

IU Graduate Faculty Council Final Report for AY 2018-2019

*Submitted to Dean James C. Wimbush by
Rebecca J. Slotegraaf, Chair of the Graduate Faculty Council
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In 2018-2019, the Graduate Faculty Council addressed several areas, including the selection of graduate awards, IU graduate program use of the GRE in admissions decisions, transfer credit policy, and financial issues facing graduate students. In addition, the strategic emphasis throughout the year centered on graduate student mental health issues. Although the general focus was consistent across the Council's efforts, much work is accomplished through its standing committees.

Committee charges, decisions, and recommendations

The Awards Committee is charged with reviewing applications for award competitions throughout the academic year. This committee **selected recipients of graduate awards** for several awards, including the Distinguished Masters Award, the Herbert Fellowship, and the Wells Graduate Fellowship. It was discussed that role of the Awards Committee should be to recommend the recipients of the awards, along with rationale, to the full Council for a formal vote and then submit these names to the Dean of the Graduate School. The workload of this committee is high, considering the number of applications for each award. For example, the Wells Graduate Fellowship, which includes a \$42,000 award, received 25 applications. Moving forward, one recommendation from this committee is to reapportion the workload, possibly across all members of the GFC (e.g., with each GFC member expected to be involved in at least one fellowship/award), due to the significant amount of work involved in reviewing applicants for the different awards.

The duties of the Diversity Issues Committee are to review the state of diversity within the graduate programs at IU and develop goals for inclusion. This year, the committee was charged with conducting a survey to learn more about **use of the GRE in graduate program admissions decisions**. The survey was designed, with feedback from the entire Graduate Faculty Council, and sent to graduate program personnel in Spring 2019. Results were received from 78 programs administered by the University Graduate School (67.5% on the Bloomington campus, 29% at IUPUI, and less than 4% from other campuses). Across the programs responding, most offer a doctoral degree (50.8%) or Master's degree (42.9%), and the remaining offer MFA or professional degrees. Results indicate that most programs (over 83%) require that graduate applicants submit GRE scores, and in some cases applicants may submit other test scores (e.g., MCAT, GMAT) instead of the GRE. An overwhelming majority (96.2%) consider their admissions practices holistic. On average, the most important factors in admissions decisions are fit with faculty strength/expertise, undergraduate and graduate GPAs, letters of recommendation, and clarity of students interests (though there is significant variation across programs). On average, GRE scores ranked 9th among 12 possible factors in admissions. However, fewer than half of programs that

require the GRE have considered dropping the requirement. Recommendations based on these results: distribute a summary to all IU graduate programs that includes disaggregated results by type of degree and discipline; encourage programs to assess the association of GRE scores with program success within their own programs; arrange a webinar on holistic admissions processes hosted by the University Graduate School.

The responsibility of the Academic Policy Committee is to make recommendations to the Council regarding development and review of academic policies. This committee focused on determining the frequency of academic policy changes and the transfer credit policy. It was determined that the GFC does not have a policy in place regarding frequency of revisiting policies, and determined this would be a good topic for the Graduate Initiatives Committee in the future. In terms of the **transfer credit policy**, at issue is the number of credit hours that students are allowed to transfer from another graduate institution and use toward an IU Master's degree. The policy clearly states that students can transfer up to 30 credit hours from other graduate institutions to use toward the 90 credit hours required for nomination to candidacy for the PhD. The concern for the Master's degree is that the 8 credits for transfer is a holdover from when most courses were four credit hours. The Academic Policy Committee recommended the transfer credit policy for the Master's degree allow up to 9 credit hours (maximum). This committee also has recommendations for next year: bring the new transfer credit policy to a full GFC vote, if it constitutes a policy change; review existing English language proficiency procedures for international students, how it compares across graduate programs at IU in terms of certifying language proficiency, and whether such processes could be streamlined and improved.

The duties of the Graduate Initiatives Committee are to review current activities and propose new initiatives. This year, this committee focused on graduate student funding and the overall **financial issues facing graduate students**. This topic was also being addressed by several other groups on the Bloomington campus, including the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG), the College of Arts and Sciences, and the IUB Graduate School in a committee that was organized by the Associate Dean of the University Graduate School in Bloomington, David Daleke. The goal of this committee is to gather insight into the financial health of our graduate students. An extensive online questionnaire will be sent to graduate students, and work on this topic will continue into the next academic year. The Graduate Initiatives Committee also proposed support for the IU Graduate School to encourage development of **interdisciplinary graduate degrees**, and encourages continual support for interdisciplinary Master's and PhD degrees. This committee also generated a report summarizing the Council's discussions and recommendations regarding graduate student mental health.

Graduate Student Mental Health: Discussions, Decisions, and Recommendations

The Graduate Faculty Council discussed several aspects on the challenges facing graduate students, and the accessibility to **mental health** services on campus. The topic is an important one facing graduate students at IU and at campuses across the country. Resources for understanding the underlying issues are starting to become more prevalent, and various resources were made available to all members of the Graduate Faculty Council during our

discussions this year (these resources are also now housed on the Canvas site for future Council members). Throughout the year, the Council also heard from the IUB Director of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Denise Hayes, as well as the IUB GPSG Health and Wellness Officer to gain their insights. Although IU engaged a Mental Health Taskforce in 2017, much of the focus was on undergraduate students. Therefore, the Council determined that there was a growing need to assess challenges and make recommendation for graduate students.

