

UA Little Rock Graduate Council  
April 15, 2020, 3:00 p.m.  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

## Minutes

### **Members Present:**

Laura Ruhl, Karen Kuralt, Jerry Stevenson, T. Greg Barrett, John Nichols, Lynne Larsen, Roger Dorsey, Sung-Kwan Kim, Trisha Rhodes, Jim Grover, Natalie Snow, Bryce Jackson-Litteken, Qingfang He, Nicole Godfrey, Kamran Iqbal, Heidi Harris, David Manry, Gary Geissler, Nancy Hamilton

### **Members Absent:**

Nawab Ali, Adelene McClenny, Mengjun Xie, Rebekah White, Donna Rose

### **Others Present:**

Paula Baker, Brian Berry, Karen Kuralt, Dana Steele, April Chatham, Erin Finzer, Malissa Mathis

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Meeting called to order at **3:03 p.m.**

### **Old Business**

- Approved minutes from April 1, 2020 meeting.

### **New Business**

- **Report of the Curriculum Committee**
  - **College of Social Sciences and Communication**

20-1163	SOCI <b>APPROVED</b>	7370	Suspend Course
20-1164	ANTH <b>APPROVED</b>	5313	New Course/Dual-Listed/If taken at 4000 level cannot take at 5000 level/Cannot take more than once
20-1165	RHET <b>APPROVED</b>	4319/5319	New Course/Dual-Listed/Can repeat at 5000 level/Cannot repeat at 4000 level

20-1166	SOCI <b>APPROVED</b>	5301	Suspend Course
20-1167 ***April Chatham and Erin Finzer spoke on behalf of this submission.	CMED-GC <b>WITHDRAWN</b>		Temporarily Inactive Program
20-1168	RHET <b>APPROVED</b>	4370/5370	New Course/Dual-Listed/ Name Change/Reactivation of 4370/Can repeat at 5000 level/Cannot repeat at 4000 level

- **College of Education and Health Professions**

20-1162	COUN-MA <b>APPROVED</b>		Other (Change admission GPA, Add a statement, Make an elective course a required course)
20-1191	CHPR/Rehabilitation Counseling <b>APPROVED</b>		Program Change
20-1192	CHPR/Rehabilitation of the Blind <b>APPROVED</b>		Program Change
20-1193	CHPR/Counselor Education <b>APPROVED</b>		Program Change

- **Report of the Policy and Personnel Committee**
  - **Nominees for Graduate Faculty Affiliate Status:**

Lawrence O’Gorman <b>APPROVED</b>	Doctorate	Bell Labs Research	EIT
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Ghulam Rasool <b>APPROVED</b>	Doctorate	Rowan University	EIT
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## Discussion of Academic Retrenchment Proposal

\*\*\*Please see attached document.

The committee was thankful for how Dr. Ruhl conducted the discussion by providing data sources throughout the process.

## Dean’s Report

### ● CARES Act

- The Senate and House passed the CARES Act to help directly with student aid
- Special thanks to Dr. Decker for recognizing Graduate Students during this difficult time. Graduate Students will be able to get the aid that they need.
- The committee was curious about the amount of money that will be available to Graduate Students.
  - Dr. Berry was only able to comment on the amount coming to the university. 2.9 million dollars is going to direct student aid.
- Conversation about medical insurance through the university was sparked.
  - Example: A student just had a baby, but has no medical insurance.
    - Dr. Berry expressed that several attempts have been made in the past to look into this. Currently, the university pays insurance for Doctoral students. To do more about this issue, GA funding would be affected. This is already done now, but to do more would require getting rid of more GA positions.

### ● Enrollment Discussion

- Enrollment is still not looking great. Dr. Berry expressed, “We are in a big time of uncertainty at the moment.” He predicts that students are probably waiting to see what is going to happen before they make any decisions about their education.
- Recruitment Ads are currently being run.
- There are still no restrictions on money when it comes to recruiting.
  - All money is being put into advertising.
    - Example: Boosting posts on social media platforms.
- Dr. Berry expressed his gratitude to the Graduate Council due to how long the meeting was running. The majority of the committee was dedicated until the very end of the Zoom meeting.

## **Open Forum**

- **Creative Works and Research Expo**

- Due to COVID-19, everything is going to run online.
- The event was originally scheduled for Friday (April 17, 2020), but is now going to be running through to April 27, 2020.
- The platform for the expo is the Whova application.
- Students will create a profile on this application that will host their name, photo, and video about their work.
- Hoping to get a campus-wide email sent out to everyone about the event. The goal is to get the whole campus community involved.

