

**Indiana University Graduate
Faculty Council
March 8, 2021
3:00 – 4:30 pm**

Present: William Allegrezza, Janice Blum, Dena Carson, Dakota Coates, David Daleke, Alyson Essex, Jill Fehrenbacher, Dominique Galli, Margaret Graves, Spencer Hall, Tabitha Hardy, Devon Hensel, Ed Hirt, Lisa Hoffman, Jason Baird Jackson, Jon Macy, Larry Moss, Ben Perrin, Jeff Rutherford, Natalia Rybas, Nathan Schmidt, Scott Shackelford, Pravina Shukla, Rebecca Slotegraaf, J a m e s W i m b u s h

Agenda

1. **Introductions** – Thanks to our grads for all of their hard work.
2. **Approval of minutes** from GFC meeting on 15 Feb 2021 - [link to minutes](#) | [link to recording](#)
3. **Updates from Dean Wimbush**

(A) Commencement: Dean Wimbush began by discussing plans for commencement. The Restart Committee met and have proposed a plan (not yet approved) in which commencement will be outdoors at Memorial Stadium. Graduates will need to have a ticket to participate, and have 2 negative COVID tests the week of commencement. Those coming from out of town will have to get their first test and show proof prior to arrival back in Bloomington (which would need to be 24 hours prior to commencement). Commencement will be open to 2020 graduates as well. There will be hooding of doctoral students. Faculty members will need to get a ticket and follow the testing protocol to participate. There will be no handshaking nor fist bumping.

Other campuses? The question was raised as to what would be done for commencement at IUPUI or other regional campuses. The proposal is evolving, but applies currently just to IUB. Those with questions should contact Jay Hess, who is a member of the EALC.

IUPUI Med School: Janice mentioned that the Medical School is doing their commencement virtually, and raised questions about how we would be able to maintain safety of the space if commencement was conducted as proposed.

Individual programs – ceremonies? Spencer asked if individual programs still had the ability to have their own commencement ceremonies. The answer is no. The Law School and Medical School are having only virtual ceremonies. Individual programs are permitted to have virtual events, but not in person ceremonies.

Cap on number of tickets? Spencer also asked whether there was a cap on the number of tickets. Dean Wimbush responded no, as far as he knows, but no family will be able to attend, so there should be plenty of space.

Other concerns: Finally, Spencer asked about guidance for students having their own graduation celebrations. Dean Wimbush said that such concerns argue against having an in person commencement, for how do you discourage or prevent students from having their own before or after parties? The plan is for immediate seating of graduating students.

4. **Update from the Mental Health Task Force** – Co-Chair [Ellen Vaughn](#) – [Interim Report](#)
Ellen Vaughn, co-chair of the MHTF, made a presentation, updating us on what the MHTF is doing. She reported that there is a graduate student mental health crisis, with anxiety and depression rates among grad students much greater than the general population and greater still with the pandemic. She discussed an evolving vision for IU to foster a culture of grad student wellness, trying to reduce feelings of isolation, disconnection, and imposter syndrome. The national Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine published a 2020 report on mental health that noted a number of areas of need.

Next steps. The MHTF is now in the process of (1) developing and maintaining a graduate student mental health website, that will be available systemwide; (2) facilitating the training of faculty, staff, and peers who work with graduate students; (3) implementing institutional data collection from graduate and professional students; (4) assessing staffing and resource needs across campuses.

Recommendations? Dean Wimbush applauded the committee's efforts and asked if they were in the process of making recommendations. Ellen expressed that as a goal.

CAPS reluctance: Rebecca asked a question about whether grad students were reluctant to go to CAPS. Ellen said that she wanted students to have a host of options, not just CAPS. She felt students need a trusted person or persons at IU to make that bridge for treatment seeking.

Grad-specific challenges: Dakota mentioned that CAPS which seems to be geared more for undergraduates than graduate students. Grad students run the risk of seeing their students there. Moreover, doctoral students think CAPS people are only Masters level and may not be viewed as qualified. Additionally, professional students often feel that getting help is a sign of weakness and may negatively impact their ability to be certified.

Other options: Dean Daleke encouraged the use of existing offices on campus. Program available at the Graduate Mentoring Center might be more comfortable for graduate students.

Changes to the MHTF going forward? Finally, Ellen expressed that the MHTF's efforts involved both intervention and prevention pieces. Spencer asked whether Ellen felt that any changes needed to be made with the MHTF to have more effectiveness going forward. Ellen did not have any suggestions along these lines.

5. **Updates on fees** – David – [Robel letter to GWC](#) | [OIS fee table](#) in Big 10
Dean Daleke commented on Provost Robel's letter to the Graduate Workers Coalition (GWC). One year ago, they had asked to eliminate mandatory fees, and had faculty support for this request as well. Dean Daleke reported that schools are working to improve stipend levels. In her letter, Provost Robel laid out all of the benefits that graduate students receive, and pointed to the increased future lifetime earnings of those who receive a doctoral degree. Her letter has generated a lot of discussion of these issues.

