

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

College of Engineering and Physical Sciences
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April 16, 2024

TO: Professor Robert Sprague, Chair, University of Wyoming Faculty Senate
FROM: Chair, University of Wyoming Graduate Council
SUBJECT: Graduate Council Report for Academic Year 2023-2024

Dear Chair Sprague,

As a Standing Committee of the University of Wyoming (UW) Faculty Senate (FS), the Graduate Council (referred to as the Council) strives to ‘*support and report to the Faculty Senate*’, per UW Regulation 2-301. The Council has fulfilled its obligations in accordance with the functions, powers, and composition described in the Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure on the Establishment of Faculty Senate Committees, as outlined below:

Functions: “The Council shall recommend the broad policies concerning the overall University function in graduate education and the University requirements for graduate degrees. It shall advise the Faculty Senate on any proposed changes in UW Regulations which would affect graduate programs.”

Powers: “The committee shall receive proposals and requests for recommendations from the Faculty Senate, the President, the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Executive Vice President for Research and Economic Development. The Academic Planning Committee may instigate its own inquiries into areas of academic concern. The committee will forward its recommendations to the Faculty Senate, to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and to other appropriate groups or individuals. All substantive committee actions will be reported to the Faculty Senate regularly.”

Composition: “The Graduate Council shall consist of 16 members, 14 of whom shall be members of the faculty distributed among the colleges as follows: Agriculture and Natural Resources 2, Arts and Sciences 2, Business 2, Education 2, Engineering and Applied Science 2, Health Sciences 2, Law 1, ENR 1. Two graduate students chosen by the Council shall also be members. College representatives shall be chosen by each college in a manner similar to that used to elect members of college reappointment, tenure and promotion committees (see UW Regulation 2-7.) College representatives shall have terms of office of three years. Student members shall have one-year terms of office. If possible, college representatives shall have staggered terms. Ex officio members of the Graduate Council shall include: the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, the Director of the American Heritage Center, and the Dean of University Libraries or their designees. The Vice Provost for Graduate Education will serve as liaison with the Office of Academic Affairs. The Chair of this Council shall serve as an ex officio member of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. The Chair of this Council or designee shall serve on the Academic Planning Committee and the University Course Review Committee of the Faculty Senate.”

In the 2023-24 academic year, the Council members included:

- College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources: Professor David Christianson and one vacant position
- College of Arts and Sciences: Professors Rachel Sailor and Sandy Hsu
- College of Business: Professor Linda Price and one vacant position
- College of Education: Professors Peter Moran and Courtney McKim
- College of Engineering and Physical Sciences: Professors Elliot Hulley and Saman Aryana (Chair)

- College of Health Sciences: Professors Jared Bushman (Chair-Elect) and Kelly Simonton
- College of Law: Professor Temple Stoellinger
- The Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources: Professor Temple Stoellinger
- Graduate Students: the Council faculty members selected Sylvie Hansen to serve as the Council M.S. representative and Amanda Anzovino as the Council Ph.D. representative, with both appointments approved October 18, 2023.

In the 2023-24 academic year, the Council undertook and accomplished a host of activities in service of graduate education across UW. Decisions and recommendations of the Council were communicated expeditiously to Chair Sprague of the UW FS and VP and Dean Ahern of the School of Graduate Education, as appropriate. The following is a list of these activities:

