The regular meeting of the Graduate Council was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 25, 2014 in 110 AIME Building

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Dr. Phillip Bishop, Dr. Melondie Carter,
Dr. Linda Cummins, Dr. Jason DeCaro,
Dr. Robert Findlay, Dr. Susan Gaskins,
Dr. John Giggie, Dr. Jonathon Halbesleben,
Dr. Rick Houser, Dr. Burcu Keskin,
Dr. Linda Knol, Dr. Aaron Kuntz,
Dr. James Leeper, Dr. Mary Meares,
Dr. Debra Nelson-Gardell, Dr. Jeffrey Parker,
Dr. C. Heath Turner, Dr. John Vincent,
Dr. Mark Weaver, Dr. Frederick Whiting,
Dr. Vivian Wright

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Dr. Andrew Billings, Dr. Andrew Graettinger,
Dr. Maria Hernandez-Reif, Dr. Allison Hetzel,
Dr. Richard Houston, Dr. Louis Marino,
Dr. Ion Stancu, Dr. Joseph Weber

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:
Prof. Steve Miller

GRADUATE SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:
Dr. John Schmitt, Associate Dean
Dr. Andrew Goodliffe, Assistant Dean
Mr. Eric Harris, Registrar

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

GUEST(S):
Dr. Charles Sox
Dr. Steve Thoma

Dean David Francko welcomed everyone

I. Approval of the Minutes-

Dr. Francko asked for any corrections or changes to the minutes from last Graduate Council meeting. Having heard none, motion was made to approve the minutes from November 19, 2013. All approved, none opposed, none abstained.
II. Reports from Graduate Council Committees

A. Admissions & Recruitment (Dr. Robert Findlay, Chair)

Admissions and Recruitment Committee is working on a proposal for a new Conditional Admission with new language. If approved, graduate students from non-English speaking countries that are being vetted by their respective home governments but can’t meet the current English requirement, would be allowed to come for one year. After that year, they would take the language tests in order to continue in their studies. The proposal is geared at informing Graduate Council members and departments so that valuable feedback may be garnered in order to bring future proposal to fruition.

Dean Francko added that it is important to streamline the international student funnel to UA. Provost support is there for this sort of thing if it works. He stressed the need to do it right.

Dr. Andy Goodliffe added that this proposal would address a common concern. He gave the example of Middle Eastern students that could potentially benefit from this sort of measure. The intent is to bring the proposed new conditional admission to the full council in April. A question was asked about any possible downsides. One foreseeable problem is that it could leave students hanging after a year if they were still unable to meet the English requirement after a year on campus.

B. Fellowship & Scholarship (Dr. Debra Nelson-Gardell, Chair)

Dr. Debra Nelson-Gardell began by commending the automated, online format for committee review. She thanked Graduate School for their responsiveness. For Round I there were 48 nominations/23 awarded. The committee finished the Research & Creative Activity with 56 nominations/19 awarded. The council was made aware of deadlines for current and future rounds: Thursday 2/27 for Round II and 3/20 for Round III. The council was urged to remind all departments about submissions and nominations. In closing, she again stressed the ease of use with the online system and offered that it feels good to give money to students.

C. Teaching, Research & Service Awards (Dr. Vivian Wright, Chair)

Dr. Vivian Wright concurred with Dr. Nelson-Gardell that the online system is working well. She made mention of the five awards for outstanding teaching, research and service. She also noted that there is now a $1,000 check given to each, as opposed to the previous $500. Winners will be presented checks and framed certificates during Honors Week.

Dr. John Schmitt noted that the nominees are already winners in their respective departments and colleges, and those that do not win a UA-wide award receive an “Award of Merit” to recognize their accomplishment. The thesis and dissertation selection committees work from November through January to read, evaluate and rank the nominees and select a winner for each of the two UA awards. He announced the two UA winners for outstanding thesis and outstanding dissertation. While difficult to select, it is clear that we have “super students” here in our Graduate School. Below are the seven winners:

**Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation**
Henri Jean-Francois Dengah, II
“Finding Success and Health through God – A Study of Cultural Models and Health among Brazilian Pentecostals”
Department of Anthropology
College of Arts and Sciences
Dissertation Chairperson: Dr. William Dressler
Dr. Jason DeCaro introduced four proposals for specializations: MS Degree in Applied Statistics—Statistics Option; MS Degree in Applied Statistics—Analytics Option; MS Degree in Operations Management—Decision Analytics Track; and PhD Degree in Educational Psychology—Educational Neuroscience Concentration. All four proposals were recommended for approval by the committee. Dr. Charles Sox is the original proposer for the three C&BA proposals; Drs. Rick Houser and Steve Thoma are the original proposers of the Educational Neuroscience Concentration in the College of Education. Dean Francko asked the committee if any clarifications were needed on any of the proposals. Having heard none, each proposal was moved for a vote and seconded. All four proposals were passed unanimously.

Dr. DeCaro spoke to the upcoming ADR four-year reviews and mandatory follow-up reports, and perhaps another proposed specialization for the April meeting.

III. Reports from the Dean's Office and Academic Affairs

A. Dean David Francko – Dean Francko reported on the “banner” two weeks that the University of Alabama Graduate School is enjoying. Kudos were handed out at the Conference
of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) regional conference in San Antonio for the work that UA students are doing. Specifically, UA’s Three-Minute Thesis winner, Will Guin, received the People’s Choice Award for his presentation. Dr. Cori Perdue was recognized for the Graduate Parent Support Group (GPS). The GPS was the 2014 recipient of its State Network Leadership Award for the Advancement of Women in Higher Education by the American Council on Education. Dr. Perdue will receive the award at the Women’s Network Leadership Council at their upcoming meeting in San Diego. Dr. Perdue recently won the Penny Allen award at UA. Dean Francko announced that the January 2014 Round of the Research and Travel grants resulted in a new record, thanks in part to matching funds. In the most recent round we have seen 430 students funded for a dollar amount of $275K, compared to 355 students at $225K this time last year. UA is on track to surpass the goal of assisting 900 students with more than $600K.

With regard to recruiting, Dean Francko reported that the Graduate School is currently ahead of last year’s applications by 130 applications or 3%-4%--not too far off the 2012 high point. He urged the departments to process all last minute applications for Summer and Fall 2014. With cutting time to degree, the need to recruit and admit new students is great. Efforts must be redoubled. License Tag Fellowship Scholarship - the call for nominations is already being asked about and will go out earlier than in past years. Nominations are due back in early April. The total dollar amount of awards is unknown at this time, but we should have enough funds for 28 or 29 awards.

**B. Associate Dean John Schmitt** – Dr. Schmitt updated the council on the various ongoing Program Reviews. All departments and degrees in the College of Education had an orientation meeting last week. All departments and degrees under the College of Human Environmental Sciences are having an orientation meeting this week. The year-long reviews of English and History conclude in April.

Dr. Schmitt brought closure to the removal of the Master’s Candidacy requirement for graduation. Positive input has been received from faculty and students. The Master’s Candidacy has been deleted from the A-Z index, our forms for master’s students, and in several department sections of the Graduate Catalog.

The Thesis and Dissertation Seminar, after being twice-postponed (due to snow/ice), was presented last week. A total of 74 thesis and dissertation writers attended.

Assistant Dean Andrew Goodliffe – Dr. Goodliffe spoke to the burgeoning Brazil graduate scholarship program and stated that UA will be participating in it. The program is now offered to the STEM students, and this is something that should be pursued heavily. South America has potential for large growth.

Dr. Goodliffe reported on the reenergized Graduate Student Association. The GSA has been very active with the leadership of Cori Perdue. A recent meeting in 205 Gorgas was very well attended. Student participation is being encouraged. Another effort being led by Dr. Purdue is the summer writing workshop. Dr. Luke Niiler from the Department of English will be assisting. The workshop will run from May 5th to May 22nd. Departments are being asked to support their students with this beneficial effort.

McNair Nominations are due on February 28th. We would like to see good nominations. Finally, Dr. Blake Bedsole will be organizing a new recruitment information session, and we expect to hear from him soon. Dean Francko added that he would like to see this rolled out soon so that in the Fall everything will run smoothly. The aim is to develop a successful model, an exciting and engaging experience for prospective students.

**IV. Reports from Standing University Committees**

No reports from Standing University Committees.
V. Old Business

No old business

VI. New Business

No new business