Meeting adjourned at **5:52 p.m.**

## **Graduate Council's Comments on the Chancellor's Retrenchment Plan**

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The Graduate Council reviewed the material submitted in Stage 1 from the department level and Stage 2 from the college level of the retrenchment process before meeting to assess the graduate programs in the Chancellor's retrenchment plan. We met Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup> and based on the discussion during the meeting came up with the following report and comments. For each item, the committee came to a consensus through discussion then voted on that consensus decision (if there were abstentions, they are mentioned in the vote).

### **Art MA (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**

Enrollment is low because the program was suspended from June 2017 – Jan 2019 as the program was redesigned. The response has been positive since the program was reopened gaining 9 MA students since Jan 2019, and they are expected to have 13 students in Fall 2020. As 1 of only 2 graduate Art programs in the state (the other being in NW Arkansas), this provides an important service to Central Arkansas. Additionally, this program net revenue positive for the University.

It was brought up that the Dean of the college proposed a trial period for 2-3 years to allow the program to become sustainable. Some council members believe it is unfair to eliminate a program that has only been reactivated for a year. Additionally eliminating the program may result in reduced external funding from art donors.

*Grad Council vote: maintain*

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### **Chemistry MA and MS (Chancellor recommendation: reduce both programs)**

Chemistry said they are willing to reduce to meet the Chancellor's recommendation. Since they will have 2 retirements at the end of this year, they will meet this reduction. It is abundantly clear that the Chemistry Department needs to hire an organic chemist to maintain accreditation and enable on-time graduation for graduate students.

*Council agrees with the reduction of 1 FTE as long as an organic chemist can still be hired*

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### **MA Interdisciplinary Studies (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate/suspend)**

Due to the low viability mentioned in the chancellor's plan, the APT and the FSAC reports, and the Stage 1&2 comments, there appears to be consensus at all levels that this program should be suspended and re-evaluated.

*Council predominantly favors suspension*

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**MA Second Languages (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**

This program has already been cancelled for lack of viability and is being taught out.

*Council sees no reason to revive this program: no recommendation*

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**Ed.D. in Educational Administration (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)  
Ed.D. in Higher Education (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**

It was brought up that Educ. Admin. programs offer ways for our Education alumni to move up the career ladder, and therefore play an important role in our alumni’s career advancement. As graduate education is projected to increase; our alumni are likely to want to come back to a graduate program with us. Lastly, it was noted that licensure should not necessarily be the measure of whether a program is valuable or successful.

The college has formulated a proposal to combine Ed.D. in Educational Admin, the Ed.D. in Higher Education, and Ph.D. in Reading under a single administrative structure with a common research core, divided concentration coursework, and a common dissertation core. This consolidation would reduce faculty workload, save resources, improve inefficiencies, and make the program more competitive.

The Ed.D. in Higher Education is viable, producing many doctoral grad students, and therefore should not be eligible for elimination. Graduates of this program are employed as presidents and chancellors across the nation. The faculty received 17 letters from Higher Education doctoral alumni and students in support of maintaining the program. Plus, the focus groups that were convened by the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of UA Little Rock academic planning consisted of “business and community leaders”. Though the Chancellor’s proposal cites a ‘lack of stakeholder support for the Higher Education program’ based on the focus group data, the composition of the focus groups would not have included the requisite informed perspective on the market demands of higher education doctoral programs. The actual stakeholders for the higher education graduate programs are institutions of higher education in Arkansas, both 2-year and 4-year faculty members and administrators, not business and community leaders.

Based on this information and the information provided in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 comments, Graduate Council recommends redesigning the Ed.D. in Educational Administration and the Ed.D. in Higher Education programs into a single administrative structure with the Reading Ph.D.

*Grad Council vote: redesign*

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**Ed.S. in Educational Administration (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**

The Ed.S. has already been cancelled for lack of viability and is being taught out.

*Council sees no point in voting on a program that is already effectively eliminated.*

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**GC in Gifted Education (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)  
M.Ed. in Gifted, Creative, and Talented Ed. (Chancellor recommendation: reduce or redesign)**

The GC was cancelled for lack of viability when it was 18 hours. It was redesigned as a 15-hour program that is now fully embedded in the Gifted and Talented M.Ed. and recently reactivated, which may account for current low enrollment.

The program is required by the state, leads to licensure (GC), and brings in substantial tuition money. Additionally, both of these programs will be supported by \$250,000 in tuition and fees administered by the Jodie Mahony Center for Gifted Education. These programs are fully online, which allows them to serve students in Arkansas effectively, as well as nationwide.

