



**Minutes of the Graduate Council  
June 21, 2021**

**Members in Attendance:**

Ali Beskok, Jodi Cooley, Alan Itkin, Adam Jasienski, Akihito Kamata, Elfi Kraka, Renee McDonald, Brian Molanphy, Alexandra E. Pavlakis, Anthony Petrosino, James E. Quick, Gretchen Smith

*Ex officio members:* Suku Nair, Heather Shaw

**Members Not in Attendance:**

Volkan Otugen, Dinesh Rajan

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**Business:**

- **Results of votes on handbook items and previous meeting minutes:** Prior to the meeting, the Graduate Council voted electronically on two items for the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies Administrative Handbook: “Review of Timeline Extensions for Advancement to Candidacy and Graduation for Ph.D. Students” and “Approval of Graduation and Collection of Graduation Surveys for Ph.D. Students.” The Council also voted by electronically on the April and May meeting minutes. The Administrative Handbook items passed 12-0; the April meeting minutes passed 12-0; the May meeting minutes passed 10-0 with two abstentions (see slides 3-5 on the attached PowerPoint presentation).
- **Ph.D. recruitment grants:** Dr. Itkin went through the proposal for this program, which was revised with Council members comments (see “Ph.D. Recruitment Grant” document attached). Dr. Quick emphasized that this program is to encourage active participation of faculty in recruiting and that this is an experiment—the program may change over time. Several Council members suggested that the program could be made more inclusive of faculty without strong track records of mentoring success, for example junior faculty. As written, those faculty members might feel excluded from applying for these grants. There was some disagreement on whether junior faculty should be encouraged to participate in the program. Council members were also in agreement that proposals should come from departments (one proposal per department) rather than individual faculty members. Other suggestions made by Council members were: rather than one Moody Fellowship, departments whose proposals are funded could have the option to offer topping up awards; additional enticements for faculty would be helpful in encouraging proposals; additional guidelines might be added for departments whose proposals are funded on how they may select prospective students to be offered the Moody Fellowship; the language could be made more inclusive of programs and not just departments. Dr. Quick requested additional input on this item electronically

after this meeting. A final version of the proposal would then be prepared for the Council's vote, and the vote would be held online.

- **M.F.A. students in the Moody School:** Dr. Quick explained that it has always been part of the planned development of the Moody School to bring M.F.A. students under the umbrella of the Moody School in the phase two of the school's growth. This was envisioned in the 2018 Graduate School Task Force Report, which provided the road map for the school's development that was the basis for the Moody Foundation gift. However, there is additional impetus for integrating M.F.A. students into the Moody School at this point: It will provide a strong rationale in support of a proposed M.F.A. Health Insurance Program that has been put forward for budgetary approval in previous years but has yet to be approved. Dr. Itkin explained that there would still be work for the Council over the course of the coming year in determining how the policies in the Administrative Handbook apply to M.F.A. students and that therefore a proposed start date for the M.F.A. students as fully integrated into the Moody School would be Fall 2022. Dr. Quick asked for a vote of the Council on a resolution in favor of bringing M.F.A. students into the Moody School. All voting member of the Council present at the meeting voted in favor of this resolution. The resolution passes 10-0.
- **Graduate student teaching awards:** Dr. Itkin went through a proposal for new awards, to be cosponsored by the Moody School and the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success, to recognize outstanding contributions to the teaching of undergraduates by graduate student instructors and teaching assistants (see slide 8). Dr. Quick and Dr. Itkin emphasized the importance of recognizing these contributions and especially of having the awards presented at a high-profile University event, such as the Board of Trustees spring dinner. The Graduate Council discussed whether it might be better to have separate awards for graduate students who serve as primary teacher for a course and those who serve as TAs. Some Council members felt that the way awards were divided on the initial proposal—between STEM fields (Dedman III and Lyle) and all others (Dedman I, Dedman II, Meadows, and Simmons)—might disadvantage graduate students in certain fields where graduate students take on less responsibility in their teaching. Council members also suggested that a statement of teaching philosophy should not be a part of the required materials for the application, as many graduate students do not yet have fully developed statement of teaching philosophy. Dr. Itkin suggested that awards could be divided differently—between STEM (Dedman III and Lyle), social sciences and education (Dedman II and Simmons), and humanities and arts (Dedman I and Meadows). Dr. Quick asked Council members to reach out to Dr. Itkin to volunteer to be involved in further developing the program. He asked that at least one Council member from each school volunteer.
- **Graduate appeals policy:** Dr. Quick explained that a policy is being developed, in an effort led by Associate Provost Peter Moore, for graduate student academic appeals. Dr. Itkin explained that the policy would cover how students may appeal decisions that have already been adjudicated by their department and the school that houses their department and that relate solely to decisions that affect the student's academic standing (being put on probation, suspended, dismissed, etc.). Dr. Quick told the Council that their input will be requested once a draft policy has been developed.

