



**Graduate Board  
Thursday, December 19, 2024  
57 Stodder Hall**

**12:30-2:00 pm**

AGENDA

1. Approval of November 21, 2024 minutes
2. December 10, 2024 Graduate Curriculum Committee report
3. Announcements/updates
  - Introduction of Karyn Soltis-Habeck, Director of Graduate Student Recruitment
  - Graduate Advisor Academy – Richard Roberts
  - Graduate Student Workers' Union update
  - Graduate School financial awards nominations
4. Continued conversation with Vice President and Dean Varahramyan
  - Cross listing of undergraduate and graduate courses
  - Advocacy for research and graduate education
  - Graduate housing costs
  - Other issues?
5. Use of AI in graduate programs
6. Items arising



**Graduate Board**  
**Thursday, November 21, 2024**  
**57 Stodder Hall**

**12:30-2:00 pm**

AGENDA

Meeting called to order: 12:35PM

Attendance: M. Camire, J. Crittenden, S. Delcourt, D. Dryer, N. Emanetoglu, A. Gardner, M. Gardiner, J. Gill, A. Goupee, D. Granke, A. Gray, V. Herbert, G. Miles, S. Morano, W.D. Nichols, B. Peterson, L. Rickard, L. Ross, D. Sandweiss, T. Schwartz, G. Schwieterman, S. Wright, T. Yoo, E Wujcik.

Zoom: J. Riccardi, J. Dimmel, L. Riordan, P. Stechlinski, R. Roberts, E. Teixeira, M. Tajvidi, M. Brichacek, J. Settele, J. Chiarell, K. Varahramyan, T. Bowden, E. Allan, S. Nittel, P. Libby, J. Romero, S. Marzilli

1. Approval of October 24, 2024 minutes
  - From Dan Sandweiss - revisions: To Jacquelyn Gill's comment – "To the GRF Competition"
  - National Science Board – in #2 from guest speaker – George Jacobson's presentation
  - Attendance addition: Jacquelyn Gill

Motion to approve with amendments: Grant Miles

2<sup>nd</sup>: Tom Schwartz

Approved as amended – unanimous with 1 abstention: Shannon Wright

2. November 12, 2024 Graduate Curriculum Committee report

New Courses:

- BEN 605 Professional and Responsible Conduct of Research in Biomedical Science and Engineering
- HTY 580 Indigenous History of North America

- PSY 519 Suicide Prevention
- SED 557 Partnerships with Families: Culturally Responsive Teaching & Interactions

**Modifications:**

- NUR 503 Advanced Health Appraisal and Physical Assessment: Nurse Practitioner
- SED 566 Executive Functioning in Learning

Motion to approve: Grant Miles

2<sup>nd</sup>: Dan Sandweiss

Unanimous approval

3. Update from Vice President and Dean Varahramyan
  - Thank you to the Graduate Board for all ongoing efforts in graduate education and research.
  - There is a lot going on at the University especially related to the SRE (Strategic Re-Envisioning) efforts.
  - Emphasis on both graduate research programs and professional programs related to workforce development. Is there any advice or recommendations from the Board for the Graduate School from a strategic point of view?
  - Professional programs often generate real revenue for the University.
  - Online Doctoral programs are in high demand – if anyone has ideas for growth in these areas and what would be needed for support to make that happen?
  - Can we create additional programs to fill needs within the state of Maine?
  - Demographics – it is becoming harder and more expensive to recruit new students. We have been doing a better job attracting applicants – and growing graduate enrollment – especially at the graduate level – we exceeded 600 for the first time with 605 doctoral students.
  - Some programs are beyond their capacity. However, if there are graduate programs who can accept more students, we can work with them to attract more students.
  - The revenue sharing pilot (GERS) was put on hold due to budgetary constraints. We have been trying to convince the University to reinstate this program or a similar program to help build capacity and encourage enrollment growth.
  - Paying attention to growth at the master's level – numbers have significantly grown over the past 5-6 years (e.g. MBA and data science and engineering).
  - If anyone has suggestions for interdisciplinary programs – especially online, please make those suggestions to Dean Varahramyan and Scott Delcourt.

