

## IU Graduate Faculty Council Final Report for AY 2020-2021

Submitted to UGS Dean James C. Wimbush by  
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### (1) Introduction

In this report, we describe the major activities of the IU Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) during the 2020-21 academic year (AY). As organized by our [Constitution](#)<sup>1</sup> and our Bylaws ([2020 version](#)), the GFC advises and legislates on matters of graduate education at Indiana University ([see more](#)). The GFC reports to the Dean of the University Graduate School (UGS).

During the AY, the GFC addressed actions and policies summarized in its initial [strategic emphases](#) document. The GFC took a pandemic-first approach; we sought to operate nimbly to meet needs or issues encountered by graduate students during the pandemic. We completed several projects initiated in the AY 2019-20 (summarized in that year's [final report](#)) and began several new ones. Some of those will require continued efforts in AY 2021-22.

Below, we summarize action taken and progress made (2-5) by each Committee of the GFC, (6) with more organized representation of regional campuses, and (7) via our interactions with GPSGs of both IUB and IUPUI campuses. (8) The GFC at large also addressed few miscellaneous topics. Finally, (9) we describe internal practices undertaken by the Executive Committee to enhance logistical operations of the GFC itself. (10) All agendas, minutes, and recordings of monthly meetings are summarized in the appendix. Note that this report offers 22 recommendations and action points for the next GFC.

### (2) Academic Policy Committee (APC) – [Final Report](#) | Chair: Scott Shackelford, IUB ([sjshacke@iu.edu](mailto:sjshacke@iu.edu))

**Charge:** Make recommendations to the Council regarding development and review of academic policies and revisions to the IU Graduate Bulletin

The APC tackled three major projects during the academic year, as summarized in their [final report](#) to the GFC. All Bulletin language and the FAQ are summarized there.

(A) *Description of graduate minor (Bulletin update):* Following the recommendation of the GFC '19-20 report, the APC proposed revision of language in the [Bulletin](#) to clarify description of the graduate minor. These changes aimed to emphasize that the minor is intended to provide intellectual breadth in graduate training and should be taken “outside” the major discipline. (vote: Oct 2020)

(B) *Leave of absence: policy update (Bulletin language) and FAQ (document):* Given high variability among Schools within the IU system, APC crafted Bulletin language requiring all

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<sup>1</sup> Most links connect to documents archived in the [GFC's Canvas page](#). Access is restricted to members of the GFC.

Schools to establish and maintain leave policies (vote: Dec 2020). APC also created a [FAQ](#) (approved March 2020), written to Dean Wimbush, to provide guidance, references, and examples that Schools can use when crafting their own policy. The GFC voted to approve the recommendation by APC that UGS should census Schools during the 2021-22 AY to ensure compliance with this Bulletin requirement.

(C) *Revalidation of courses - re-visitation of policy*: Dean Wimbush asked APC to revisit revalidation policy. Specifically, the APC considered a request to elongate the revalidation window to ten years for both MS and PhD degrees. APC recommended that extant policy remain intact on timing (five years for MS, seven for PhD) but to expand criteria for revalidation. (Language approved April 2021).

**Recommendations/action points from APC:**

1. *Ensure Bulletin updated*: Ask Dean Rutherford to ensure that bulletin language for the graduate minor, leave policy, and revalidation was included in the 2021-22 Bulletin (in both PDF and Word versions). Preview those changes at the Sept 2021 meeting of the GFC.
2. *Leave policy – follow up with Schools*: Set a date for UGS to canvass Schools for compliance with development of Leave policy for graduate students. Delegate a UGS Dean to report to the GFC on this progress.
3. *Revalidation timelines*: (A) Undertake a census of revalidation timelines at IU vs. other Big Ten and peer institutions. (B) Ask UGS to distill best practices on revalidation. (C) Further consider appropriate changes to revalidation procedures in the Bulletin, balancing flexibility with disciplinary realities.
4. *Other considerations (see APC report)*: (A) application of prior credit towards graduate credentials, including certificates; (B) analysis of grade forgiveness policy for grads (FX), potentially mirroring existing undergraduate policy; (C) clarification of intent for major/non-major GPA calculations in the Bulletin; (D) amend the candidacy timeline for graduate students post-pandemic; (E) formalization of policy for online doctoral defenses post-pandemic.

