

# Alcorn State University

## GRADUATE COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday, April 27, 2016

The Graduate Council met on Wednesday, April 27, 2016, in the School of Education and Psychology Inner Conference Room in the Walter Washington Administration Building. Dr. Martha Ravola presided.

*Present:* Dr. Janelle Baker, Dr. Sandra Barnes, Dr. Jeremiah Billa, Dr. Malinda Butler, Dr. Akash Dania, Dr. Latoya Hart, Dr. Lawrence Konecky, Dr. Ivory Lyles, Dr. Keith McGee, Dr. Victor Njiti, Ms. Julia Odom, Dr. Babu Patlolla, Dr. Blanche Sanders, Dr. Cynthia Scurria, Dr. Debra Spring, Dr. Johnny Thomas, Dr. Voletta Williams, Dr. Helen Wyatt, Dr. Ping Zhang.

*Absent:* Dr. Chris Gilmer, Dr. Dickson Idusuyi, Mrs. Dyann Moses, and Mr. Jimmy Smith.

*Alternate Reps in Attendance:* Dr. Steve Adzanu and Ms. Destini Jones.

**Call to Order:** Dr. Martha Ravola called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. Dr. Ravola welcomed council members in attendance. Two new council members were introduced as Interim Chairs for their respective departments, Dr. Victor Njiti, Department of Agriculture and Dr. Jeremiah Billa, Department of Advanced Technologies.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Council Member Dr. Akash Dania and seconded by Council Member Dr. Ivory Lyles, the Graduate Council voted to approve the Minutes of the Graduate Council held on February 4, 2016.

### REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

The Agenda was adopted with one new item added by Dr. Janelle Baker, IRB. Dr. Ravola suggested to place this item for discussion under Non-Thesis.

### CURRICULUM

#### Program Revision

**Biology Online Admission Formula for Conditional Admission** – Dr. Voletta Williams explained the admission revisions to the Master of Science in Biology (Online) program. The formula to determine Unconditional admission was detailed as to the overall score of 855 using the  $GPA \times 100 + \text{Verbal GRE Score} + \text{Quantitative GRE Score} + \text{Analytical Writing} \times 100$ . Conditional admission was added to this formula to include a total score range of 800-854 with a

minimum GPA of 2.65. A student admitted Conditionally will be required to enroll in two additional graduate biology elective courses for a total of six credit hours.

## **GRADUATE FACULTY**

- a) Graduate Faculty – Listed below are names of applicants who applied for graduate faculty membership and were approved by Graduate Council members:

### **School of Arts and Sciences**

#### **Mathematics and Computer Science**

Dr. Wondimu Tekalign .....Assistant Professor, New Appointment, ASU Associate Member

### **School of Business**

Dr. Diaeldin Osman .....Assistant Professor, New Appointment, ASU Associate Member

Judge Lillie Blackmon Sanders .....Adjunct, Reappointment, ASU Professional Affiliate

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND GENERAL ORDERS**

- a) **Graduate Faculty Membership Prior Status for Freda Lawrence** – An update was given to the council regarding the question of membership status of Dr. Freda Lawrence. Based on the data search, Ms. Julia Odom verified this was a new appointment versus a reappointment. Dr. Lawrence’s membership was approved by the council at the November 11, 2015 meeting with clarification requested to determine if this was a reappointment.
- b) **Policy Governing Students Taking Classes Outside Curriculum** – The council was asked to consider developing a policy to for oversight of an advisement issue regarding students taking courses not included on their Program of Study. There have been growing requests of students to exclude these courses taken as a graduate that have lowered the student’s GPA. After much discussion, it was concluded that all courses taken as a graduate student count. Dr. Carr posed the question if there was a way the Office of the Registrar could build in the system to lock students out of taking courses that are not part of the Program of Study. It was recommended that the Policy Committee add this item to its agenda and bring a recommendation to the council. Dr. Carr asked if a meeting schedule could be devised to ensure policies and procedures are voted on by the council before they are included in the Graduate Catalog. The Policy Committee will meet and bring a recommendation to the council at its next meeting for approval.
- c) **Graduate Council Sub-Committees** – Sub-committees were identified at the November 11, 2015 meeting to address business of the Graduate School. There is an immediate need for a Policy Committee to review current policies that need updating, need for new policies to address current trends, curriculum and programs.
1. Policies Committee – Dr. Akash Dania volunteered at the November meeting to serve on this committee. Council members were asked to designate a representative from their school to serve on this committee. The following members were added:

Dr. Janelle Baker, School of Nursing  
Dr. Voletta Williams, School of Arts and Sciences  
Dr. Helen Wyatt, School of Education and Psychology  
Dr. Victor Njiti, School of A.R.E.A.S.

2. **Non-Thesis Project** – Dr. Janelle Baker addressed the need for a Non-Thesis Manual that includes current guidelines for the Non-Thesis Project. The document available to students as a guide is outdated. Students want a non-thesis guide to follow that is user-friendly. Dr. Ravola reminded the council that the guidelines for the research project are included in the current Thesis Manual. Students follow the guidelines for the first three chapters for the Thesis is they are completing a Non-Thesis/Research Project. A separate manual will be developed for the Non-Thesis/Research Project and shared with council members for input before finalizing the document for posting on the Graduate website. The option is available to departments to go beyond the stated requirements for the research projects that are specific to the discipline.

**IRB** – Dr. Baker shared her concerns regarding problems encountered with nursing students in following the current guidelines. There is a need for a detailed document which includes Consent. This should be inclusive of a list of procedures that have to be adhered to in this process. It was suggested that an IRB process is published on the website to inform students of the entire process and give access to the necessary forms in this process. Dr. Ravola commented the IRB committee meets the first Thursday in each month and she would share the council’s suggestions for consideration and give an update at the next council meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) **Policy Governing Number of Courses for Substitution** - The Policies Committee was asked to determine a meeting schedule under the leadership of Dr. Ravola and consider a policy to govern the number of courses a student can substitute on the Program of Study. The question was brought before the council that some advisors were substituting a large number of courses to replace Core and Required courses. There is a need to establish some limits for advisement. Comments were heard from council members regarding the pros and cons of implementing such limits. Dr. McGee stated it would be a charge for the Policies Committee in proposing such a policy since it would lock students into taking a certain track. Dr. Robert Carr expressed concern regarding establishing such limits and diminishing the flexibility or discretion of an advisor to substitute courses as deemed necessary. It was determined this matter will be the charge of the Policies Committee to bring a proposal before the body at its next meeting.
- b) **Second Master’s Degree Policy** – Dr. Ravola shared the Second Master’s Degree Policy with council members to ensure integrity to the process by making sure all departments are aware of the policy.
- c) **Graduate Catalog** – This item was tabled until the next meeting.
- d) **Program of Study** – This item was tabled until the next meeting.
- e) **Policies for Review** – This item was tabled until the next meeting.

## **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

The council is making progress to address policies and business operations of the Graduate School. Some of the recent discussions are moving the council in the right direction.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) Graduate Council Meeting Calendar – Next scheduled meeting is April 27, 2016.
- b) Tuberculosis Chest X-Ray - The policy was shared with council members to be informed of the policy for accountability of the Tuberculosis Chest X-Ray requirements.

Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.