our undergrad students (re-branded and renamed). Reporting changes—Dean of Grad students (like dean of undergrads), with additional personnel taking on operational positions—finance budget hr, etc. Ken will move out of the Dean's role, with a faculty member (internal search) to take on the executive role initially. Anyone interested in this administrative role—let Ken know. Challenge: like to see solved—how we think about GC—expand membership to include staff reps and student reps, influence in shared governance, expand GC executive committee (include subcommittee chairs, corresponding secretary, would love more ideas). Things we need to address (policy committee): standardize and scale (every program is different) academic policies: things like number of semesters for doctoral funding, number of semesters to graduate, dissertation committee membership; (curriculum committee): proactive in communication with departments and TGS, and not be the end point.

Thinking of an adhoc committee to discuss the structure and expansion of GC.

Disconnect between policies, and practices, and students. Having staff, faculty and students would help bring together.

Some ideas to increase student engagement:

Melissa S: Students find it difficult to vocalize opinions

Eric J: Put student on Exec committee

Student meeting prior to grad council meeting, include remarks from the student rep in the beginning of the meeting (similar to other committees).

Policy and curriculum committees should include student representatives.

Address student participation on council in graduate student leadership courses.

#### **b. Initiatives related to Student Affairs.**

Ken—Standardize tuition (we have 42 grad tuition policies). Increase # of GAs (only 10% of grad students receive a GA). For AY24-25 an additional \$300,000 was allotted in the budget for graduate services, a portion of which will go to the Student Affairs subcommittee to propose and implement programs that could benefit graduate students. For example, real world career prep campus-based internship “consultancies”. Units across campus would create descriptions of what they need, TGS would match graduate students for short-term positions with departments (many other ideas).

Changes taking place during this academic year.

#### **c. How to elevate the status of GC across campus. And enhance influence.**

Members are not showing up to GC meetings.

–Small group discussion: People don’t come because their grad program isn’t being included (e.g., lots of talk about science, less talk about other programs). (interesting science feels that culture is anti-science too).

–Small group discussion: Who gets the minutes? Can we get a summary instead of minutes? (\*\*we need to figure out how to communicate with the members better, what we are doing is not working\*\*). This group suggested a Canvas course (???) and have a grad student help manage.)

- Small group discussion: The structure of the meeting is not effective. Members feel like they are being talked to rather than contributing to the work of solving problems. Is not a productive use of time. Should revisit the mission and role of GC.

Provide agenda and meeting report to senate.

Expand membership to include staff, more students

Meeting regularly with the President and Provost.

Reps report to college/school meetings.

Representatives to other constituencies and also invite them to present.

Look for ways to make sure the needs of graduate students are considered with initiatives on campus (i.e. the new course block).

Needs to incorporate more of the graduate community.

Are grad students as engaged with campus (or is it that we do not engage with them).

Need to think about culture of grad school (lounge for grad students, zen den)

Services open later (stagger hours). (have the grad students work the staggered hours as internships)

d. Reconfigure physical space to promote more interaction and collaboration during council meetings –perhaps circular tables in a large space. Feedback: this space does not make the meeting accessible (is a deep space that makes communication more difficult).

- Adjourn

Remaining GC Meetings for AY 2024-25: Nov 13<sup>th</sup>, Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, Jan 27<sup>th</sup>, Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, Mar 19<sup>th</sup>,

Apr 23<sup>rd</sup>, May 5<sup>th</sup>