Minutes of the Graduate Council
July 16, 2021

Members in Attendance:

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

Ex officio members: Suku Nair

Members Not in Attendance:

Jodi Cooley, Volkan Otugen, Heather Shaw (ex officio)

Business:

- **Results of votes on Ph.D. recruitment grant program and previous meeting minutes:** Dr. Itkin presented the results of an online vote on the Ph.D. Recruitment Grant Program proposal (see the proposal below). The proposal was approved with 11 "yes" votes, 1 "no" vote, and no members abstaining. The Council member who voted "no" felt that the difference between departments and programs was not clearly enough articulated in the proposal. Dr. Itkin went through the comments provided on the online voting survey and mentioned that he and Dr. Quick would make minor revisions to the proposal before announcing the new program, taking into account the Council members' comments (see slide 4 of the PowerPoint slide show below).

  Dr. Itkin reported that the minutes of the June 21, 2021, meeting were approved with 10 "yes" votes, 0 "not votes," and 2 abstentions (see slide 5 below). Prof. Molanphy had requested an addition to the minutes, to reflect a contribution that he had made at the last meeting regarding the GRE requirement. Dr. Itkin said that Prof. Molanphy's requested change would be made.

- **GRE Requirement for Fall 2022 applicants to Ph.D. and M.F.A. programs:** There had been some discussion of this item before the meeting among Council members on Microsoft Teams, and Dr. Itkin showed comments made by Ali Beskok and Gretchen Smith (see slide 7). Dr. Itkin said that many Ph.D. programs went GRE optional for Fall 2021 applications, due to challenges created for applicants by the Coronavirus pandemic. For the Fall 2022 application cycle, two questions are before the Council: 1) Should programs be allowed to continue to be "GRE optional," with the approval of their school dean, for Fall 2022 applicants? 2) Should the GRE be required for Moody School fellowship nominations? Dr. Quick asked Dr. Nair to report on the perspective of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Nair reported that the opinion expressed by Faculty Senate officers and members was

that graduate programs should mirror the policy in undergraduate admissions: undergraduate admissions will continue to be test optional, and so graduate programs should continue to have the option to be test optional. Dr. Nair also reported that Faculty Senate members felt it could negatively impact the competitiveness of SMU graduate programs to require the GRE, when many other highly-ranked schools are not requiring the GRE for Fall 2022 admissions.

Dr. Quick asked that Council members discuss question 1, whether programs should be able to continue to be "GRE optional. " Several Council members expressed concerns and described challenges—for example, for international students in countries facing surges in COVID-19 cases—that would be created if the GRE were required for Fall 2022 admissions. Dr. Quick called for a vote on this question. All 10 members present voted "yes," in favor of programs being allowed to continue to be "GRE optional," with the approval of their school dean, for Fall 2022 applicants. This position was adopted as the position of the Moody School.

Dr. Quick asked the Council to consider question 2, whether the GRE should be required for Moody School fellowship nominations. Several Council members expressed concerns about requiring the GRE for fellowship nominations when their programs may be GRE optional and expressed support for the process that had been used to select nominees for fellowships this year in absence of a GRE requirement. Dr. Beskok described challenges that fellowship reviewers could face if GREs are not required for fellowship nominations. Dr. Quick called for a vote on this question. 9 out of 10 present Council members voted "yes" on this question. This position was adopted as the position of the Moody School.

- **Other items:** Prof. Molanphy raised the issue of vaccine requirements on campus, in particular having faculty involved in the decision about whether SMU should require COVID-19 vaccination for undergraduate and graduate students to enroll in the fall. Dr. Quick mentioned that Gov. Abbott had mandated that state financial aid funds be withheld from universities that require vaccinations and that this limited SMU's ability to put in place a vaccine requirement. He also said that HIPAA restricts the University's ability to require proof of vaccination, even if vaccination itself is a requirement. Dr. Smith brought up a related issue: the continuation of a high-level of air filtration in campus spaces, and mentioned that faculty were concerned that air filtration would be returned to lower levels before the start of the fall term. Dr. Quick recommended that the most effective way for faculty to express their concerns and voice their support for a change in policy on these issues would be for the Faculty Senate to vote in favor of resolutions on these topics.

  Dr. Kamata raised the issue of making Ph.D. dissertation defenses public and having the Moody School announce defenses. Dr. Quick agreed that it was an important principle to have dissertations and their defenses be public and said that this would be a topic of discussion at future Council meetings. Dr. Itkin raised the question of whether retiring faculty should be allowed to continue as the dissertation committee chair and mentioned that this would also be a future item for the Council's consideration.

