# Graduate Council Annual Report, 2020-2021

## Membership

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| --- | --- |
| Faculty Members  Cara Nelson, Ecosystem & Conservation Sciences (2021) - Co-Chair Sara Rinfret, Public Administration & Policy (2021) - Co-Chair Kelly McKinnie, Mathematics (2022) Jason Triche, Management Information Systems (2023) Ekaterina Voronina, DBS (2021) Jody Pavilack,  History (2023) Curtis Noonan, Public & Community Health (2022) Eric Reimer, English (2021) Michael DeGrandpre, Chemistry (2022) Katrina Mullan, Economics (2023) Valarie Moody, Integrative Physiology and Athletic Training (2023) Jeb Puryear, Teaching and Learning (2023) Greg Machek, Psychology (2023) | Graduate Students: Charles Gatlin Mariah McIntosh Gray O'reilly  Ex-Officio Members Scott Whittenburg, Vice President, Research and Creative Scholarship and Dean of the Graduate School Ashby Kinch, Associate Dean, Graduate  School Nathan Lindsay, Vice Provost |

## Subcommittee Members

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| --- | --- |
| Humanities Eric Reimer, English (Co-chair) Jody Pavilack, History (Co-chair) Professional Schools Jason Triche, Management Information Systems (Chair) Cara Nelson, Ecosystem and Conservation Sciences Valarie Moody, Integrative Physiology and Athletic Training Jeb Puryear, Teaching and Learning | SciencesMichael DeGrandpre, Chemistry (Chair) Kelly McKinnie Mathematics Ekaterina Voronina, DBS   Social Sciences Curtis Noonan, Public & Community Health (Chair) Sara Rinfret, Public Administration Katrina Mullan, Economics Greg Machek, Psychology |
| DIS Oversight Committee Members Ekaterina Voronina, Division of Biological Sciences (Chair) Kelly McKinnie, Mathematics  Cara Nelson, Ecosystem and Conservation Sciences Jody Pavilack, History Michael DeGrandpre, Chemistry Curtis Noonan, Public Health | DIS Admissions Committee Members John Quindry, Integrative Physiology and Athletic Training (2021)  Ben Colman, Ecosystem and Conservation Sciences (2021) Kirsten Murray, Department of Counseling (2021) |

Committee Charge

* Promote, review, and evaluate graduate programs to ensure vitality, currency, and quality;
* Review and make recommendations on all requests for new programs, for deletions of programs, and for curriculum additions or changes by departments and schools;
* Consider suggested changes in Graduate School regulations;
* Consider issues raised by graduate students relating to regulations of specific graduate programs or their welfare;
* Initiate and supervise interdisciplinary graduate programs in response to national, regional, or state needs, or to the desires and needs of sufficient numbers of graduate students;
* Decide on substantive matters relating to graduate programs, curricula, general Graduate School regulations, awards and scholarships, etc., and forward decisions to the Graduate School, Faculty Senate, and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs as appropriate.

Meetings

Graduate Council met via Zoom for the entire academic year to mitigate safety issues due to the Pandemic.

Annual Curriculum Review

The Graduate Council acted on 125 proposals, including 2 level II and 3 level I proposals, 21 program modifications, 41 new courses, and 5 course deletions. The majority of these items were considered in fall semester, but 27 were considered in spring. The Council organized the review assignments among four subcommittees: humanities, professional schools, science, and social science. In order to balance the workload, some proposals were moved among subcommittees; otherwise the professional schools subcommittee would review 2-3x more proposals than other subcommittees. At the start of the semester, the Co-chairs held a curriculum review training session for subcommittee chairs to communicate the goals and objectives of the review process, where to access files, and the deadlines for completing reviews. Subcommittee Chairs were provided with an excel template to take notes. Camie provided a brief Coursedog demonstration. Level I and II proposals were reviewed in Coursedog, course forms were in e-Curr and program modifications were available in Box. Missing or inadequate graduate increments on course syllabi for UG courses continues to be an issue.

### Academic Program Form -Level I

Online delivery of Social Work MS  
Retitle Ecology and Evolution PhD from Organismal Biology, Ecology and Evolution PhD (spring)  
Terminate Rural Environmental Change option in Sociology MA (spring)

### Academic Program Form -Level II

PhD in Integrative Physiology and Rehabilitation Sciences (spring\_  
PhD in Computer Science

## Curriculum proposals not approved

The proposed Health Science MS and Post Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Certificate were sent back to the proposer with suggestions to collaborate with the faculty in the effected units. The proposal was submitted by the Director of UMHM.