Complications: The fees are analogous to taxes for public benefit. IU gets less of its budget from the state every year, and rather than increasing tuition, these fees pay for essential services. The question is whether these fees should be waived for some students and not others (e.g., SAAs). International students have different fees in many places, and thus are hard to use as a source of comparison.

Unremittables: Dean Daleke reported that unremittable fees have or will be eliminated by the end of the year.

Reception of letter by students: Spencer comments that Provost Robel's letter was not received well and indicated that a response letter was being drafted. Many issues,

including class issues, student debt, and the need for greater transparency have emerged from this discussion.

6. Standing Reports from Committees

(A) Academic Policy Committee (APC) - Chair: Scott – [Leave guidance update](#) | credit validation

FAQ on Leave: Scott introduced an [FAQ document](#) for the graduate student leave policy. The APC would like to put it to a vote. One thing the APC would encourage is that leave policies be drafted and approved by individual units. What would be a reasonable time frame? By the end of 2021/ by the end of AY 2021-22?

GPSG Resolutions on Leave? Dominique asked whether the IUPUI GPSG had any resolutions to include. The IUB GPSG has some, but some are dated in 2017 and may need to be updated.

Variation in Leave policy among units? Rebecca asked whether all unit's policies should look alike. Could they each have different policies (and maybe even have different policies within units)? Scott replied that this needs to be worked out. The FAQ would provide links to some existing policies that are included as templates.

(B) Awards Committee - Chair: Gloria

Gloria was absent, but Margaret Graves reported for the Awards Committee that the Edwards Fellowship recommendation were submitted.

(C) Diversity and Equity Issues Committee (DEIC) - Chair: Dominique and Rebecca – URM data update with IUPUI | URM fellowships - update | [UGS document](#) on recruitment, retention, success | Support for URM students after arrival ([preview](#))

The DEIC is examining support for URM students, and IU's commitment to diversity.

Retention: They are looking at both recruitment efforts and support for matriculating students in the service of retention. What programs or events are held? What resources are available, and do people know about them?

Fellowships: They are also examining what fellowships students can apply for. Alyson has been looking at schools in terms of listing URM fellowships, and Pravina is collecting information on fellowships at IUB.

(D) Graduate Initiatives Committee (GIC) - Chair: Jill: TBA

Jill discussed two tasks undertaken by the GIC.

(1) Transparency resolution – improvements of offer letters: The first involved a resolution delivered by the GPSG concerning transparency in offer letters. The GIC has been collecting examples, both good and bad. They hope to have a template for discussion at our next meeting. These letters will be very different for different schools, as no one template will apply in all cases. Interdisciplinary programs are a particularly thorny case, as the fees may be different for the different programs.

Improvement of MoneySmarts: There are also issues with the use of moneysmarts and other planning calculators, which are outdated and potentially misleading.

(2) Mentorship training: The second issue involves mentorship training. It seems important to provide, but can it be mandatory? Any intensive mentorship training is likely

too much to be mandatory. However, some programs get around this because of accreditation requirements.

Roles of GMCs and related offices: The mentorship offices on IUB and IUPUI have not been helpful for several faculty that the GIC have heard from. It may be the case that one size might not fit all, and mentorship training will need to be different for different schools and units.

Plans for future surveys: The GIC plans to conduct surveys with ties to mental health in which they will try to identify areas for improvement along these lines.

Future NIH action? Janice mentioned that NIH is asking for comments for improving the training environment for mentoring URM students. It is possible that suggestions regarding mandatory mentoring might be fruitful.

Agenda Items Skipped

In the service of time, we skipped (E) and items 7 and 8 on the agenda to address preparations for GFC elections. Reports from regional reps and student representatives will wait until next meeting.

(E) Check in on the UGS-GPSG-CoAS-GFC financial health survey (David, Scott, Jill, Dominique)

7. Updates and standing reports from regional campuses –

(A) Update on fellowship concerns on regional campuses – Kyoko

(B) Reports East (Natalia), Kokomo (Gloria), Northwest (William), South Bend (Kyoko), South East (Lisa)

8. Reports from Student Representatives - Dakota, Alyson

(A) Update on IUPUI's GPSG's projects and concerns – Alyson

(B) Update on IUB's GPSG's projects and concerns – Dakota

9. Preparing for GFC in 2021-2: [Bylaws](#) | [Constitution](#)

(A) **Final reports** – Spencer: Annual committee reports due 5 April. Draft of final GFC report distributed 12 April. From 2019-20: [GFC final](#) | [APC final](#) | [Awards final](#) | [DEIC final](#) | [GIC final](#) | [GPSG final](#)

Timing: Spencer reminded all committee chairs to have their final reports ready for our final meeting.

(B) **Process and timing for GFC elections:** Dena and Jeff

Dena and Jeff will work to fill vacant seats on the GFC for 2021-22. The Executive Board will be soliciting nominations.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.