*Grad Council votes maintain for both programs*

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**MS in Health Education/Promotion (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**

The faculty want to redesign the program and are in the process of doing so with a 4+1 program up for review by ADHE. Both the CEHP Dean and college assembly want to maintain the MS in Health Education and Promotion for these reasons. Previous stage (both 1 & 2) comments say this will result in negligible savings, will reduce revenue, and would result in no FTE reductions. Since the program is being redesigned with a 4+1 option (and fully online) to increase enrollment, the graduate council believes that this should be given the opportunity to grow enrollment in the program.

*Grad Council votes predominantly to maintain (two abstentions)*

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**MA in Higher Education (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**

Based on the comments in previous stages, the program has letters in support from graduates employed in student affairs. Additionally, the program also brings in a diverse range of graduate students, which is a desirable quality for the university. It is viable, and the program is recruiting additional students.

The MA in Higher Education has 2 concentrations. The two-year college teaching concentration is probably not viable, but the student affairs concentration is. Therefore rather than eliminating both of them, the graduate council suggests maintaining the concentration in Student Affairs, therefore maintaining the MA in Higher Ed, but suspending the concentration in two-year college teaching. This supports the faculty recommendation from Stage 1, redesign designation from the CEHP Dean, and the maintain from the college assembly.

*Grad Council supports maintaining the student affairs concentration and suspending the two-year college teaching concentration.*

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**Ed.S. in Reading (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**

Program was viable until Linda Dorn passed away. There are no resources to replace her.

*Grad Council votes to suspend, with the option of reactivating later.*

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**M.Ed. in Rural/Urban School Leadership (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**

Based on comments from the previous stages, the program is viable, essential to UA Little Rock's mission, and contrary to the initial report, does lead to administrative licensure. With the move to a fully online format, the number of graduates has increased (5 in Fall 2019, and 6 expected in Spring 2020).

*Grad Council votes to maintain.*

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**MA in Applied Psychology (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**



*This program is already suspended, therefore no vote or comments from Grad Council.*

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**GC in Business and Professional Writing (Chancellor recommendation: review)**

The certificate is fully embedded in an MA program; no cost savings will result from eliminating this program. Additionally, they are working to make it available through online programming. We agree with the program faculty, Dean, and CSSC Graduate Curriculum Councils that this graduate certificate should be maintained.

*Graduate Council votes to maintain.*

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**MA in Mass Communication (Chancellor recommendation: reduce)**

This program's faculty is already being reduced through a retirement this year, and possibly a faculty departure/failed search. Therefore they need no further reduction.

*Graduate Council votes to maintain.*

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**MS in Construction Management (Chancellor recommendation: eliminate)**

Previously the FSAC reported that the MS Construction Management allows entry into construction management for students from other disciplines. College assembly would like to maintain this MS in Construction Management.

Department says the program is viable (14 active students, 5 will graduate in Spring 2020, and 12 students are admitted for fall) and that it does result in gainful employment (100% job placement after graduation). Additionally, most of these graduate students pay out of state tuition, which brings in additional revenue for the University. Of the 30 credits required for the degree, 12 of them are 5000-level courses that are dual level (4000/5000) and are taught by undergraduate faculty and no additional burden to the program. They have letters from 60 graduates and employers to support maintaining the engineering and construction programs. They do not understand why the construction program is on the table for elimination. They are willing to redesign the program using courses in other departments to save resources and attract new students.

*Graduate Council votes to maintain.*

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**GC, MS, and Ph.D. in Systems Engineering (Chancellor recommendation: reduce Ph.D., eliminate GC and MS)**

Previous stage comments indicate that the Systems Engineering Program is a vital part of maintaining our research profile. The Engineering Science & Systems PhD program is well enrolled with a high number of students each year. The Systems Engineering Master's degree is undergoing a re-organization to become an MS in Mechanical Systems Engineering and an MS in Electrical and Computer Systems Engineering. This will make these degrees more marketable than the MS in Systems Engineering.

The Department argues that proposed 7 FTE reduction will make it impossible to maintain both the undergrad and graduate programs, and would therefore result in the Engineering Science & Systems doctoral program being suspended. Dropping from 12 faculty to 5 would not make it possible for them to meet accreditation requirements or have enough faculty to cover course needs. The department reported that the faculty in this department teach from 15-18 hours of graduate courses in addition to 35-36 hours of undergraduate courses each semester. Two faculty are expected to retire next year, so the MS and Ph.D. programs will already take a partial reduction when that happens.

Because they are making the change to implement mechanical and electrical & computer engineering programs, they want to keep the current MS in Systems Engineering program at least until the new programs are approved.

*The GC has already been cancelled for lack of viability.*

*Grad Council votes predominantly to maintain the MS and Ph.D. programs, with a couple of abstentions.*