The regular meeting of the Graduate Council was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 19, 2013 in 110 AIME Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Dr. Melondie Carter, Dr. Linda Cummins (sub Dr. Silas Blackstock),
Dr. Jason DeCaro, Dr. Susan Gaskins,
Dr. Andrew Graetinger, Dr. Jonathon Halbesleben,
Dr. Allison Hetzel, Dr. Burcu Keskin,
Dr. Linda Knol (sub – Dr. Jeannine Lawrence), Dr. James Leeper,
Dr. Mary Meares, Dr. Debra Nelson-Gardell,
Dr. Ion Stancu, Dr. Heath Turner,
Dr. John Vincent, Dr. Mark Weaver,
Dr. Frederick Whiting, Dr. Vivian Wright

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Dr. Andrew Billings, Dr. Phillip Bishop,
Dr. Robert Findlay, Dr. John Giggie,
Dr. Maria Hernandez-Reif, Dr. Rick Houser,
Dr. Richard Houston, Dr. Aaron Kuntz,
Dr. Louis Marino, Dr. Jeffrey Parker,
Dr. Joseph Weber

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:
Prof. Steve Miller
Dr. Louis A. Pitschmann

GRADUATE SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:
Dr. John Schmitt, Associate Dean
Dr. Andrew Goodliffe, Assistant Dean
Ms. Beth Yarbrough, Registrar

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE(S):
Mr. Derrick Stokes
Mr. Robert Herron

GUEST(S):
Dr. Philo Hutcheson
Dr. Claire Major

Dean David Francko welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

I. Approval of the Minutes-

Dr. Francko asked if there were corrections to the September 24, 2013 minutes. Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as written – all approved, none abstained, and none opposed.

II. Reports from Graduate Council Committees –

A. Admission and Recruitment Committee – Dr. Andrew Goodliffe reported on two new University Scholar (US) proposals; The US proposal submitted by the Geography department has been approved and the US proposal submitted by the Journalism department still needs
The Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering department requested a GRE waiver to accommodate officers who have completed the US Navy CEC Program. The officer training skill gained through the CEC Program negates the need for a GRE test score. The waiver has been approved. Other branches of the military will be considered if proposed. If a department submits a proposal that meets the current template/standards, approval is easier and quicker.

B. Fellowship & Scholarship Committee – no report.

C. Teaching, Research and Service Award Committee – no report.

D. Program and Degree Committee and Research and New Programs (combined) –

Dr. Jason DeCaro reported that two new proposals have been submitted and recommended for approval.

The College of Education submitted a proposal for a Certificate in College Teaching. Many non-education programs across the state do not have teaching in their discipline, and this certificate would provide an opportunity for any UA graduate student to receive teaching credentials to teach at the college level. This certificate would fill a gap in teacher education and improve a student’s teaching ability and employability. This concept was mentioned at the Deans’ Council meeting, and other UA colleges and schools showed interest in this program. Onsite videotaping will be used in the content-related teaching. All courses will be taught face-to-face. After review, the committee recommends approval. A motion was made and seconded to accept the new certificate proposal as written. All Graduate Council members present voted to approve the proposal - none opposed or abstained.

The second proposal was submitted by the Graduate School to discontinue the master’s candidacy requirement. Historically, master’s degree programs took longer to complete than they do today, and candidacy served a more valuable function for faculty to determine which students may proceed to complete their coursework-only master’s and which may proceed to writing a thesis. That has changed in the last several decades, with master’s degree programs compressing to three or even two semesters. Master’s candidacy has morphed for most faculty and students into a final-semester form to complete.

We surveyed SEC schools to determine their master’s candidacy policies. The table of SEC schools shows that the University of Tennessee is currently the only school other than UA that requires a formal candidacy application at the master’s level.

The proposal to delete master’s candidacy has no effect on the doctoral candidacy requirement, and departments may retain master’s candidacy if they feel that it is useful and are willing to monitor it themselves. No longer will master’s candidacy be monitored by the Graduate School.

A motion was made and seconded to pass the proposal as written. All Graduate Council members present voted to approve the proposal - none opposed or abstained.

III. Reports from Dean’s Office and Academic Affairs -

A. Dean David Francko – Dean David Francko reported on the application numbers for the Fall 2014 semester. Even though the numbers were down at the beginning of the Fall 2013 semester, as of today, applications for Fall 2014 total 1,110, which is 11% above this date last year. These numbers are very close to breaking the record number of applications received, set in the Fall 2011 semester. The decrease in applications at the beginning of the year is a trend affecting all schools in the SEC. In Dr. Bonner’s recent Presidential address, she emphasized that for the University a high-priority goal is an increase in graduate enrollment. Dean Francko strongly encouraged departments to step up their recruitment
activity, since departmental contacts with prospective graduate students is arguably the primary factor for determining which graduate prospects become applicants and are admitted.

