The Graduate Council met on Wednesday, September 23, 2020, at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Members present: Suchendra Bhandarkar, Michael Cacciatore, Joon Choi, AnnaMarie Conner, Merrily Dunn, Tim Foutz, Cari Goetcheus, Georgia Harrison Hall, Ray Kaplan, Elizabeth Knight, Kyser Lough, Laura McAndrews, Christof Meile, David Mustard, Kerry Oliver, Kaori Sakamoto, Jennifer Samp, Shane Singh, Shavannor Smith, Elizabeth St. Pierre, Seth Wenger, Catherine White, and Ming Zhang. Ron Walcott, Meredith Welch-Devine, Robert Scott, Cheri Bliss, Robin Bingham and Olivia Myers represented the Graduate School. Shayla Lee represented the Graduate Student Association as current president.


Interim Dean Ron Walcott called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes of the August 26, 2020, Graduate Council meeting were approved as posted on the Graduate School website.

Graduate Council Committee Reports and Action Items

A. Administrative Committee
   Ron Walcott, Ex Officio Member
   The Administrative Committee met with department head Aaron Meksin and graduate coordinator Rene Jagnow from the Department of Philosophy via Zoom on September 14. Members present were committee chairs AnnaMarie Conner, Elizabeth Knight, and Christof Meile as well as Ron Walcott and Meredith Welch-Devine from the Graduate School. The request was that the Philosophy MA degree be exempt from the public portion of the oral defense exam and the Philosophy PhD degree be exempt from the private portion of the oral defense exam. The request for the MA was denied. The request for the PhD was approved.

B. Appeals Committee
   Christof Meile, Chair
   Since the last report to the Graduate Council, the Appeals Committee has met once on September 9, 2020. Committee members present were Christof Meile, Jill Anderson, Swarn Chatterjee, Joon Choi, Merrily Dunn, Dan Johnson, Kyser Lough, Shavannor Smith, and Ming Zhang. The committee met to hear one admission decision appeal. The committee voted to deny the appeal and uphold the decision of the department.
C. Program Committee
Liz Knight, Chair
Since the last meeting of the Graduate Council, the Program Committee has reviewed and approved one (1) proposal. The Program Committee would like to bring the following action item to the Graduate Council for its approval.

*Action Item:* From the Biomedical & Health Sciences Institute, a name change request to be called the Biomedical & Translational Sciences Institute. *Approved.*

D. Policy and Planning Committee
AnnaMarie Conner, Chair
The Policy and Planning Committee met on September 17. Members present were AnnaMarie Conner, Michael Cacciatore, John Campbell, Tim Foutz, Laura McAndrews, Kerry Oliver, Kaori Sakamoto, Shane Singh; Shayla Lee (GSA); Ron Walcott, Bob Scott, Cheri Bliss, Robin Bingham (Graduate School).

*Action Item:* Revise current policy regarding oral comprehensive exams and thesis and dissertation defenses to allow for flexibility in holding remotely. *Master’s Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Defenses were approved as revised. Oral Comprehensive Exam sent back to committee for further revision.*

Old Business
No old business.

New Business
Recognition that Interim Dean Ron Walcott has been selected as the inaugural Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School, effective October 1, 2020.

Information Items
Curriculum Report: The Graduate School has approved 13 new courses, 74 course revisions, and 0 deletions.

Next meeting: October 14 at 3:30 pm via Zoom

Meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.
II. Master’s Thesis Approval and Defense

The defense of the thesis will be chaired by the student’s major professor and attended by all members of the advisory committee simultaneously for the entire defense period. The defense will consist of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance. The public presentation is open to anyone who wishes to attend. The student and committee chair must appear in person for both components of the defense, but other committee members can participate via teleconference or video conference, provided that the comments of all participants can clearly and consistently be heard. If the major professor is not able to attend the defense in person, they can designate a substitute chair who is a current member of the committee. Under extenuating circumstances, the defense can be held completely remotely if approved by the graduate coordinator and the department head. The advisory committee must approve the student’s thesis and defense with no more than one dissenting vote and must certify their approval in writing. An abstention is not allowable for the final defense. The results of the defense of the thesis must be reported to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to graduation for the current semester.

If a University program would like to deviate from the above policy, the following steps must be taken: (1) request approval from the Graduate School for the revised policy that will be used for program level defenses, (2) documentation in the program’s handbook on the revised policy approved by the Graduate School for the program. Such deviations must be applied to all students in the program.

III. PhD Dissertation Approval and Defense

The defense of the dissertation will be chaired by the student’s major professor and attended by all members of the advisory committee simultaneously for the entire defense period. The defense will consist of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance. The public presentation is open to anyone who wishes to attend. The student and committee chair must appear in person for both components of the defense, but other committee members can participate via teleconference or video conference, provided that the comments of all participants can clearly and consistently be heard. If the major professor is not able to attend the defense in person, they can designate a substitute chair who is a current member of the committee. Under extenuating circumstances, the defense can be held completely remotely if approved by the graduate coordinator and the department head. The advisory committee must approve the student’s dissertation and defense with no more than one dissenting vote and must certify their approval in writing. An abstention is not allowable for the final defense. The results of the defense of the dissertation must be reported to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to graduation for the current semester.

If a University program would like to deviate from the above policy, the following steps must be taken: (1) request approval from the Graduate School for the revised policy that will be used for program level defenses, (2) documentation in the program’s handbook on the revised policy approved by the Graduate School for the program. Such deviations must be applied to all students in the program.