**(3) Awards Committee** | Chair: Gloria Preece, IUK (gpreece@iuk.edu)

**Charge:** Review applications for graduate student award competitions throughout the academic year and recommend recipients

Over the 2020-2021 AY, this committee selected recipients of the University Distinguished Master's Thesis Award, the Wells Graduate Fellowship, and the John H. Edwards Fellowship. Despite a heavy workload, with deadlines occurring before, in the middle, and at the end of the semester, the committee did not pursue previously discussed reappportioning of reviews, for example, across all members of the GFC.

**(4) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC)** – [Final Report](#) | Chair: Dominique Galli (IUPUI, dgalli@iu.edu)

**Charge:** Review the state of diversity within graduate programs at IU and to develop goals for inclusion

The DEIC embarked on four projects.

*(A) Identify financial issues or challenges of students from URM groups (survey):* Both the DEIC and GIC of the GFC collaborated with UGS, GPSG, and the College at IUB to [survey graduate students](#) on the Bloomington campus. The response rate to this survey proved too low to provide meaningful data comparisons to data collected from IUPUI students in 2019. Dean Daleke indicated that this effort provided a learning opportunity but professional guidance should be sought to create the next variation of the survey. Unfortunately, given insufficient data, DEIC (and GIC) could take no action on this project.

*(B) Review recruitment and attrition data for students from URM groups (data):* This project continued from last year's DEIC. It aims to examine patterns of URM representation, retention, and degree completion. Unfortunately, DEIC was unable to acquire the data from managers at UGS (for the second year in a row). Some data were acquired and analyzed (DEIC final report, Appendix 1), and Dr. Galli has found a route to data through the University Institutional Research and Reporting Office.

*(C) College information on support resources for enrolled URM students (compilation of links):* The committee began collection of links and information about resources that support enrolled URM students (DEIC final report, Appendix 2).

*(D) Survey number and size of fellowships available to URM students.* The committee began a survey of units to compile fellowship resources available (DEIC final report, [Appendix 3](#)).

**Recommendations/action points from DEIC:**

5. *Financial Health survey (point 4A):* With the GIC, encourage UGS et al. to rekindle a new version of the financial health survey and combine with other possible sources of data (e.g., IUPUI MS student [survey](#))

6. *Retention data (point 4B):* Continue attempting to acquire germane data to evaluate URM representation, retention, and degree completion to present to the GFC during the '21-'22 AY. Upon analysis, the DEIC should prepare recommendations to the GFC and UGS.

7. *Support creation of a resource inventory for URM students (point 4C):* Continue collecting similar resources across campus. Then, to complete the project, provide recommendations for sharing compilations with students, programs, and Schools in appropriate ways (e.g., via UGS websites).

8. *Survey of fellowships available to URM students (point 4D):* Continue collecting information about fellowship resources. Prepare comparison to rival Big10 institutions with subsequent recommendations to UGS. Consider fellowships available to members of [displaced first nations](#).