Members abstained from voting on the [Materials Sciences PhD termination](https://umt.box.com/s/t6ign5vx8n5slf856nlvrbdma3h3ogq4) given the divergence from the normal process. Although there are no students in the program and the faculty member has been reassigned, the former director would have preferred the program go into moratorium. UM did not receive the resources to make the multi-campus program viable. The termination form was completed by the Provost’s Office to remove the program from the degree inventory.

### Exemption to Graduate School Policy C4.00

The exemption request for the MSW/MPH and MPA/MPH program were approved. Graduate School Policy C 4.00 allows up to 9 credits earned toward one master’s degree be applied to a second master’s degree. The MPA/MPH students typically share between 12-16 elective credits.   
Associate Dean Kinch revised language for C 4.000. A joint degree program should be proposed as a new degree. Faculty may need future guidance for creating joint master degree programs.

## Program Reviews

The Council developed a program review [Qualtrics](https://umt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eyUJklllwIeQrGt) survey to streamline the process and allow for a meta-analysis of longitudinal data. The survey asks for general program information and then includes questions about SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats). The following programs were reviewed.

* + Environmental Studies
  + Mathematical Sciences
  + Anthropology
  + Geography
  + Wildlife Biology
  + Integrative Physiology and Athletic Training
  + Communication Studies
  + Political Science

## Bertha Morton Awards

This year $81,000 was available for Bertha Morton awards. This is the lowest amount in five years. Given this, the Council approved using all the funds for scholarships/fellowships and not for recruiting. The Council discussed the option to organize the review differently given that the professional schools include a wide variety of disciplines, which creates issues for applicant ranking. The 57 applications were distributed evenly among the subcommittees to decide on 27 awards. The Graduate School plans to interview recipients and create a webpage with their stories to improve public relations.

## Procedure and Policy Review Items

The Co-chairs created a calendar that included expected business items for each semester and updated as needed. This provided members with the ability to plan ahead for discussion items and subcommittee meetings.

GRE  
The Council agreed to waive the GRE for admissions for the 2020-2021 academic year given that many of the test sites are closed due to COVID-19, resulting in an equity issue. Programs still had the authority to require the GRE, but would not have to ask the Council to waive for this year.

The council discussed the trend for public universities (UM’s competitors) in the west to drop the requirement.

### GRE Waivers

Linguistics, Geosciences, and Molecular and Biomedical Sciences requests to waive the GRE were approved in accordance with Policy 302.10 Graduate Student Admissions Standards.

## Policies

* Graduate Council reviewed ASCRC’s revisions to Policy 201 (Curriculum Review Overview) and Policy 201.60 (Effective Date of Approved Curriculum Forms) as well as the Editorial Catalog Change Policy and suggested minor edits. The updated policies were approved by the Faculty Senate.
* Andrea Vernon, Acting Executive Director of Experiential Learning & Student Success and member of the Priority for Action #4 Partner with Place presented draft Pre-Professional Definitions to the Council in the fall. In the spring the Council approved the [High-impact Definitions and Attributes procedure](https://umt.box.com/s/skbz4ahvkkvg4pp8shmeoh1etnrgahil) (201.72) drafted by ASCRC to implement the definitions.
* A subcommittee (Professors Curtis, Rinfret, Mullan, Nelson, and VP Whittenburg) worked over the year on a proposal to update policy 303.20 Criteria for Allocating Teaching Assistantships. The subcommittee sent a survey to stakeholders for feedback and incorporated changes into the draft document. The survey had 48 respondents. An inductive analysis was conducted and found that 86% of participants favored the classifications and 70% agree with the process. Qualitative themes included periodicity, paperwork burden, and language (focus on growth and innovation – added stability). The proposed timeline for the revised procedure was to have graduate programs submit proposals in fall 2021 for graduate assistantships for AY 2022.23 through AY 2026.27. The [proposal](https://umt.box.com/s/dswdmemgbm9f74h0akbwa1irvlug929i) to revise Policy 303.20 General Funded Graduate Assistant Process and Allocations was approved by the Faculty Senate on March 25th

Graduate Council Policies

The Council reviewed its policies and operating procedures. There was a question of whether Policy 303.30 Research Awards or 303.40 WAGS/UMI Awards Nominations were still applicable. Members would like to include a clearer reference for Bertha Morton Fellowship in Policy 303.10. Policy 303.20 Program Review will be evaluated in the fall to incorporate the new survey structure. The Council should also discuss graduate increment standards (301.30) and whether a standard evaluation policy is needed to provide a mechanism for diverse programs to have a benchmark.

