

College of Arts and Sciences
Graduate Faculty Committee

Minutes

January 24, 2025

Kinard 018

- I. Call meeting to Order and approve Agenda-Approval of the agenda passed unanimously.
- II. Approval of Minutes, October 18, 2024 – [Appendix A](#) -Approval of the minutes passed unanimously.

III. Curriculum Proposals

I. New Courses

- SOCL 559 User Experience: UX Research and Social Science

II. Modified Courses

- SCWK 541 Substance Use Disorders Interventions

III. Inactivated Courses

- CHEM 531 Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory

All motions to approve passed unanimously

IV. Old Business

- None

V. New Business

- None

- VI. Graduate Director's Remarks — Greg Oakes discussed GA Programming. Attached are the minutes he shared with the group to guide discussion. **See attachment: Graduate Assistant Workgroup**

Notes: A committee exists to determine what a GA is and how they are hired/awarded.

Budget suggests changes might happen, so we need to pull together better documentation about GA positions.

Group Discussion was held, and ideas were shared with Dr. Oakes by the graduate faculty. The focus was on items:

- a. Over-arching Purpose of Graduate Assistantships
- b. Primary Criteria for Awarding GAs

Note: GFC Quorum (35% of graduate faculty) is 25 faculty members. The minimum attendance to do business (20% of graduate faculty) is 14 faculty members. 25 in person faculty members.

A Quorum was reached based on in-person graduate faculty

Motion to adjourn with second. Meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Appendix to Minutes

Graduate Assistantship Workgroup Opening Meeting Agenda January 10, 2025

1. Charge: To develop a strategic and sustainable model for graduate assistantships and associateships that will launch in Fall 2026. Strategic model to define and codify the following:

- a. Overarching Purpose of Graduate Assistantships and Graduate Research Assistants.

Discussion:

- GA positions are good for introducing students to the role and function of faculty, thus creating the next generation of faculty members.
- GA can save money because they are available at times when undergraduates are not, and it would cost more to hire a staff member to complete the jobs that GAs can complete.
- Recruitment value for school psychology and other grad programs across campus.
- Nutrition needs GAs to run the lab and other portions of the nutrition program. If they did not exist, they could drastically change the nutrition program.
- Career readiness skills are built into the GA positions, which directly links to QEP goals
- Jobs, duties, and responsibilities that Grad students are a better fit versus undergrad students. An example is the writing center positions are not appropriate for undergraduate students.
- GAs support faculty in many jobs related to labs, teaching, etc.
- Often, GAs Provide immediate support to undergraduate students. More likely to ask graduate students. They provide Undergraduate students access to information about graduate programs.
- Introduction of scholarship for these students.
- The GA positions are an anchor for the students to provide structure to their semester.
- Connection to the culture of the department and campus community as graduate students can struggle to become immersed in the campus.
- Professionalization along with QEP high academic rigor. Take the training and then apply it in the professional workspace.
- GAs can have a direct positive relationship with retention of both students and faculty.
 1. Student example: GAs provide 80 hours per week in tutoring centers. Students who utilize the writing center have a half-letter grade higher than those who do not utilize the writing center.
 2. Faculty example: GAs provide help with classes, so if they do not exist, these jobs are passed back to faculty, hindering retention.

- Service to the community is a large part of some programs' GA roles and functions. Some grad program internships provide 1200 hours of service to local school districts per student per year.
 - Graduate students need the money to afford graduate school and make Winthrop competitive with other local universities.
 - Community partnerships with alumni. To build alumni connections for the future.
- b. Primary Criteria for Awarding Gas
 - Discussion:
 - i. Nutrition has to have a credential DPD. Solid GPA.
 - ii. Some programs build the awarding criteria into the interview process to match skills with the correct student who will be made an offer for the program.
 - c. Guidelines for Posting and Marketing GA positions
 - d. Transparent and Systemic process for GA position reviews and allocations
2. Background
 - a. Budget
 - b. Compensation inequity
 - c. Shifts in GA compensation models
 3. Planning the Process and Timeline
 4. Action Items

Question changed what is the criteria for having a GA position

- Have research opportunities for GA students or needs to be relevant to the student's program.
- a couple of grad students at the WEST center from Nutrition highlighting how they are able to provide support outside of area of they are attending for grad school.
- Does the position require a GA or require their expertise, and does it support the mission and does it support the undergraduate program?
- Does it support retention of the GA and undergraduates
- Merit in supporting the financial health of the institution. The financial health of the program in how GA is allocated.
- Worrying about some of the retention criteria could hurt a smaller program.
- Want to ask, based on understanding the primary mission to educate students, are their better places cut so we can support students?
Greg does not feel it is a way to impose massive GA cuts.
- The committee will deploy a policy
- No current language about GA positions
- If you cut GA positions, you cut programs!
- Justify what we do instead of making cuts. How essential these positions are that is the language. Opportunity to make formal
- The graduate school needs to lobby for all programs. How do we talk to the graduate school to advocate for GA positions going forward?

- Good process to tie things to strategic plans the five pillars are directly related to having GA positions
- 2% fringe for a student, which is much lower than other workers
- We should continue to discuss GA financial aid and graduate funding in general. Directly linking to the strategic plan might be beyond the committee's task, but they do have access to the plan.
- Faculty retention is important as well. They help support instruction, go into the field, and set up labs. If GA goes, then it becomes a faculty member.
- Adjuncts in the hard sciences are sometimes really helped by the GA positions. Impact on the undergraduate education could be substantial as adjuncts who are willing to teach for the amount our adjuncts are paid will most likely not agree if they are not supported by GA positions.
- We would need to reimagine the faculty workload based on losing a significant amount of GA. This would be a net cost/loss because a faculty member would need to do more set-up.
- Writing center: If GAs went away, then expertise would be lost, and all that would be left would be other faculty. The only support for Graduate students in writing is the writing center, which is staffed by GAs.