

Minutes of the Graduate Council
March 25, 2022

Members in Attendance:

Jodi Cooley, Alan Itkin, Akihito Kamata, Kraka, Renee McDonald, Brian Molanphy, Alexandra E. Pavlakis, Anthony Petrosino, James E. Quick

Ex officio members: Heather Shaw

Members Not in Attendance:

Ali Beskok, Adam Jasienski, Suku Nair (ex officio), Volkan Otugen, Dinesh Rajan, Gretchen Smith

Business:

- x Minutes of the February 25 meeting: Dr. Quick asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2022 Graduate Council meeting, which were circulated to the committee before the February meeting. The motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.
- x MFA students in the Moody School: Council members were asked to review two documents with revisions intended to accommodate the inclusion of MFA students in the Moody School Moody School Administrative Handbook and the Moody School Travel Grant Guidelines. Council members provide any requested edits online, so a final version for the Council's vote could be compiled (see slide 5 below.) Updated versions of these documents were reviewed by the Council at the present (March 2022) meeting and additional clarifying edits were made based on Council members' input. Dr. Quick stated that the versions with these additional edits (see both below) would be shared with the Council after the meeting and an online vote on them held before the next Council meeting.
- x Public dissertation defenses: At the November Graduate Council meeting, the Council approved a policy to make Ph.D. dissertation defenses public and advertise them on the Moody School's website and calendar. At the February 2022 meeting, the Council voted to amend this policy to allow petitions for students to opt out of public defense of the dissertation with the stipulation that this would be the last revision made to the policy in response to the concerns raised (see slides 7-8 below). Dr. Itkin went through a revised version of the policy intended to address the concerns raised. Council members requested that the language be modified to be less specific about the situations in which an exception to the requirement that the defense be open to the public could be requested. Dr. Qu

- x Fellowship Nomination and selection process Dr. Quick stated that the goal of this discussion was to collect input on the processes for nominating applicants for Moody Graduate, Mustang, and University Ph.D. Fellowships and selecting awardees while these were still fresh in Council members' minds. There was still a long time before the next admission and fellowship cycle changes would be made immediately. Dr. Itkin went through the results of fellowship nominations so far and reviewed the nomination and selection processes (slides 15-18). Dr. Kraka suggested that the way nominees are ranked by departments might be hurting the odds of those nominees most suited for a University Ph.D. Fellowship from being awarded a fellowship, since those nominated for the Moody Fellowship will always be ranked #1, with applicants only nominated for a University Ph.D. Fellowship receiving a lower ranking. Prof. Molanphy raised four concerns: 1) committee members might need better instructions about how to evaluate candidates without GRE scores, so that qualified nominees without GRE scores are given equal consideration; 2) departments might be given better instructions for how to tailor the nomination to the criteria of the committee; 3) Reviewers might be given better instructions about how to evaluate the GPA, given the range of schools at which nominees earned their undergraduate degrees; and 4) the ratings of the committee members before the review meeting guides the discussion of the review committee more than discussion of individual nominees' qualifications and therefore the review committee might be given better instructions on using the full range of the 5-point scoring system.

- x Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Awards nomination and selection process Dr. Sheri Kunovich, Associate Provost for Student Academic Engagement and Success, and Prof. Karen Thomas, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, joined the committee to discuss this item. Dr. Itkin reviewed the nomination and selection process for the Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Awards (slides 17-18). He stated that one recommendation already made by members of the review committee was to award one teaching award to a graduate student whose primary experience was instructor of record for a course and one for a graduate student whose primary

Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

Graduate Council Meeting

March 25, 2022, 1-2:30pm, Zoom meeting

The logo for Southern Methodist University (SMU) is displayed in the bottom left corner. It consists of the letters "SMU" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the right of the "U". The background of the entire slide is a photograph of the Moody Center for the Arts at SMU, featuring its prominent dome, set against a sunset sky with colorful horizontal light streaks.

SMU®

Meeting Agenda

- Minutes of the February 25, 2022, meeting
- MFA students in the Moody School
- Public dissertation defenses
- Fellowship nomination and selection process retrospective analysis
- Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Award nomination and selection process
- Other items

SMU

February Meeting Minutes



MFA Students in the Moody School



Public Dissertation Defenses



Policy Approved by Graduate Council, 11/19/2021:

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.

