

**Minutes of the Graduate Council  
November 19, 2021**

**Members in Attendance:**

Jodi Cooley, Alan Itkin, Adam Jasienski, Akihito Kamata, Elfi Kraka, Renee McDonald, Brian Molanphy, Volkan Otugen, Alexandra E. Pavlakis, James E. Quick, Dinesh Rajan, Gretchen Smith

*Ex officio members:* Suku Nair, Heather Shaw

**Members Not in Attendance:**

Ali Beskok, Anthony Petrosino

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**Business:**

- **Results of online votes:** Dr. Itkin went through the results of votes that were held online (see slides 4-8 below). The minutes from the Oct. 22 meeting were approved with 9 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 3 abstentions.

A proposal to make Ph.D. dissertation defenses public, revised with input provided by Council members at the Oct. 22 meeting (slide 5), received 11 yes votes, 1 no vote, and 0 abstentions. Dr. Itkin summarized the comment from the Council member who voted “no”: they felt that the Moody School should take a more active role in setting specific requirements for the form of the defense (slide 6). The proposal was approved.

A proposal to clarify regulations with regards to the composition of Ph.D. dissertation committees (slide 7) received 12 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 1 abstention. One suggestion was made to clarify the language (slide 8), and the suggestion was accepted by the Council. The proposal, with that amendment to the language, was approved.

- **Doctoral hooding ceremony:** Dr. Quick and Dr. Itkin described how graduates of doctoral programs have been recognized at Commencement events in the past (slides 10-11) and explained that the Registrar’s office would like to end the practice of hooding graduating doctoral students at the all-University Commencement ceremony as of Spring 2022. Dr. Quick explained that, in the past, the Registrar’s office has provided hoods to graduating Ph.D. students who attend the all-University Commencement ceremony for free as an incentive for doctoral students to attend the all-University ceremony. For this reason, any school or department that wishes to hood at a separate ceremony will need to provide hoods to the graduating students, once the doctoral students are no longer hooded at the all-University ceremony. Dr. McDonald mentioned that, in Dedman College,

departments hold their own ceremonies to honor their graduating Ph.D. students, and that these ceremonies take place after the all-University Commencement ceremony.

Council members expressed support for the idea of transforming the Moody School Doctoral Graduate Recognition Ceremony, held the Friday before the all-University Commencement ceremony, into a hooding ceremony. Dr. McDonald suggested that departments be polled to determine their support for this idea and whether they have any concerns about how this would impact the ways they are currently recognizing their Ph.D. graduates, and Dr. Quick agreed that this was a good course of action.

- **Credit-bearing ESL classes and full-time status:** Dr. Martha Kwon, Director of SMU's ESL Center and Intensive English Program, visited the Council to present an idea she is proposing to introduce ESL classes that carry credits in order to count towards full-time status for students. Dr. Kwon summarized the proposal (see slide 13) and mentioned that one aspect of the proposal is still open for suggestion: the fees charged to students for these courses. These fees, as she explained, vary widely at institutions with similar courses. Council members asked Dr. Kwon questions and discussed the idea with her. Council members expressed concern that allowing students to take for-credit ESL courses and hence to reduce their course load in their program each semester would hinder their progression through the degree.

Dr. Kraka raised an alternative option: students could take intensive English-language classes during the summer before they begin their programs. Dr. Kwon said that this was another program she was developing and explained that this would require coordination with ISSS to ensure that students get visa approval to arrive in time to take ESL classes before the start of the semester. She explained that she felt this was a good option and that the obstacles related to visa approval could be easily surmounted.

The Council discussed Dr. Kwon's proposal further after she left the meeting. They concluded that they weren't aware of a significant need for the proposed credit-bearing ESL classes in their schools and that there were issues surrounding how this would affect the progression of students in graduate programs in their schools through the degree that would need to be resolved.

- Meeting adjourned.



# Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

## Graduate Council Meeting

*November 19, 2021, 2-3:30pm, Zoom meeting*

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# Meeting Agenda

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1. Results of online votes
2. Doctoral hooding ceremony
3. Credit-bearing ESL classes and full-time status
4. Other items

# Results of Online Votes



# Results of Online Votes

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Minutes of the October 22 meeting:

- 9 “yes” votes
- 0 “no” votes
- 3 abstain
- The minutes are approved

# Results of Online Votes

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## **Public Dissertation Defenses:**

Oral examinations for the Ph.D. degree are open to the public and announced on a University calendar that is publicly available. The completed Dissertation Defense Announcement form, including the date, time, and location of the examination (or, in the case of a virtual examination, a link to register for or attend the examination online), must be submitted to the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies at least 14 days in advance of the scheduled defense. The examination will be announced on the Moody School events calendar as well as in the Moody School newsletter. Additional announcements are at the discretion of the student's dissertation committee, in adherence with relevant departmental policies. The format of the oral examination and the participation of the audience are also at the discretion of the dissertation committee, in adherence with relevant departmental policies. Usually, the examination will include a portion open to the public and a portion that includes only the student and the dissertation committee members.

# Results of Online Votes

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## Public dissertation defenses:

- 11 “yes” votes
- 1 “no” votes
- 0 abstain
- Comments:
  - (“no” vote) The way this motion is worded, the dissertation committee/Department/ and College's discretion is paramount to the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies oversight. I feel Moody should provide guidance and leadership on this issue and have ultimate approval. As far as the PhD degree is concerned going forward at SMU, the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies is the governing body and any motion should indicate as such IMHO.



# Results of Online Votes

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## **Composition of Ph.D. Dissertation Committees:**

If a student has only one dissertation or supervisory committee chair, that person may only be a full-time tenured or tenure-track SMU faculty member. In addition, if a student's committee has co-chairs (in accordance with program and school policies), at least one of the co-chairs must be a full-time tenured or tenure-track SMU faculty member.

# Results of Online Votes

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## Composition of Ph.D. dissertation committees:

- 12 “yes” votes
- 0 “no” votes
- The proposal is approved
- Comments:
  - (“yes” vote) I suggest that “..may only be...” be changed to “...must be...” in the first sentence. This way it is less confusing and in harmony with the following sentence.

# Doctoral Hooding Ceremony



# Doctoral Hooding Ceremony

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- In the past, hooding has been done by Dean Quick and the school dean at the all-University ceremony.
- In addition, the Moody School held a Doctoral Graduate Recognition Ceremony, usually including a luncheon or dinner, at which each graduate was recognized with comments from their advisor.
- Hoods were a gift of the University (~\$150 each) only for students who attended the all-University ceremony.
- The Registrar's Office would like to establish a separate hooding ceremony to be held before the main ceremony.



# Doctoral Hooding Ceremony

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## School-level Commencement Ceremonies:

- In the past, Ph.D. and Ed.D. graduates have been hooded by their advisors at the Simmons School ceremony.
- In the past, Ph.D. and D.E. graduates have been hooded by their advisors at the Lyle School ceremony.
- Dedman College and Meadows Ph.D. graduates have not been hooded at their school-level ceremonies.

# Credit-Bearing ESL Classes



# Credit-Bearing ESL Classes

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- Many international graduate students take courses at the ESL center to improve their English while pursuing their graduate studies at SMU.
- These classes carry no credits, and therefore international students must take them in addition to a full course load to stay in compliance with visa requirements.
- The ESL center would like to start offering ESL classes that carry credit and therefore would count towards the students' full-time status.
  - Courses would not count towards required number of credits for the degree.
  - Courses would not count towards any program requirements.
- There are administrative hurdles to implementing this.
- Other universities– e.g., UT Austin and U Chicago– do this.
- It would be helpful to know if there is interest for this in Council members' schools.

# Other Items