- Patty Libby – Hannah Carter, Richard Roberts and the UMaine Online team have also been working on a list of program ideas to consider growth.
- Scott Delcourt – Carnegie R1 status priority for PhD students – there is concern that there are some students admitted to PhD programs that should not be – resulting in unintended retention issues.
- Richard Roberts – everyone involved is being asked to do more with less. Maybe there are additional ways we can collaborate.... working closely with the Graduate School to streamline processes and improve efficiency?
- Dean Varahramyan encouraged collaboration with the Graduate School.
- Jessica Riccardi – SRE working group talking about administrative efficiencies – with faculty workload in mind.
- Gail Schwieterman – wondering about quality of the program we are offering with the financial challenges we are facing. Programs rely on cross listing of courses to offer both an undergraduate and a graduate curriculum.
- Jacquelyn Gill noted that some courses cross listed have become concerns for students.
- Dean Varahramyan asked if there is a way to programs to invest in based on objective criteria? Can we reinvest some of the savings we are hoping to realize through SRE? Is the School of Marine Sciences interested in putting together some information that would help us to measure the program' strength and need and define the issues?
- Gail Schwieterman expressed a concern about students having to travel to Portland without financial support to do so.
- Meghan Gardner – primarily online program – constantly flirting with the maximum capacity of our resources. There is increasing pressure to increase caps on courses – and facing faculty burnout.
- Terry Yoo – mentioned that we are asking lecturers to do things we would typically ask tenured professors to do.
- Jacquelyn Gill noted that a couple of faculty searches failed due to non-competitive packages – so we had to move to lecturer hirings just to fill teaching needs.
- Scott Delcourt mentioned the recent news from BU regarding student unionization efforts that resulted in the closure of some PhD programs in humanities and social sciences due to the high cost to offer those programs.
- Tom Schwartz – mentioned not filling faculty positions is causing a bottleneck in courses offered for students.
- William D. Nichols – from Faculty Senate - there is a partial pause on hiring – until SRE is completed in April (tentative). We have put in requests to fill vacant positions – but those have been converted to lecturer positions. Literacy program may not be able to continue – and may have to downsize to a certificate.

- Scott asked for Dean Varahramyan's thoughts on the challenges presented. Dean Varahramyan suggested the following: Programs should look to reduce course redundancies which then might free up to offer new courses. It would be beneficial to come up with a business case to ask for increased financial support for potential high growth graduate programs. (number of students, compared to revenue and the impacts of having fewer students / revenue lost / revenue gained vs. cost of faculty).
- Dean Varahramyan asked if anyone had ideas, to please send to him.
- Scott Delcourt stated that this important discussion needs to continue. There is a disconnect between the program review process and the recommendations in the review reports.
- Terry Yoo – suggested that we follow the Dean's advice and make a business case. Other universities (Memphis) have received endowments from the legislature in the area of +\$15M to support R1 efforts. Can we consider something similar? Applying for endowments from the State? Is this an initiative that we wish to take on?
- Scott Delcourt stated that some research universities have focused on professionalizing many master's degrees and refocusing funds toward PhD programs (e.g. UMass, UConn).
- Mary Ellen Camire – we are getting millions of dollars for athletics - can we appeal for funds for Research and Graduate Studies?
- Tom Schwartz – business case.... our program has doubled PhD enrollment in the past 2 years – and we have only 1.5 faculty lines to support it. I don't know how long we can continue in this manner.
- Jacquelyn Gill – state budget surplus – schools go to legislature to appeal for funds once a year.... UMaine has not been present during those appeals. Is this something that the Graduate School can take on? Appeal for State appropriations.
- Dan Sandweiss – noted that George Criner had made the case with numbers in order to appeal to the legislature. (suggestion – to put together a working group to determine costs and benefits).
- Scott Delcourt – suggested that the President may want to be involved as Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation. Economic data may be available via Jake Ward, VPR's office.
- Grant Miles stated that the group that comes forward could be concerned citizens hoping to appeal to the legislature (much like the Faculty Five).
- Dylan Dryer suggested that the Margaret Chase Smith Center might offer help.
- Scott asked for Jessica Riccardi's help in getting some of this feedback to the SRE process. Scott will also contact Sabrina and James -the SRE project directors).
- Jacqueline Gill suggested that it may not be a formal rule that we cannot go to the legislature.
- Tom Schwartz suggested that BOT policy section 214 indicates that faculty are not able to speak directly to the legislature.

- Orlina Boteva suggested that as private citizens, we can write letters and flood the congressional delegation with our requests.