Based on our discussions, the Council has several recommendations for how to improve services for students:

1. Using the Graduate School website, offer a centralized location describing mental health services available to graduate students, including services offered through CAPS.
2. Increase the number of free individual counseling sessions to a minimum of six. Currently, the number varies by campus (two free sessions per semester in Bloomington vs. six free sessions at IUPUI), and experts indicate that six sessions would be considered “brief” behavioral therapy.
3. Identify a more private location for graduate students to receive CAPS sessions. For a graduate student who is currently a Teaching Assistant or AI, visiting the central CAPS location would be a deterrent given the stigma surrounding mental health (since the graduate student may risk seeing one of their undergraduate students at the central CAPS location).
4. Address potential policies associated with AI/RA positions when a student may require a mental health/medical leave.
5. Create a new Mental Health Task Force that focuses specifically on graduate students.

Other Council topics

Voting for the next year’s GFC members typically occurs in March of the Spring semester. However, problems arose regarding electronic invitation, and some campuses did not receive the invitation to nominate individuals for the 2019-20 Council, and the deadline was therefore extended. However, two campuses (IUSB and IUNW) did not submit any names for nomination. Follow-up invitations from the IUB Graduate School eventually led to the sufficient nominations so that a full IU campus vote could occur. This vote occurred during the summer, and the GFC for 2019-20 has full membership.

At the final meeting of the academic year, members of the Council raised the issue of the meeting time for the Council meetings. With family commitments, some members recommended exploring whether there might be a better time for the meetings that would also not conflict with teaching responsibilities.

Attached is the roster of the 2018-19 GFC, including committee assignments, committee responsibilities, and officer positions. At our final meeting, new officers were elected for the 2019-20 Council. The new Chair is Mary Waldron (IUB), Vice-chair is Dominique Galli (IUPUI), and Secretary is Lessie Frazier (IUB).

Summary of the Council's Recommendations

- Reapportion the workload for the Awards Committee so that all award recommendations are not housed within one committee.
- To reinforce the committee's mission, rename the "Diversity Issues Committee" as the "Diversity and Inclusion Committee".
- Have the Diversity and Inclusion Committee complete survey analysis of GRE use by type of degree and discipline.
- Distribute a summary of the GRE use survey results to all IU graduate programs, and include disaggregated results by type of degree and discipline.
- Encourage programs to assess the association of GRE scores with program success within their own programs.
- Arrange a webinar on holistic admissions processes hosted by the University Graduate School.
- Have the Graduate Initiative Committee create a policy regarding frequency of revisiting policies, and submit to full Council for a vote.
- Bring the new transfer credit policy to a full GFC vote, if it constitutes a policy change.
- Review existing English language proficiency procedures for international students, how it compares across graduate programs at IU in terms of certifying language proficiency, and whether such processes could be streamlined and improved.
- Analyze results from the graduate student financial health survey, and make recommendations based on these results.
- Continue discussion of interdisciplinary graduate degrees.
- Create a new Mental Health Task Force that focuses specifically on graduate students, with task force membership comprised of members representing IU mental health experts and stakeholders, and whose charge will be to make more specific recommendations.
- Explore whether a different meeting time on the third Monday of each month would be more convenient for Council members.

On behalf of the Graduate Faculty Council, we look forward to another productive year in 2019-20.

2018-2019 GRADUATE FACULTY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT

2018-19 Council Member	Campus	Unit	Academic Policy	Awards	Graduate Initiatives	Diversity	Executive Committee
Bauer, Margaret	IUPUI	IN-1	X				
Bender, Alan	IUB	BL-1		Chair			
Blazer-Yost, Bonnie	IUPUI	IN-6			X		
Bourke, Mary	Regional	KO	X				
Buchenot, Andy (alternate)	IUPUI	IN-2	X				
Charnes, Linda	IUB	BL-7		X			
Frazier, Lessie	IUB	BL-6				X	
Galli, Dominique	IUPUI	IN-3				X	
Gershkoff-Stowe, Lisa	IUB	BL-3			X		
Helton, Edwina	Regional	EA				X	
Ivan, Mircea	IUPUI	IN-1		X			
King, Stacie	IUB	BL-2	Chair				
Kovacik, Karen (sabbatical)	IUPUI	IN-2	X				
Liu, Yan	IUPUI	IN-1		X			
McLeod, Jane	IUB	BL-2				Chair	
Ossi, Massimo	IUB	BL-5	X				
Pavalko, Fred	IUPUI	IN-1			Chair		
Pegram, Scooter	Regional	NW			X		
Pierce, Barbara	IUPUI	IN-4				X	Vice-chair
Rooney, Patrick	IUPUI	IN-5	X				
Shackelford, Scott	IUB	BL-4		X			
Shepherd, Terry	Regional	SB		X			Secretary
Slotegraaf, Rebecca	IUB	BL-4	X				Chair
Van Zee, Liese	IUB	BL-1			X		
Waldron, Mary	IUB	BL-8			X		
Wille, Diane	Regional	SE		X			

From the Bylaws regarding committees:

Academic Policy Committee

It shall be the responsibility of this committee to make recommendations to the Council regarding development and review of academic policies of the University Graduate School.

Awards Committee

The duties of the Awards Committee shall be to review applications for the annual award competitions administered by the School, and to review applications for external award competitions.

Graduate Initiatives Committee

The duties of the Graduate Initiatives Committee shall be to review the current activities of the School and the Graduate Council and propose new initiatives as appropriate. The Committee shall also make recommendations to the Council regarding the introduction of new graduate degrees or graduate certificate programs developed on any campus in the Indiana University system. As appropriate, the committee shall also make recommendations to the Council to amend the Constitution of the Graduate Faculty and to revise Council Bylaws.

Diversity Issues Committee

The duties of the Diversity Issues Committee shall be to review the current state of diversity within the graduate programs at IU, including both faculty and students. The Diversity Issues Committee develops goals for inclusion and diversity in the University Graduate School and advises the Dean and Associate Deans of the UGS on issues related to diversity and inclusion.