**(5) Graduate Initiatives Committee (GIC) – [Final Report](#) | GIC Chair: Jill Fehrenbacher (IUPUI, [jfehrenb@iu.edu](mailto:jfehrenb@iu.edu)) and Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) – [Final Report](#) | Co-chair: Larry Moss (IUB, [lmoss@iu.edu](mailto:lmoss@iu.edu))**

**Charge:** Review current activities and propose new initiatives for the UGS and the GFC; update the Constitution and Bylaws

- (A) *Creation of the Mental Health Task Force*: The 2020 MHTF was tasked by Dean Wimbush to identify mental health care needs of graduate students in the IU system. The MHTF issued an [Interim Report](#) to Dean Wimbush in Dec 2020. Dean Wimbush indicated that major funding requests for additional counselors and staff<sup>2</sup> would likely not be possible. The MHTF is re-evaluating its membership and charge in its next phase<sup>3</sup>.
- (B) *Survey of Financial Health*: The GIC planned to analyze data from the financial health survey. Please see point 4A above.
- (C) *Student membership to APC, DEIC, and GIC committees*: The GIC proposed updates to bylaws of committee membership to three committees of the GFC. Those changes, as summarized in the final report of the DEIC (Amendments), broadened student participation in these committees. The updated [2020 Bylaws](#) include the approved language. Note that the Vice Chair must be consulted about and approve of these student appointments.
- (D) *Support for Resolutions of the GPSG at IUB and IUPUI*: The GIC worked with the IUB GPSG and UGS Deans Daleke and Blum to address the [Syllabi and Text Book](#) resolution. GIC supports creation of minimum standards for offer letters (following [the associated resolution](#)).
- (E) *Mentorship guidelines and training*: GIC began dialogue concerning mentorship training (e.g., which strategies could work and which would likely not, based on existing literature). Abegunde (Director, Graduate Mentoring Center [\[GMC\]](#) at IUB) fielded questions concerning [UGS's plans](#) to create a mentoring handbook, and existing resources were shared (including [CGS's handbook](#) and the College Grad Office's [\[CGO\] guidelines](#)).

**Recommendations/action points from GIC and MHTF:**

9. *MHTF [Interim Report](#) (point 5A)*: Continue urging Dean Wimbush to catalyze implementation of the recommendations of the Interim Report.
10. *MHTF Survey of Graduate Mental Health (point 5A)*: Support the MHTF's proposed survey of graduate mental health. Look for synergies of this survey with others regarding financial health (rec. #3).
11. *The Future of the MHTF (point 5A)*: The MHTF needs input from and administrative guidance from the UGS and GFC on its future directions, scope, and 'home' (as stated in its [final report](#) to the GFC).
12. *Student membership to Committees of the GFC (point 5C)*: Ensure smooth implementation of the addition of student members to the APC, DEIC, and GIC. Do **not** allow Canvas access to these additional student members.
13. *Syllabi posting and Canvas notification (point 5D)*: Follow up with UGS Deans and Julie Johnston (Director of Learning Spaces, UITS) concerning timely posting and notification.
14. *Create minimal requirements for offer letters* and distribute these recommendations via UGS to relevant School (point 5D).
15. *Urge updating of websites managed by Money Smarts* to better convey total costs of attendance at graduate and professional programs.

<sup>2</sup> Please note IUB GPSG [Resolution](#) on Resources for Graduate Mental Health Care.

<sup>3</sup> The CGS released a report on Grad Mental Health in April 2021 ([pdf](#)).

16. *Mentorship guidelines and training (point 5E)*: Acquire the UGS handbook for mentoring. Informed by the handbook, the GIC should remain engaged in creation and implementation of mentor training and guidelines. It should coordinate with similar efforts, e.g., CGO's Working Group on Mentoring and Retention [contact: CoAS AD Padraic Kenney: [Spring 2021 report](#)]. Topics for consideration include: (i) becoming a clearinghouse for common practices among grad programs (committee meeting structures, handbooks, IDPs, etc.); (ii) enforcement of creation of Advisory Committees and mandatory yearly committee meetings (Advisory and Research) for PhD students; (iii) evaluation of training requirements for Graduate Faculty status.