Public Dissertation Defenses

Proposed revision: Publication of Dissertation Defenses and MFA Thesis

Exhibitions: 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. In cases where an open defense would create an exceptional burden or public safety risk, students may petition the Dean of the Moody School to limit attendance and announcements to SMU faculty and students. Petitions will be reviewed by the Moody School Graduate Council.

The Moody School also publicizes Art M.F.A. thesis exhibitions on the Moody School events calendar and in the Moody School newsletter.

- Fellowship Results So Far:

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Text questions on the nomination form:

- Why is the student an outstanding candidate? Please include specific examples, including test scores, research experience, etc. as pertinent. Note how this applicant compares to other applicants in your pool.
- How does this student fit into the department's strategic plan for its graduate program? For example, what types of students are you targeting and how will they contribute to the improvement of the department?
- Mustang Fellowship Specific: How will this applicant contribute to the diversity of your discipline? Please note: the Mustang Fellowship recognizes diversity broadly defined. You may wish to consider: the applicant's status as a first generation college student, veteran, or member of an underrepresented minority; the applicant's cultural heritage or geographic origins; any other aspects of the applicant's background that is underrepresented in your field.

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Fellowship Review Process Retrospective Analysis

Instructions provided at February 2022 fellowship review meeting:

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Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Awards

- Two awards, each including a \$1,000 prize, will be made annually.
- Departments (or programs not in a specific dept.) may nominate one graduate student.
- Nominations to be submitted by department chair or graduate program director by Jan. 31
- One letter of nomination from the department chair, graduate program director, or other faculty member with knowledge of the graduate student's teaching accomplishments
- The nominee's CV
- The nominee's teaching evaluations for all classes taught at SMU
- A brief statement (no more than 1,000 words) by the nominee about their teaching experience, including:
 - How have you demonstrated effectiveness in helping students to achieve the learning outcomes of the courses in which you have taught?
 - What innovative materials or techniques have you developed and integrated into your teaching?
 - How have you created an inclusive environment for the students you have taught?

Other Items



Graduate Student Travel Grant

Guidelines

1. The maximum amount of a grant is \$750.
2. Travel grants cannot be awarded retroactively; proposals must be submitted before travel.
3. Only one grant per student per academic year is awarded or funded. Please prioritize your proposals accordingly.
4. Requests with matching funds from other sources have a higher priority.
5. This grant will only fund conference travel to present an accepted paper, poster, creative project or performance (applications without documentation of acceptance are ineligible for this grant). The paper, poster, creative project, or performance must formally recognize SMU as the venue at which the work was produced.
6. Applications are accepted year-round, and must be submitted at least 10 business days prior to travel (or 10 business days prior to virtual event).
7. The proposals should be sponsored by the department chair and the graduate advisor. Department chair and graduate advisor are requested not to sponsor students who could be supported from other sources such as sponsored research, grants and contracts.
- 8.

they may use different procedures for reimbursement than the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. Please be sure you know your department's requirements before your departure.

Procedure

Using the [application form](#), please attach the following items to your submission in a PDF only. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Questions can be emailed to travelgrants@smu.edu.

Combine the following documents as a PDF for your application:

1. A proposal describing the activity and

4. Your abstract submission (accepted by the conference) with proof of acceptance (or other proof of participation in a virtual event) .

Application must be submitted at least 10 business days prior to travel (or 10 business days prior to virtual event).

The Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

Administrative Handbook

The Moody School Administrative Handbook details the School's current administrative processes and procedures. Faculty members are represented on the Graduate Council by representatives appointed or elected at the discretion of the school dean and approved by the Graduate Council April 23, 2020.

Graduate Council Quorum: An attendance of not less than 50% of the voting members of the Council + one additional member is necessary to establish a quorum for a meeting of the Graduate Council. Adopted by the Graduate Council February 13, 2020.

Annual Assessment of Ph.D. and M.F.A. Student Performance and Progress to Degree: The Moody School requires that all students be assessed annually by their advisors. The assessment is a required part of the student's progress to degree. The assessment is a required part of the student's progress to degree. The assessment is a required part of the student's progress to degree.

Publication of Dissertation Defenses and MFA Thesis Exhibitions: 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 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 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. The Moody School also publicizes Art M.F.A. thesis exhibitions on the Moody School events calendar and in the Moody School newsletter. Adopted by the Graduate Council November 19, 2021. .