#### 4. Announcements/updates

- Graduate Student Workers' Union(GWU) update – two primary issues:
  - i. Academic Freedom. The GWU has proposed that graduate workers have the same rights to academic freedom as faculty members.
  - ii. Job Security - GWU has proposed that the minimum assistantship appointment length be nine months or more. Raises the question regarding what to do about summer appointments, or one semester appointments for students who are graduating? Trying to work through unintended consequences.
- Graduate School financial awards process – upcoming
  - i. Dec 9 – assistantship/fellowship nomination deadline
  - ii. Feb 3 – scholarship nomination deadline
- SRE update (covered in general discussion –more to come after the Dec 13 SRE town hall)
- 3MT competition upcoming (winner of our 3MT presents at the Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools competition).

#### 5. Update from OIP –Orlina Boteva

- See slide presentation  
IEI – semester 1 – graduate course + 1 IEI course  
Assistantships & fellowships can now cover IEI courses – this allows international students who need additional English support to take advantage of these courses.  
Testing for graduate admission – Graduate School can recommend conditional admission for students who have not yet attained the required English proficiency. Students take a combination of ESL and academic courses until English proficiency is attained.  
IEI – questions may be sent to Orlina Boteva, Curriculum questions to Erin Kate Sousa, Admissions – Jake Hess.

Nuri Emanetoglu – asked about ESL instruction to help improve English writing skills.

#### 6. New academic program proposals

- Graduate Certificate in Offshore Wind Energy – Andrew Goupee
  - i. Target audience is our current graduate student base
  - ii. Suggestion from Laura Rickard regarding a couple of communications courses offered through CMJ that may be relevant for stakeholder communication.
  - iii. Question from Dan Sandweiss – regarding stakeholder challenges

for the program regarding course offerings & mode of delivery if offered as an unofficial online option (impacts online rate and out of state audiences ability to take classes)

Resolution to move forward

Motion – Tom Schwartz

2<sup>nd</sup> – D. William Nichols

Motion to move forward - unanimously approved as amended

Andrew Goupee abstained from vote

- MBA concentration in Organizational Leadership – Meghan Gardner & Grant Miles
  - i. Working with USM to offer Organizational Leadership option – 8 standard MBA courses + 3 electives offered via USM
  - ii. Val Herbert asked about UMaine programs that are interested in leadership from other disciplines – would they be able to take MBA classes? Meghan encouraged Val to meet separately to discuss options for the Nursing program.
    - 1. Motion- Val Herbert
    - 2. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Tom Schwartz
      - a. Unanimous approval to move forward
- 7. Continued discussion of the use of AI in graduate programs
  - We will discuss at a future meeting – please review.
  - Please share with departments in advance of our next meeting.
- 8. Items arising

Meeting adjourned: 2:00 PM

## **CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT**

**The Curriculum Committee met on December 10th, 2024 and is recommending the following courses to the Graduate Board for approval at its December 19th meeting.**

### ***New Courses:***

**PSE 502** Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources

**SFR 506** Applied Remote Sensing for Forestry

### ***Modifications:***

**ERS 527** Isotope Geology

**NUR 506** Professional Issues in Advanced Practice Nursing

**SFR 695** Graduate Seminar in Wood Science



To: Graduate coordinators, department chairs/school directors, and administrative staff

Re: Graduate Advisor Academy

Date: December 16, 2024

The Graduate School and the Division of Lifelong Learning/UMaineOnline are pleased to announce the release of the [Graduate Advisor Academy training program](#), which is available to graduate faculty through Brightspace. The program was created to provide graduate advisors with training to help inform their work with graduate students and to broaden their awareness around the unique advising needs of adult learners in graduate programs both online and in-person. [Click here for navigation assistance](#) on self-enrolling in this course.

In this self-directed course, advisors will be able to access the online training program at any time and have an opportunity to provide feedback to the course developers to continue providing appropriate and important information for future graduate advisors. The first 45 advisors who complete the course will receive a \$25 UMaine Bookstore gift card.

Many thanks to the advisory committee for their work on this project as well as to the faculty members who provided important feedback in developing this course.

*The Graduate Advisor Academy training program was made possible by the Adult Learner Grant awarded by the University of Maine System. [The grant proposal is available here.](#)*

Please reply to this email with any questions.

Best,  
Crystal

Crystal Burgess | Director of Graduate Communications  
[The University of Maine Graduate School](#)