

Minutes

Graduate Academic Affairs Committee August 14, 2020 – via zoom

Call to Order: R. Wood called the meeting to order at 9:00am via zoom.

New Business:

MS Program and Post-Baccalaureate Program in GIS – April Tree:

This is an FYI – Changes were made to select required courses to align with corresponding standards and expectations of graduates by individuals outside of SLU. These changes apply to both the certificate and master’s program.

Recommendation Decision: N/A for Information Only

Change Application Requirements for the SOE MAs and Certificates – Jennifer Buehler

The Master of Arts (MA)’s Degree in School of Education called: Educational Principles and Practices. Currently has 14 students.

The reason for this change is that we are trying to differentiate our doctoral programs from our master’s program more clearly and one way we are trying to do this is to make it easier to admit master students, while remaining normally rigors for our PhD’s students. Last year our faculty decided to eliminate our GRE requirements. It has come to an agreement that we would like to eliminate the 3 letters of recommendations requirement and move it to 2 letters of recommendation requirements for each of the masters in the school. This would make it easier for students and to be consistent with The School of Education and that is not hard for those students to figure out what or who needs what for each program. This would be simple and provide streamline procedures.

Recommendation Decision: Unanimously recommended.

Discussion Draft – “Saint Louis University Experiential Learning – Professor Doug Williams

Professor Doug Williams would like the committee’s feedback on the definitions that were developed as part of Operational Excellence (OE) Program and inform you about of the larger project about tracking and expanding experience learning. This project was initiated some time ago under the sponsorship interim former Provost, Chet Gillis and Associate Provost Jeff Jackson, Career Development. This is the project charter that was approved by the OE Project Review Committee.

The fundamental goals of this project are to find ways to track student participation and experiential learning opportunities across the University and then to be able to provide a good set of data at the program, college and University levels at those levels of participation.

We would like to expand the opportunities that are available to our students for experiential learning.

Some of the initiatives that are in the pipeline and will be announced soon. For example, Career Services is developing an internship program targeting students in academic programs that do not include mandatory internships. Career Services will be seeking partnerships with academic units to grow and facilitate internship opportunities for students.

There is growing demand from students for experiential learning opportunities. Over the years there has been increased academic recognition of the value of experiential learning. We would like the ability to facilitate the tracking and expansion of experiential learning. The goal is for that the data collected will support these efforts. Furthermore, the hope is that these data will help inform potential expansion of such opportunities.

The request from the operation excellence project team proposal is for members of GAAC to review and provide input on standard, university-wide definitions for the variety of experiential learning courses offered at SLU now and in the future and bring your recommendations back to Provost Lewis. Professor Williams requested that all comments regarding these definitions be emailed directly to him.

How COVID is Affecting Graduate Students and any Concerns – GSA Representatives – Ashley Donaldson

Abbey/GSA reported that a survey was sent out to all graduate students back in the spring and analysis of the responses revealed these items of concern:

- Degree completion
- Funding
- Overall communication, particularly grad students who are teaching assistants because they are concerned about having to teach in person.
- Space
- Teaching in person
- Staying safe

Of concern to international graduate assistants (GAs):

- Mental health, well-being these students do not feel supported (enough) during these unprecedented times.

It is important to remind everyone that Pius Library-North/Main Campus has 20 study rooms that are available by reservation a week in advance for 3-hour blocks.

Spacing is a systemic issue. Matt Davis, Assistant to the President, sent a list to the colleges of rooms that the Provost's Office controls. The Provost's office is trying to identify additional rooms that do not have classes scheduled than can be repurposed for student study areas that meet proper COVID-19 precautions.

Question posed: Is there any way to get GTA's on all the emails that go out to the instructors? When those come out, we must ask their departments to forward to their graduate students because they should be getting in and all communication that anyone else is teaching the classes. Is there we can get the GTA list linked to an instructor list so that we are notifying everyone? Brandon McCoy will review what reports we currently have and try to resolve this issue.

Concerns expressed was regarding time to degree working students. We have working adults in the School of Education and two of these students are experiencing a disrupted home life at the result of COVID-19. These student(s) are attempting to begin work on their dissertations but may to be able to complete it within the current timeline. The School of Education (SOE) is responding by implementing the Leave of Absence (LOA) option. If a student is approaching the end of their time to degree and COVID-19 is the reason for the LOA request, extensions are considered as appropriate. The concern is that if the COVID-19 continues longer than expectations, for those students who exhaust their leave of absences, what are we going to do?

Rob stated that we error on the side of caution and at the committee should talk about this and this is going to be a decision that Dr. Pestello and The Provost are going to need to make. This committee needs to decide on what we are going to do. The last five years we have been diligent because of what we were trying to achieve in terms of getting our time of degree down because we should report that out. We have been diligent to hammer this down and my inclination is to be lenient on extended time to complete for COVID-19 related reasons. This is a topic that we still need to discuss. What is the future of graduate education? What or our objectives in delivering graduate education at Saint Louis University?

Professor Matsuo stated as a concern that any research in which we violate social distancing will not be allowed. In these situations, there is a problem with the way they are triaging proposals in the IRB.

Regarding data collection this year and in terms of dissertation and master thesis, when I corresponded with the IRB office, and particularly in my two courses and in one of the courses, students usually collect the data and students could collect the data virtually through zoom and record it. However, when I contacted through the IRB office, I learned that the IRB review process has been altered so priority will be given to COVID-19 vaccine development and diagnosis, followed by COVID-19 related research. This process will put the student in a very difficult position and especially for my class this person should within and need to finish. This is

difficult and Helen also stated that we have students that cannot collect data, then students that are delayed.

Rob asked Professor Matsuo if she is willing to collect some data on the number of students that are being impacted by this priority shift? We should bring this to the attention of the IRB and maybe they should set up a sub-group. GSA student, Mark, Professor Matsuo will work together to bring more information back to the group.

Professor Jesus Garcia-Martinez is the representative to the Faculty Senate and would like to report the findings and the results of this data and what the IRB and the Office of the Vice President for Research are going to do and then he will report those findings to the Senate, as this affects the work of the faculty.

For those that would like to be involved in this project, contact Professor Matsuo.

Old Business:

Updating and Correcting Joint Degree Program Form – April Trees:

We do not have an updated joint degree form on the web and we have a current version that is being revised and we will get a clean draft and send it to the Associate Deans and then to the UAAC for approval.

GSA VP of North Campus Mitchell Stevens stated that another one of the newer concerns graduate students are expressing is how the data from the COVID-10 symptoms app will be handled and whether there is going to be institutional access to this data or will be HIPPA breached. The lawyers are controlling that part and it will be in HIPPA compliant.

The app was already released to the students and the faculty did not see that yet. Why did they release to the students first because if they were questions the faculty did not even have the app yet? Rob will inquire.

We had voted on some changes to the GA manual in the last spring and if we could get the new version at some point that would be great. We have the old version and we are working to update the new version of the GA manual.

Non-Traditional Dissertations Helen Lack:

Last May I brought to the committee some changes to the non-traditional dissertations and if we could have a plan on how to address this so that we can get this done this fall. This is a University requirement and not a School of Nursing requirement. We tabled this in May, but we need a plan to move forward. Rob will have a plan in September and bring back to the committee.

Approval of Minutes from the May 8th, 2020 Meeting:

Minor changes per the members were incorporated and the Minutes from the May 8th, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 AM and the next meeting will take place on Friday, September 11th @ 9 AM via zoom.

Link will be sent out prior to the meeting.