MINUTES OF THE GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
Friday, October 23, 2020 – 3:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Chair – Godfrey Gibbison, Dean of the Graduate School

Members Present: Emily Beck (LALE/ESOL), Vince Benigni (COMM/HSS), Brooke Blosser (GSA), Karen Chandler (ARCM), Roger Daniels (ACCY), Mark Del Mastro (AA), Gerald Gordon (URBP), Melissa Hughes (BIOL/SSM), Alex Kasman (MASC), Kate Keeney (ARTM/SOTA), Ron Magnuson (MBA), Renée McCauley (CSIS/DATA), Judy Millesen (MPA), mutindi ndunda (TEDU/EHHP), Antonio Pérez-Núñez (HISP/LCWA), John Peters (SMFT), Craig Plante (MBIO), Emily Rosko (CREW), Susan Simonian (MSCL), Emily Skinner (MTLA), Sandy Slater (CGE), Jacob Steere-Williams (HIST), Rafael Teixeira (SCIM/SOB), Anton Vander Zee (ENGL), Annette Watson (ENSS), Kelley White (EDEC)

Guests Present: Mary Bergstrom (RO), Divya Bhati (OIE), Lucy Davis (ENSS), Julie Dahl (RO)

GSO Staff Present: Laura Everett (Recruitment & Marketing), Jon Hakkila (Associate Dean), Susan Hallatt (Admissions), Robyn Olejniczak (Student Records), Erica Shirley (Admissions & Support Services)

I. Welcome – the meeting was called to order at 3:02pm.

II. Approval of the Minutes September 18, 2020 Meeting – unanimous approval

III. Curriculum Proposals – Sandy Slater, CGE

A. Creative Writing, MFA
   i. ENGL 564: description change
   ii. ENGL 565: description change
   iii. ENGL 706: description change

   These course description changes include small word changes and removal of the journal name Crazyhorse, as the journal’s name is in the process of being updated.

   The proposals passed unanimously without discussion.

B. Ad hoc discussion of Accelerated Programs

   Alex Kasman (MASC) reported that the Math department’s current BS/MS program is updating its eligibility requirements to align with the new requirements recently accepted by Graduate Council. This includes updates the cumulative GPA minimum and earned credit hours. Anton Vander Zee (ENGL) asked if the accelerated program proposal was accepted by Faculty Senate. Godfrey Gibbison (GSO) responded yes, he presented the proposal to Senate as information from the Graduate School. The Graduate School also had a meeting with Financial Aid, the Registrar, Honors, Academic Advising, and Undergraduate Admissions to discuss communication; implementation will be worked out with the Registrar and Academic Affairs.

   Renée McCauley (CSIS/DATA) asked if existing accelerated programs are required to update their eligibility requirements? The Computer Science department’s current program does not want to update for fear of dissuading prospective students. Gibbison (GSO) responded yes, the intent of the accelerate programs task force was to develop uniform standards for
these programs. He added that programs can create their own standards outside of the GPA and earned hours requirement. McCauley (CSIS/DATA) followed up that if the College’s program adheres to the new standards, that may create different requirements from the Citadel since they also have an accelerated program.

Gibbison (GSO) closed by saying that students would need to submit an admissions application to the graduate program to establish their graduate matriculation once they have earned their bachelor’s degree. Susan Hallatt (GSO) added that it is possible to develop an online application specific to accelerated students. Judy Millesen (MPA) asked whether undergraduates could still enroll in graduate courses outside of an approved accelerated program. Gibbison (GSO) responded yes, as long as they meet the criteria and receive permission.

IV. 3MT 2020 – Jon Hakkila, Graduate School

Jon Hakkila (GSO) announced the annual 3MT competition is being held virtually this year due to the restrictions on events and gatherings. The event will still be live in the sense that students will make their presentations in real time, as opposed to submitting a pre-recorded video. He asked program directors to encourage their students to participate.

V. Assessment – Jon Hakkila, Graduate School

Hakkila (GSO) provided another update on the assessment requirements this year. He reported that using COVID-19 is an acceptable explanation for either uncollected or unanalyzed data. The assessment committee is working through current submissions, and programs should be receiving their feedback soon. The committee will send along a rubric that program directors can review and request changes if needed.