- **GRE Requirement for Fall 2022 applicants to Ph.D. and M.F.A. programs:** Dr. Quick explained that, due to difficulties created by the pandemic, SMU Ph.D. programs were permitted to make the GRE optional for their Fall 2021 applicants with the approval of their school dean. The question before the Council is whether to extend this policy for Spring 2022 applications. Dr. Itkin had shared a list of other Universities and their graduate programs who have decided to continue to waive the GRE requirement for Fall 2022 as well as those who have decided to reinstate a GRE requirement for Fall 2022. The list was compiled by the Moody School's Director of Graduate Recruitment and Admissions, Stevie Otto. The Council discussed the advantages of requiring the GRE as well as some disadvantages of reinstating a university-wide GRE requirement. Prof. Molanphy pointed out that the GRE is not used as a measure of applicant promise for M.F.A. programs in Art. Several Council members suggested that making the GRE required could disadvantage SMU in recruiting applicants—and especially recruiting diverse applicants. Dr. McDonald suggested that increases in application numbers could be at least partially attributed to the “GRE optional” policy for Fall 2021 applications. She also suggested that it could be helpful to know if many of the students awarded fellowships had chosen not to submit GRE scores. This would speak in favor of keeping the GRE optional policy for Fall 2022. Speaking in favor of having applicants submit GRE scores, Council members suggested that the additional data point in the application can be helpful making decisions and that scores do still factor into the rankings of graduate programs and schools. The latter point may be mitigated somewhat by the fact that increased numbers of applications, which waiving the GRE encourages, may also improve rankings. Dr. Quick asked that Council members provide input on this item online and that a July meeting be scheduled with this as the sole topic of discussion.
- Meeting adjourned.



# Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

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Graduate Council Meeting

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June 21, 2021, 10:00-11:30am  
Zoom Meeting



1. Results of votes on handbook items and previous meeting minutes
2. Ph.D. recruitment grants
3. M.F.A. students in the Moody School
4. Graduate student teaching awards
5. Graduate appeals policy
6. GRE requirement for Fall 2022 applicants to Ph.D. programs
7. Other items



**Review of Timeline Extensions for Advancement to Candidacy and Graduation for Ph.D. Students:** When a student is nearing the limit set in the catalog for advancement to candidacy or graduation after advancing to candidacy, the department or program may file a petition for an extension (generally a one-year extension) to the timeline. The petition must include a letter of support from the DGS or Department Chair. The dean of the student's home school may either designate a member of their office to review the petition or may ask the Moody School to perform this function. In the former case, the school dean or their designee and the Dean of the Moody School or their designee must both approve the extension request. In the case of disagreement between the two deans, the Provost or their designee makes the final decision regarding approval of the petition. A record of the approval is maintained by both the student's home school and the Moody School.

12 "yes" votes, 0 "no" votes, 0 abstain



### **Approval of Graduation and Collection of Graduation Surveys for Ph.D.**

**Students:** The Moody School is responsible for collecting Survey of Earned Doctorates information. The Moody School develops graduation lists for Ph.D. programs, works with schools and departments to ensure that lists are complete and accurate, and shares lists with the Registrar's Office. Developing graduation lists assists the Moody School in recognizing doctoral graduates in graduation ceremonies. Collecting Survey of Earned Doctorates information allows for accurate tracking of graduation statistics and accurate, uniform responses to Survey of Earned Doctorates requests for information. As resources allow, the Moody School will be responsible for tracking and reporting on Ph.D. career outcomes.