- The Council reviewed and recommended to VP and Dean Ahern that Professor of Practice, Dr. Brian Toelle, be allowed to serve as a Required Member, including as Co-Chair, on graduate committees within the Energy & Petroleum Engineering graduate program. This recommendation was approved by the Council on October 18, 2023.
- The Council diligently developed the proposed Bylaws of the School of Graduate Education. These bylaws incorporated feedback from meetings with the Dean's Council (Council Chair met on November 21, 2023), and the FS Executive Committee (Council Chair met on November 13, 2023). The proposed Bylaws were approved by the Council on December 8, 2023, and were promptly transmitted to the FS for their consideration.
- The Council reviewed a request by Professor Lars Kotthoff's for exceptions to the required credit hours in formal coursework for Ph.D. degrees at UW, including a potential reduction to zero credit hours in exceptional cases. This review followed a similar proposal from the previous year, which was rejected on February 10, 2023. On December 1, 2023, the Council voted against the recent proposal to decrease the Ph.D. coursework credit hours. The Council also provided a summary of feedback and rationale for its decisions on both occasions.
- The Council elected Temple Stoellinger as the GC Chair-Elect for the 2024-25 academic year on January 26, 2024.
- The Council reviewed the UW Regulation 2-13: Low Producing Programs Recommendations dated November 22, 2023. The Council voiced general concern over the loss of diversity in offerings, especially in social sciences. However, due to a lack of context and background information provided to the Council, the Council determined that it was not well-positioned to provide meaningful feedback to the FS (communicated to the FS on February 23, 2024).
- The Council reviewed a proposal to reduce the minimum number of Ph.D. Dissertation Committee members from five to four as part of the proposed Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure on Graduate Committee Formation. The Council voted in favor of this change on February 26, 2024.
- The Council reviewed two graduate program proposals from the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences: **1)** M.S. in Quantum Information Science & Engineering, proposed by Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS), Astronomy and Physics (A&P), and the School of Computing (SoC); and **2)** M.S. in Artificial Intelligence by EECS and SoC. After meeting with Professors Bryan Shader (EECS), Suresh Muknahallipatna (EECS), Jinke Tang (P&A), and Director Gabrielle Allen (SoC), the Council voted on February 26, 2024, to support the proposals, contingent on the following issues being addressed:

- i. Clarifying the hybrid delivery mode for Plan A and Plan B, and providing additional language, possibly as part of the assessment/evaluation steps, to ensure students' competency in basic research methodology skills. It was noted that the M.S. in QISE does not plan to offer a hybrid research/Plan A degree, whereas the M.S. Plan A in AI may be delivered online.
 - ii. Clarifying the research credits (5960) as it relates to Plan A (thesis-based) and Plan B (coursework-only).
 - iii. For M.S. in AI: Include language to emphasize that, while Ethics is offered as an elective, it is integrated throughout the entire core program.
- The Council reviewed a proposed Ph.D. program in English and met with Professors Kelly Kinney and Nancy Small from the English Department. The Council voted in support of the proposal on March 22, 2024.
 - Two Council members served on the selection committee for the Distinguished Graduate Scholars and McNair Scholars GA programs.
 - The Council reviewed applications for the following awards and made recommendations to the School of Graduate Education for their consideration:
 - i. Distinguished Graduate Faculty Mentor Award [3 nominees]
 - ii. Mid-Career Graduate Faculty Mentor Award [3 nominees]
 - iii. Early-Career Graduate Faculty Mentor Award [2 nominees]
 - iv. John P. Ellbogen Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Awards [7 nominees]
 - v. Outstanding Master's Thesis Award [3 nominees]
 - vi. Outstanding Dissertation Award [3 nominees]
 - The Council heard from VP and Dean Ahern and Enrique (Enjo) Salonga, a Ph.D. Student and the Chair of the Graduate DEI Task Force, on April 1, 2024, and April 15, 2024, regarding a draft Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure (SAPP) on Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Council provided feedback on the content, language, and the possibility of developing a mission statement instead of a SAPP. The Council will consider the revised document based on this feedback in the 2024-25 academic year.

I would like to sincerely thank the members of the Graduate Council for their efforts. I am also deeply grateful to VP and Dean Ahern for attending the meetings and providing invaluable feedback and guidance during the Council's deliberations. Additionally, I wish to recognize the leadership provided by FS Chair Sprague. Last but not least, I am thankful to Sarah Wolverton from the School of Graduate Education for her support and administrative assistance. I truly appreciate the time and energy this wonderful group of colleagues has invested in advancing and strengthening the pillars of graduate education at the University of Wyoming. I sincerely wish Professors Jared Bushman and Temple Stoellinger great success in their roles as the incoming Chair and Chair-Elect of the Council, respectively.

Respectfully,

Saman A Aryana

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