

Report from the Graduate Council

April 29, 2021

submitted by Laura S. Ruhl

Approved Curriculum Items

20-1038	Program Change (Catalog Changes)	Ph.D. Bioinformatics	approved 4/14
20-1003	Curriculum Change (Multiple Changes)	ECED 4320/5320	approved 4/28
20-1009	Curriculum Change (Multiple Changes)	SYEN 4335/5335	approved 4/28
20-1013	Curriculum Change (Alpha Code Changes)	SYEN 4376/5376	approved 4/28
20-1014	Curriculum Change (Alpha Code Change)	SYEN 4326/5326	approved 4/28
20-1015	Curriculum Change (Alpha Code Changes)	SYEN 4315/5315	approved 4/28

Approved for Graduate Faculty Status

Nominees for Full Status

Brian Walker	Doctorate	Univ Arkansas Little Rock	DCSTEM	approved 4/28
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Nominees for Affiliate Status

Audrey Imhoff	Master's	Colorado Mountain College	CHASSE	approved 3/31
Reinaldo Morales, Jr.	Doctorate	Norfolk State University	CHASSE	approved 3/31
Dylan Yarbrough	Master's	UA Little Rock	CHASSE	approved 3/31
Carey Roberson	Master's	Ouachita Baptist University	CHASSE	approved 3/31
Robert Seiner	Master's	KIK Consulting & Educational Services, LLC	DCSTEM	approved 3/31
Jessie Walker	Doctorate	STEM Resources, LLC & AR Dept. of Higher Ed.	DCSTEM	approved 3/31
WooYoung Chung	Doctorate	MIT CDOIQ Program	DCSTEM	approved 3/31
Timothy McCarthy	Doctorate	Harvard University	CHASSE	approved 4/14
Benjamin Babst	Doctorate	UA Monticello	DCSTEM	approved 4/14
Joseph Yacura	Master's	Int. Assoc. of Data Quality, Governance, and Analytics.	DCSTEM	approved 4/14
Said Abushamleh	Doctorate	Indiana Institute of Technology	DCSTEM	approved 4/14

Keegan Nichols	Doctorate	Arkansas Tech University	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Harrison Johnson	Doctorate	Jackson State University	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Barry Hancock	Doctorate	John A. Logan College	CHASSE	approved 4/28
TaJuan Wilson	Doctorate	Georgia Southern University	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Steve Robinson	Doctorate	Lansing Community College	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Brian An	Doctorate	University of Iowa	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Cliff Jones	Doctorate	Arkansas State University	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Bently Wallace	Doctorate	South Arkansas Community College	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Brian Shonk	Doctorate	Univ of AR Comm. College of Batesville	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Cathy Cline	Doctorate	East Arkansas Community College	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Steve Rook	Doctorate	Arkansas State Univ Three Rivers	CHASSE	approved 4/28
Benjamin Gibbs	Doctorate	University of Nebraska at Omaha	CBHHS	approved 4/28

Approved Policy Changes

No approved policy changes in Mar or April 2021

Approved Recommendations from Graduate Council

On April 14th, the Graduate Council drafted and approved the following recommendations to the University in regards to the on-boarding process for international graduate students:

International graduate students are an instrumental resource in the teaching and research missions of UA Little Rock. The onboarding process in getting to UA Little Rock can be intimidating and formidable. While many sources of this intimidation are outside of UA Little Rock's jurisdiction, there are certain policies and procedures at UA Little Rock that exacerbate this uncertainty. Examples include not making timely Graduate Assistant offers which results in them not arriving in time to be legally allowed to work at the start of classes, as well as automated communications indicating drop for non-payment and threat of deportation. In addition to the unsatisfactory personal student experiences, this also negatively impacts the University's teaching mission. The Graduate Council would like to challenge offices directly involved in these processes to evaluate how their existing policies impact onboarding students and is willing to help identify opportunities to improve student experiences.

Possible solutions to the international student onboarding issues:

- Publish a flow chart of the application, acceptance, and onboarding process on the Graduate School website.
- Establish internal deadlines to get offers to students at least 90 days ahead of the beginning of the semester.
- Send out offer letters in early spring (Feb) to be able to compete with other institutions.
- If one is a funded GA and therefore should be placed on a no-drop list, and should not receive automated emails about tuition non-payment (i.e. remove from list).