Hakkila (GSO) also thanked the thesis awards committee for their work. The winners from this year’s categories will soon be submitted as the College’s nominees to the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools.

VI. Graduate Student Association – Brooke Blosser, President

Brooke Blosser (GSA) introduced herself as the new GSA president and noted her excitement to be involved. She asked that program directors encourage their students to engage with GSA; delegates are needed from each program to keep a program and its students in good standing and eligible for funding. She acknowledges that GSA will have to get creative about their events and opportunities given the COVID-19 restrictions in place. Gibbison (GSO) added that the makeup of the Graduate Student Council has changed as of this year. Delegates now come directly from each graduate program instead of from the sub-organization. This should help students in programs without sub-organizations engage in GSA. He also thanked program directors who already submitted the names of their delegates.

VII. Announcements, Updates, and Reminders – GSO Staff

A. Duolingo as an accepted test of English proficiency

Robyn Olejniczak (GSO) reported that the Director of International Admissions submitted a proposal to include Duolingo as a new option for a test of English language proficiency. Compared to the current tests, TOEFL and IELTS, it is a more accessible option due to its
lower price and home-testing availability. Many schools have moved to accept this test since the onset of the pandemic and its impact on international students. The proposal will be voted on at the November meeting of the Faculty Senate.

B. Upcoming Events

Olejniczak (GSO) let the group know of a series of upcoming events held by the Graduate School. Due to the 3MT competition being held virtually, the Graduate School is hosting two workshops to describe the format change and answer any questions. The Graduate School’s thesis workshop will also be moved to a virtual format and be offered twice.

Olejniczak (GSO) continued that December’s Commencement ceremony has been canceled due to the pandemic, but fall graduates will be eligible to participate in the May Commencement ceremony in 2021. The President and Board of Trustees decided that it was unsafe to have students and families return to campus for the ceremony since the College is returning to remote learning after Thanksgiving.

C. Miscellaneous

Gibbison (GSO) reminded program directors to consider applying for the opportunity funds offered by the Lowcountry Graduate Center. Programs are still considered new and eligible for funding if they are less than three years old.

Gibbison (GSO) continued that the Graduate School is aware of its low level of diverse students. It has obtained a list of McNair scholars to target for recruitment.

Hallatt (GSO) announced that she has updated the dashboards in TargetX to help programs track their applications. The Graduate School will also continue with its annual free application period, which will be from December 1 through January 15.

VIII. For the Good of the Order

Craig Plante (MBIO) asked if the Graduate School is considering extending the thesis submission deadline similar to the spring 2020 semester. Olejniczak (GSO) answered yes, but a new deadline has not yet been decided.

Millesen (MPA) asked for an update on the requested change to the graduate grading scale to include minus grades. Mark Del Mastro (AA) and Mary Bergstrom (RO) asked if a formal proposal had been submitted and reviewed by any/all relevant committees. Bergstrom (RO) asked what prompted the proposal. Millesen (MPA) responded that she finds there to be grade compression between a “B+” and “A.” Bergstrom (RO) added that changes to the grading scale require a long planning and implementation period; the earliest this change could take effect is Fall 2022. This timeline would also need a signal from the Provost that this item is a priority as the Registrar Office is already managing several big projects with limited staff. Gibbison (GSO) asked for Millesen (MPA) and Ron Magnuson (MBA) to polish the proposal, include some peer research, and resubmit to the Graduate School. The proposers also have keep in mind the impact on joint programs. Del Mastro (AA) added that this type of proposal would at least need approval from the committees on Academic Standards, Academic Planning, and Graduate Education; final approval would be needed by the Faculty Senate.
Vince Benigni (COMM/HSS) let the group know that he is the faculty athletics representative, and as such he suggested that the Graduate School should consider developing a commercial that would air during basketball games. It would allow the Graduate School to advertise outside of the Charleston media market. Gibbison (GSO) said it is a good idea and he will follow up on whether it would be possible.

IX. **Adjournment** – the meeting adjourned at 4:09pm