- Meeting adjourned.

Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

Graduate Council Meeting

July 16, 2021, 9:00-10:00am
Zoom Meeting

SMU

Meeting Agenda

1. Results of votes on Ph.D. recruitment grant program and previous meeting minutes
2. GRE requirement for Fall 2022 applicants to Ph.D. and M.F.A. programs
3. Other items

Results of Online Votes

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Ph.D. Recruitment Grant Program Proposal

11 “yes” votes, 1 “no” votes, 0 abstain

Notes:

- Is the $4,000 to support projects that involve active participation in recruitment activities by faculty members a one time award or for each year of graduate study? There seems to be a fairly high burden of documentation for an award that will likely not be the difference between a student attending SMU or not - unless there is a sense there is some type of prestige associated with this Recruitment Grant.
- Allowing collaborations between multiple departments, but then only 1 proposal per department seems a bit confusing. perhaps smaller departments will collaborate and larges one put forward their own proposals. In 1 a, b, c: Departments may create large but inefficient groups of PIs just to increase the list of current and previously mentored PhD students. Perhaps giving a time limit like the students graduated for the past 5 years etc would be suitable.
- I am still unclear about the difference between "departments" and "programs" -- if programs are within departments, then the applications should represent the whole department, not solely the program. It would be possible for two programs within a single department to submit a proposal, independently, correct?

Results of Online Votes

June Meeting Minutes

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

Notes:

- I request amendment to the minutes page 3, GRE Requirement for Fall 2022 applicants to Ph.D. and M.F.A. programs, something like, "Molanphy pointed out that the GRE is not used as a measure in MFA programs in Art."

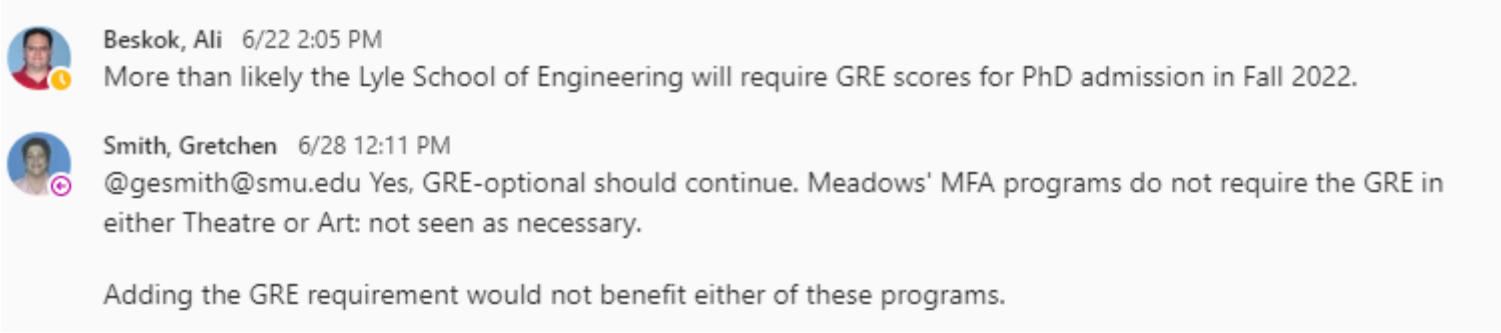
GRE Requirement

GRE Requirement

Two Questions:

1. Should programs be allowed to continue to be “GRE optional,” with the approval of their school dean, for Fall 2022 applicants?
2. Should the GRE be required for Moody School fellowship nominations?

Comments in Teams:



Beskok, Ali 6/22 2:05 PM
More than likely the Lyle School of Engineering will require GRE scores for PhD admission in Fall 2022.

Smith, Gretchen 6/28 12:11 PM
@gesmith@smu.edu Yes, GRE-optional should continue. Meadows' MFA programs do not require the GRE in either Theatre or Art: not seen as necessary.

Adding the GRE requirement would not benefit either of these programs.

SMU | MOODY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND ADVANCED STUDIES

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 programs (no more than one proposal per department). Collaborative proposals from multiple departments or programs 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 programs 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 be submitted by the department chair or graduate program director and should include:

1. A list of all faculty members involved in the proposed recruitment activities and a brief description of faculty members' mentoring record, if applicable, 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
    c. Names of Ph.D. students currently being mentored and indication of whether any of them are members of underrepresented minorities
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 description of how the selection of a prospective student to be offered a Moody Graduate Fellowship will be made

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) as a single PDF no later than **Sept. 15.** Questions may also be directed to Dr. Itkin.

DRAFT