Possible solutions to the international student onboarding issues (continued):

- Incentivize international students to arrive in the 25-30 days before the first day of class to be able to complete the social security number process
- Convey the fact that funded graduate students are responsible for their fees and include the magnitude of the fees in the offer letter.
- Convey the requirement and cost of international health insurance.
- Reduce (or subsidize) the fees for graduate students.
- Eliminate the erroneous (automated) emails about non-payment and threat of deportation.
- Improvement in “customer service”.

Other Issues Discussed

March 31, 2021:

Dr. Brian Berry reported to the council that Graduate School enrollment data was looking good when comparing 2020 to 2021. They are receiving more applications this year from domestic students. Dr. Berry also reported that Minnie Walker-Egger, an Admissions Processor in the Graduate School, is retiring. They are in the process of hiring another Admissions Processor.

Dr. Karen Kuralt reported that she attended the town hall meeting on the curriculum process. Dr. Kuralt recommends using the revised curriculum website (<https://ualr.edu/provost/curriculum-change-process/>), as it has many helpful resources including a work flow, process deadline calendar, links to forms, and tracking of curriculum items. Dana Steele added that if you have a dual-listed course, you should start a little further in advance because the curriculum items need to go to both Undergraduate and Graduate Councils.

Dr. Kuralt also reported about the Graduate School’s recruiting meeting with Philander Smith College students. They spoke with the honor’s program students about graduate school and will be working to match potential students with programs of interest.

Upcoming events were also highlighted during the Grad Council Meeting. The events include workshops by the Graduate Student Association on Professional and Interviewing skills in April. The Student Research and Creative Works Expo is Friday April 16th through the Whova App. Everyone is encouraged to attend and see the great research and creative works our undergraduate and graduate students are doing.

April 14, 2021:

Dr. Berry reported that enrollment is still looking good. Applications to the graduate school are up 50%, and enrolled applicants are up 20%. Overall enrollment at this time is up 6.3%. Dr. Berry also announced the approval and formation of the “Get Your Feet Wet” Scholarship that will award small scholarships (totaling \$25,00) to first time graduate students to reduce the burden of entry to graduate school. These scholarships are to recruit those not initially considering graduate school, and could pay for their first class.

Dr. Berry also reported that Sheri, the second admissions processor in the graduate school, is leaving and they are working to fill the positions.

April 14, 2021 (continued):

Dr. Kuralt reported that the Graduate School will be holding four separate graduate commencement ceremonies at 6pm:

May 11- CHASSE

May 12- School of Social Work

May 13- STEM

May 14- CBHHS

Graduate students need to RSVP by April 23rd. A seating chart will be set up once the RSVPs are in, as well as the determination about additional faculty attendance (based on social distance requirements. Masks are required.

The Graduate Student Association is taking nominations for open positions. Information is available on their website and nominations are due April 30th. Elections will be held May 6th.

April 28th, 2021:

Dr. Heidi Harris, the Graduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee Chair, recommended a curriculum process training for all involved (and opened up to all faculty) with Records in the Fall. A specific Graduate Process "Records Day" was also recommended by others for next academic year.

Dr. Berry thanked the Graduate Council for all of their hard work and effort throughout the academic year, as well as thanks the Curriculum Sub-Committee, Policy and Personnel Sub-Committee, and Graduate Council chairs. Dr. Berry reported that Grad School enrollment is great (up 3.4%). He thanked programs for their work in admitting these students, as well as the Director of Admissions, Paula Baker.

Dr. Berry also reported that faculty will be receiving an additional email about the Graduate Commencement Ceremonies taking place during the evenings on May 11-14. The event will be live-streamed on the Graduate School's YouTube channel. Parents can receive their graduates outside of the DSC when the graduate exits the ceremony. Some faculty will be able to attend the ceremony (not all due to social distancing requirements). The selection process will be given to the Deans of each college/school for each of their events.

Dr. Kuralt reported that they have invited the winners of the Graduate "We heart out faculty" winners to speak at graduation.

The approval of the Faculty Workload Policy was brought up and discussed.

The Graduate Student Association elections will be held May 6th. Applications are still being accepted until April 30th, and graduate students are encouraged to apply.

End of Report.