12 "yes" votes, 0 "no" votes, 0 abstain



## April Meeting Minutes

12 “yes” votes, 0 “no” votes, 0 abstain

## May Meeting Minutes

10 “yes” votes, 0 “no” votes, 2 abstain



- Link to Ph.D. Recruitment Grant program draft in Box:  
<https://smu.box.com/s/8bevoje9aetlzcnybkwn76wrhcnoa7pc>
- Link to draft proposal evaluation rubric in Box:  
<https://smu.box.com/s/jsa7xsqkmy4q62xnXuqms8uvx2ggsgyl>



# M.F.A. Students in the Moody School



### **Outstanding Graduate Student Teacher Awards**

- These awards recognize outstanding contributions to the teaching of SMU undergraduates by graduate student instructors and teaching assistants
- Two awards will be made yearly:
  - One for STEM fields (Lyle, Dedman III)
  - One for humanities, social science, arts, and education fields (Dedman I and II, Meadows, Simmons)
- Awards will include a \$1,000 prize, cosponsored by the Moody School and the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success
- Departments may each nominate one graduate student
- Nominations will be reviewed by a committee chaired by the Dean of the Moody School or their designate and including:
  - Three Moody School Graduate Council members
  - One faculty member designated by the Associate Provost for Student Academic Engagement and Success
  - One Center for Teaching Excellence staff member designated by the CTE Director
- Nominations will be reviewed and selections made in the early fall
- Nomination materials will include:
  - Letter of nomination from the department chair or director of graduate studies
  - Nominee's CV
  - Nominee's teaching evaluations for all classes taught at SMU
  - Nominee's statement of teaching philosophy
- Awardees will be announced and winners recognized at the Board of Trustees spring dinner



# Graduate Appeals Policy



- Link to comparison document in Box:  
<https://smu.box.com/s/s63rro31xr3d7cljqtdq4gy5m48jcqce>



### **Ph.D. Recruitment Grant Program**

This program is intended to support faculty and departments in actively recruiting exceptional prospective Ph.D. students. Grants awarded in fall 2021 will fund activities to recruit incoming Ph.D. students for the **Fall 2022** term. Proposals may be submitted by departments or by individual graduate faculty members with the endorsement of their department chair. Collaborative proposals from multiple faculty members and/or departments are encouraged. Proposals for projects for which departments or schools have committed additional funds are also encouraged.

Grants will provide up to **\$4,000** to support projects that involve active participation in recruitment activities by faculty members. In addition, departments or individual faculty members whose proposals are successful will have the opportunity to offer one prospective Ph.D. student they are recruiting a **Moody Graduate Fellowship** (\$30,000/year stipend for five years), pending full review and acceptance of the prospective student's application.

Proposals should include:

1. A list of all faculty members involved in the proposed recruitment activities and a brief description of faculty members' mentoring record, including:
  - a. Names of Ph.D. students mentored to degree completion and indication of whether any of them are members of underrepresented minorities
  - b. Information about Ph.D. students' career outcomes
2. A CV for each faculty member involved in the proposed recruitment activities
3. A recruitment plan, including:
  - a. Description of proposed activities
  - b. Budget for proposed activities
  - c. Description of additional committed contributions from schools, departments, or campus offices for the proposed activities, if applicable
  - d. Description of the pool of potential applicants who will be contacted via the program, including
    - i. How many potential applicants will be contacted,
    - ii. The suitability of contacts for recruitment,
    - iii. The numbers of potential contacts who are from underrepresented groups
  - e. A description of how the activities complement existing departmental recruitment activities and initiatives, including
    - i. Any faculty/staff contacts developed via the proposed activities that will continue to be beneficial in future years
    - ii. Any materials developed via the proposed activities that will continue to be beneficial in future years
4. A brief letter of endorsement from the department chair

A preliminary version of the rubric used to evaluate proposals is attached. In addition, proposers should be prepared to submit a brief report in **summer 2022**, describing the outcome of the funded project.

Proposals should be submitted to Dr. Alan Itkin ([aitkin@smu.edu](mailto:aitkin@smu.edu)) as a single PDF no later than **Sept. 15**. Questions may also be directed to Dr. Itkin.