



Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2020

Location: WebEx Conference Call

Subject: Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Hector Aguila, Mary Anne Amalaradjou, Marina Astitha, Janet Barnes-Farrell (Alternate), Christopher Blesso, Daniel Bolnick, Karen Bresciano (*Ex Officio*), Preston Britner, Yongku Cho, Kenneth Couch, Caroline Dealy, Anne Delany, Amanda Denes, Kimberly Dodge-Kafka (UCHC Alternate), Valerie Duffy, Niloy Dutta, Martin Han, Amir Herzberg (Alternate), Kent Holsinger (*Ex Officio*), Todd Kravet, Barbara Kream (*Ex Officio*), Nicole Landi, Elaine Lee, Jacqueline Loss, Charles Mahoney (Moderator), Samuel Martinez, Betsy McCoach (Alternate), Jeff Ogbar, William Ouimet, Barbara Parziale (*Ex Officio – Secretary*), Dan Pejril, Victoria Robinson, Kathy Segerson (*Ex Officio*), Helena Silva, Victoria Ford Smith, David Solomon, Ron Squibbs, Matthew Stuber (Alternate), Helen Swede (Alternate), Rachel Theodore, Rebecca Thomas (Alternate), Mark Urban, Penny Vlahos, Xiaojing Wang, Andrew Wiemer, and Suzanne Wilson.

Absent: Richard Anyah, Gerardo Blanco, Zeljko Boskovic, Jose Cruz, Jennifer Dineen, Anna Dongari-Bagtzoglou, Jeffrey Dudas, Megan Feely, Mitch Green, David Gregorio, Michelle Judge, Nancy Naples, Heather Read, Cristian Schulthess, Prabhakar Singh, Richard Sosis, Gregory Sotzing, Steven Szczepanek, Jiong Tang, Judith Thorpe, Damaris Thuita (GSS), Charles Towe, Anastasios Tzingounis, Bing Wang, and Edward Weingart.

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1. Agenda item number one (1) – Call to order. The meeting of the GFC for March 25, 2020 was called to order at 3:02 pm.
 2. Agenda item number two (2) – Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the February 26, 2020 meeting of the GFC were presented. There was a motion to accept the minutes offered, which was seconded and the motion was adopted in favor by all members present. **Agenda item number two (2) was passed unanimously without dissent.**
 3. Agenda item number three (3) – Announcements/Discussion from the Dean.
 - a. Carl W. Lejuez has been named the new Provost.
 - b. Eboni S. Nelson has been named the new Dean of the Law School.
 - c. ETS announced on March 24th that the GRE can be taken remotely.
 - d. Time to degree will remain the same. If an extension needs to be granted the major advisor will notify The Graduate School.
 - e. New items on the FAQ website at The Graduate School:
 - i. The Registrar’s office will accept scanned signatures on required paperwork.

- ii. They will also accept an e-mail from the faculty member through the UConn e-mail system.
 - f. Faculty report that online classes are going smoothly so far.
 - g. Due to the Covid19 pandemic it may be challenging for international students to arrive for fall classes on time because United States embassies are not accepting appointments for VISA interviews. These students may need to delay their arrival until the next semester.
 - h. There is a good possibility the students may not return to campus until next fall.
- 4. Agenda item number four (4) – Report from the Graduate Student Senate. The representative from the Graduate Student Senate was absent so there was no report given.
- 5. Agenda item number five (5) – New business – presented for discussion:
 - a. In response to a request from undergraduates, the University Senate has relaxed the rules for Pass/Fail for spring 2020 because of the difficulties caused by the coronavirus pandemic. A question arose as to whether it is possible for The Graduate School to offer a P/F option. The Graduate School catalog and by-laws do not allow graduate students to take classes on P/F. Instituting a P/F option would require a vote by the GFC. This possibility was discussed but there was not support among the GFC members at the meeting for pursuing a P/F option for graduate students.
 - b. The deadline for dropping courses has been extended to the last day of classes so that any students who are struggling during the pandemic can either drop the class and take a W for withdrawal or take an incomplete if the issue is beyond the control of the student.
- 6. There was a motion offered for adjournment, which was seconded. The motion was passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 3:44 pm.
- 7. The next regular meeting of the GFC is scheduled for April 22, 2020 via WebEx.
- 8. **Email action:** Because of the pandemic, students are having difficulty taking English proficiency tests. Many test centers have been closed. Approving the use of Duolingo as an alternative means of certifying English proficiency would allow some to take the required test at home. This requires an amendment of the GFC by-laws, preferably quickly so that it could take effect immediately and be included in the next graduate catalog. Thus, as a separate action, an email vote was conducted regarding a motion to amend Section III.F.a of the GFC by-laws as follows:

"Regardless of visa status, students whose native language is not English must show evidence of proficiency in the English language by having earned either an Internet-based (IBT) Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of at least 79 or a Paper-based (PBT) TOEFL score of at least 550, an overall band score of 6.5 or greater on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic Module, or an overall score of 53 or greater on the Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic test, or a score of 100 or higher on Duolingo. Some departments also require the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or the Test of Written English (TWE)."

The email vote closed on March 16, 2020 at 3:08 p.m. **The motion passed.** The vote was 39 in favor, 0 opposed, and 4 votes to postpone consideration until the next GFC meeting.