**(6) Regional representatives** – [Final report](#) | written by Kyoko Takanashi, IUSB (ktakanas@iusb.edu), and Natalia Rybas, IU East (natrybas@iue.edu)

**Charge:** There is presently no formal committee of representatives from regional campuses of the IU system.

*(A) Standing reports on monthly agenda:* The GFC began to receive monthly reports<sup>4</sup> from regional reps. These reports elicited shared concern about UGS fellowships offered to regional campuses. That concern catalyzed meetings with Bianca Evans-Donaldson (Assistant UGS Dean).

**Recommendations/action points from representatives from regional campuses:**

17. *Continue monthly standing reports from regional reps.*

18. *Fellowship information:* UGS and regional reps should prioritize timely communication with appropriate contacts with graduate administrators on regional campuses to maximize use of funds.

19. *Consider creation of a standing or ad hoc committee of regional reps, particularly concerning funding and fellowship matters.*

**(7) Graduate and Professional Student Government** – [Final report](#) from IUB by GPSG President Dakota Coates (dakcoate@indiana.edu) | [Final report](#) from IUPUI by Vice President Alyson Essex (alysessex@iu.edu)

**Charge:** GPSG members provide valuable perspective and insight at each GFC meeting<sup>3</sup>. The GFC enjoys a productive and important relationship with GPSG leadership.

*(A) From IUB GPSG:* As detailed in the final report, the GFC has taken action on some initiatives and resolutions proposed by the GPSG:

(i) Collaboration with GIC produced updated bylaws enhancing student membership on three committees of the GFC (see point 4C above).

(ii) Collaboration with APC also led to creation of leave language in the Bulletin and to the FAQ (see point 2B above).

(iii) The resolution on course information was addressed by the GIC (see point 5D).

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<sup>4</sup> Reports were sought monthly, but crowded agendas sometimes squeezed them out.

- (iv) A resolution on access to [high speed VPN](#) was addressed in collaboration with APC.
- (v) GIC will work on crafting minimal guidelines for transparency in offer letters (see point 5D and rec #14).
- (vi) The mental health resolution is being addressed by the MHTF (see point 5A above).
- (vii) The GFC did not collaborate with IUB GPSG on addressing resolutions on [Food Insecurity](#) and [Graduate Student Marketing](#) (although they both were discussed, and the GFC asked UGS Deans to describe marketing concerns to the University Administration when possible).
- (viii) Other activities and accomplishments of the IUB GPSG are summarized [here](#).

*(B) From IUPUI GPSG:* As described in their [final report](#), IUPUI GPSG:

- (i) Conducted a survey of Graduate Student Experience during Spring 2020 (pre-covid). Results might provide important resources for DEIC and GIC efforts in the future.
- (ii) Continued to urge release of emergency funding for graduate students, and transparency in financial benefits.
- (iii) Continued to seek ways to provide students at IUPUI with enhanced resources for mental health (e.g., 1000 licenses to [Headspace](#)).
- (iv) Created a DEI committee (which perhaps can coordinate with DEIC), a COVID-19 subcommittee that will survey impact of the pandemic on the progress of graduate students.
- (v) Other projects of the IUPUI are summarized in their [final report](#) to the GFC.

## **(8) Other Miscellaneous Activities of the GFC**

*(A) Covid testing at the beginning of the Autumn Semester:* The GFC wrote Dean Wimbush about safety concerns on the IUB campus for covid testing before the start of the Fall 2020 semester (and the start of meetings of the GFC). We received a reply from Robel ([letter](#)).

*(B) Fees:* The GFC discussed concerns about graduate student fees (mandatory, OIS) on numerous occasions. The fee issues frustrate the GFC, because while fees create angst among graduate and professional students, the UGS does not directly control them. Key references: [IUB GPSG Resolution on Fees](#) | [Big 10 OIS fees](#)

### **Recommendations/action points:**

20. *Writing Dean Wimbush:* If covid related concerns involving graduate students arise, the GFC Chair should write Dean Wimbush.