Other Business Items:

Initiative to increase TA/RA stipends  
Graduate Council continued to advocate for adaptation of the [Faculty Senate Resolution on TARA pay](https://umt.box.com/s/0kow9uerht88tk2e5jhqpfeylhsaavsq). The administration responded to the request for a response by asking the Graduate School to respond. The Graduate School asked Graduate Council to form a subcommittee. The subcommittee (Cara Nelson, Mariah McIntosh, Gray O’Reilly, Char Gatlin, and VP Whittenburg). The subcommittee met several times, and decided that it did not have the appropriate authority or information to suggest actions to increase salaries. The graduate students (Maria McIntosh, Grey O’Reilly, and Char Gatlin) drafted a TA/RA stipend resolution that was approved by ASUM and shared with the Faculty Senate. The GPSA also drafted a  [letter](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13_EVkOzKufmEF9qtNIjtW-u4WtYy65QuOgjP8ChLOMw/edit) signed by 300 students and faculty created a supporting letter signed by 130 faculty in an effort to make the need for increased stipends more visible. They would like to institutionalize a cost of living increase for graduate students in connection to other UM employees. The students met with the Acting Provost and VP Whittenburg as well as the President. Future meetings are scheduled and a graduate student representative has been added to the Budget Committee. There is support to minimize the financial burden for graduate students. The students conducted a survey to assess the financial situation of graduate students. [Preliminary results](https://umt.box.com/s/iavmq1qqrbtsvujdbgj94bgggmnay4e0) were shared with the Council and the Faculty Senate. A further analysis will be shared once completed.

Budget Model   
Vice President Lasiter met with Graduate Council on October 28th and responded to questions about the budget model. Members were sent the latest budget model spreadsheet and PowerPoint from VP Lasater’s October 1st presentation to the Faculty Senate Meeting. The Model was used to give Deans a budget for 2023. Determining the percentages is an interactive process that will evolve as more data becomes available. Faculty need to provide their concerns to their deans.

## Other Communication Items

* The Council received various updates from the Graduate School including graduate student orientation, graduate student professional development opportunities (LinkedIn Learning, DoctoralNet, and [Aurora](https://beyondprof.com/aurora/), Cognitive Behavioral Training)
* The Graduate School submitted a joint NSF proposal with Montana Tech and MSU Billings focused on resources for graduate student mental health. The collaboration generated a lot of great ideas. Associate Dean Kinch will reach out to directors this spring to pursue some of them.
* The Council discussed a waiver of the English language proficiency tests for Spring 2021 admissions, given the COVID situation. A small group was formed to investigate how current admission requirements for English Proficiency are working given the challenges of COVID-19. The group included: Cara Nelson from Graduate Council along with Brigitta Lee-, International Recruiter, Jeanie Castillo- English Language Institute Chair, Donna Anderson- Senior International Officer & Executive Director, Global Engagement Office, and Ashby Kinch, Graduate School Associate Dean. The group discussed potential barriers to admission that the testing requirements impose in non-COVID years (travel to testing sites, costs) and the feasibility of having the ELI come up with a UM-specific assessment. Due to lack of bandwidth, this discussion was tabled until the second half of spring semester.
* On February 3rd Professor Kari Harris joined the Council on behalf of Gil Quintero, the Chair of the Public Health Curriculum Committee. The Public Health PhD program is attracting a variety of students that don’t have a Master’s degree in Public Health, so pathways have been created to support these students gain a MS degree on the PhD path.
* Professor Len Broberg joined the Council on February 3rd to provide an update on his concerns regarding the future of the Environmental Studies graduate program. He very much appreciated the Council’s review of the program last year. The program is at a crossroads given the budget situation and pending retirements. At the program review meeting with the administration, the program was directed to work with the dean to manage the re-imagination issues, but they are at an impasse. A letter has been provided to acting Provost Humphrey, who according to Vice Provost Lindsay will respond in a more nuanced way. Grad Council members suggested that in the future, these meetings should have representation from the Graduate School, given it has data (cost to revenue) that could inform the discussion.

## Pending Items

* Consider whether course numbers should be reviewed to align with the MUS reserved course numbers
* Discuss waiving the GRE with input from programs and guidance from Professor Puryear who has studied the issue.
* Discuss bias and objectivity in the use of GRE for admission.
* Clarify the Council’s role in curriculum review- VP Whittenburg suggests that the Council can alert the administration to concerns. Even though proposals indicate the programs are cost neutral there are costs. Associate Dean Kinch suggests the possibility of setting a minimum number of students per a market analysis.
* Discuss the delineation between undergraduate and graduate level- work