The Graduate School has set a record each year of the Research and Travel Grants Program. To date this year (2013-14), 292 students already have been funded for a combined total (Grad School and department) of over $204,000.

B. Associate Dean John Schmitt – Associate Dean John Schmitt reported on the Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards. The colleges have submitted their nominations, which are now being reviewed online by the two committees. All nominations for the other five awards—Outstanding Teaching by a Master’s Student, Outstanding Teaching by a Doctoral Student, Outstanding Research by a Master’s Student, Outstanding Research by a Doctoral Student and Outstanding Service by a Graduate Student are due January 13, 2014. Procedures may be found online at http://graduate.ua.edu/awards.

Program Reviews are well underway, and another two colleges are set to begin the OAA review process for all of their degree programs in the spring. Procedures for program reviews are found at (http://graduate.ua.edu/apr). In recent years there have been many improvements in the program review process. OIRA (Office of Institution Research and Assessment) and the Graduate School both provide data from their databases for the departments to include in their self-study reports, and various numbers are pre-populated in the department’s reports for them. Academic Program Review has greatly assisted reaffirmation of the University’s assessment and institutional effectiveness activities by SACS in its accreditation reaffirmations since the mid-1980s.

The Workshop for New GTAs for the 2014-2015 academic year will be held on August 14-15, 2014. In addition to a slate of outstanding presentations by leading UA faculty and staff, nine breakout rooms with videotaping sessions will provide new GTAs the opportunity to watch themselves while teaching and receive oral and written feedback from peers and Graduate Teaching Fellows. The feedback is important for improving the new GTAs’ classroom presentation skills, as well as their skills in making presentations of their research. Dr. Schmitt asked that all departments avoid August 14-15 (the Thursday and Friday before classes begin) when scheduling meetings for GTAs.

C. Assistant Dean Andrew Goodliffe – Assistant Dean Andrew Goodliffe announced that the information for Round #1 Graduate Council Fellowship nominations is due January 16, 2014. The nomination process will be online this year, and different components will automatically be pulled into the online process.

Recruitment definitely has increased the application numbers. The Graduate School bought advertisements in a few publications in specific fields, and these have been effective. Several departments have done the same. For example, Geological Sciences has seen a doubling in the number of applications after placing an advertisement in a field-related publication. AppReview is the new online application review system. Some departments are using the system already, and the plan is for AppReview to be online with all departments by early 2014. So far, the feedback has been positive. Review can begin as soon as the application is received – even if not all of the required materials have been submitted. Specific departmental admission requirements are being adjusted in the system currently. Any errors detected by the departments are being corrected.

Admissions information is uploaded by different means. The Graduate School scans and uploads paper transcripts. GRE/GMAT scores are directly uploaded to Banner, along with letters of recommendation and related materials. Students can scan an unofficial transcript to expedite the process, but an official transcript will still need to be submitted from any other college/university in which the student completed 15 or more hours of coursework.

OnBase scanning software is with a 3rd party company. Firefox and Internet Explorer are not being supported as they should be – but the company is working on it. Google Chrome cannot be used at all.
The **3MT Finals** will be tomorrow night, Wednesday, November 20, 2013, at 6:00 p.m. in 159 Russell Hall. The 15 finalists will be competing. The judging panel has been filled with distinguished members. There also will be a People’s Choice Award determined by vote of the audience. The Graduate School and Graduate Student Association will provide approximately $4,500 prize money. These include for the winner an all-expenses paid trip to the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools’ 3MT finals in San Antonio, Texas.

This competition has been instrumental in preparing a number of UA doctoral students for job interviews and presentations. We are working to secure School sponsors for next year’s competition. Over 100 doctoral students participated – more than any other school in SEC. The video recording from the final competition will be put on the Graduate School website. We know from the experiences of other 3MT institutions and UA’s early experiences with 3MT that it is a great recruitment tool.

**IV. Reports from Standing University Committees** – no reports

There were no standing committee reports.

**V. Old Business**

There was no old business.

**VI. New Business**

Dean Francko recognized Robert Herron as the GSA president. Robert serves on the Council’s Program and Degree, Research and New Programs Committee and has been instrumental in rebuilding the GSA. Seventy-three graduate students attended the last GSA meeting. There is one more event on the horizon - Women in STEM (WISE) program. Details will be available at a later date.

Currently, there is talk of proposing an Interdisciplinary master’s degree program. Although a proposal has not been submitted, this will be an issue that will soon be reviewed.

Dean Francko adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.