21. *Continued dialogue about fees:* The GFC should continue asking for updates on fee-related matters from the UGS Deans. The GFC should urge UGS Deans to advocate for transparency and openness at the University level concerning fees.

## (9) Practices of the GFC – crafted by GFC Chair Spencer Hall (sprhall@iu.edu)

**Logistics:** During the 2020-21 AY, the GFC implemented a number of small changes to its organization and logistics.

(A) *Meeting time:* We tried holding meetings at different times of the day (Fall 2020: 1-230p; Spring 2021: 300-430p) to minimize impact of GFC meetings on parents of children attending school online during the pandemic.

(B) *Meeting method:* All meetings were held by Zoom and recorded. Transcripts of the meeting and the chat (edited) were provided via Canvas.

(C) *Creation of a listserv:* We used [GFC\\_Members-L@iu.edu](mailto:GFC_Members-L@iu.edu) to communicate as group.

(D) *Communication with constituents (DGSs and Directors of Grad Programs):* We discussed ways of communicating with our constituents. The GFC is largely invisible – we do not report directly with DGSs and Graduate Faculty. However, we never formally implemented a way of reaching them (e.g., a listserv) or never crafted a written form of communication (e.g., a newsletter).

### **Recommendations/action points from the Executive Committee:**

#### **22. Suggestions for logistics – ways to run the GFC effectively in the future:**

(A) *Meeting time:* Stick to the 330-500p slot on the third Monday of each month. Ensure that all nominated candidates for a position on the Council understand that the set meeting time.

(B) *Meeting method:* Continue running the GFC via Zoom after the pandemic. It equalizes participation by all, from each campus.

(C) *Maintain the listserv:* The Vice Chair can update and maintain the listserv and pass ownership/log-in credentials to the next Vice Chair.

(D) *Communication with constituents:* Rather than write a newsletter, consider seeing if a member of the Executive Committee could present to DGSs at key meetings (e.g., at the DGS meeting run in the College). Encourage UGS to summarize and promote GFC actions in twice-yearly newsletters. Continue asking UGS to archive agendas and minutes of monthly meetings on the [GFC's public website](#).

(E) *Timing of Distribution of items:* We advocate striving for this schedule:

- Collect agenda items two weeks in advance of the GFC meeting.
- Distribute all items with the agenda to the Council one week in advance of the meeting.

(F) *Consultation with those outside the Council:* Consider monthly check-ins with key UGS staff who may provide information about looming concerns of grad students (e.g., GMC Directors at IUB and IUPUI, Assistant Vice Provost for Student Development, etc.)

## (10) Appendix

### (A) *Meeting agendas and minutes:*

September 2020 – [agenda](#) | [minutes](#) | [recording](#)

October 2020 – [agenda](#) | [minutes](#) | [recording](#)

November 2020 – [agenda](#) | [minutes](#) | [recording](#)  
December 2020 – [agenda](#) | [minutes](#) | [recording](#)  
January 2021 – [agenda](#) | [minutes](#) | [recording](#)  
February 2021 – [agenda](#) | [minutes](#) | [recording](#)  
March 2021 – [agenda](#) | [minutes](#) | [recording](#)  
April 2021 – [agenda](#) | [minutes](#) | [recording](#)

*(minutes from April 2021 must be approved in Sept 2021)*

*(B) GFC Roster and Committee Assignments:*

- The original GFC roster for the 2020-2021 academic year [is posted here](#).  
Alyson Essex became the IUPUI GPSG representative in January 2021.  
Kyoko Takanashi became IUSB representative in January 2021 (replacing Lee Kahan).
- All committees assignments [are recorded here](#).

*(C) Final reports from previous academic years:*

- AY 2019-20: [GFC](#) | [APC](#) | [Awards](#) | [DEIC](#) | [GIC](#) | [GPSG](#)
- AY 2018-19: [GFC](#) | [APC](#) | [Awards](#) | [DEIC](#) | [GIC](#) | [GPSG](#)