McCausland Graduate Committee Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2025
Petigru 305, 3:00-4:00 PM

Present: David Hitchcock (chair), Alexander Duncan, Sheryl Wiskur, Jelena Jankovic, Gretchen Woertendyke, Eric Holt
Ex Officio: Tracy Weldon, Sonya Brown

Absent: Brett Sherman

-Minutes from September 10, 2025 meeting were approved.

-Discussion of College's offer letter template:

- There is a need for uniformity in offer letters – certain elements of required
- Should there be a second letter for assistantship renewals? The hiring letter should be distinct from the "welcome to the department" letter.
- Departments can have the flexibility to add language that is specific to their programs.
- Should add that assistantship renewals are contingent upon satisfactory performance in assistantship duties as well as satisfactory degree progression
- Add language about passing international TA language evaluation, transcript credentials, tuition supplement?
- Tracey Weldon requests feedback by Friday, Nov. 21

-Discussion of new proposed international transcript credentialing rules

- Ask for a grace period? One semester's grace period would help
- Is our proposed policy consistent with our peers?
- We can ask Harlan Smith if he has data on peers' policy
- If not, we can research this as a committee (splitting up this task)

-Decided top priority topics for the committee to look at this year:

    - How to speed up travel reimbursement for students (hopefully can find short-term solutions)

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- Summer assistantship – more opportunities for students to get paid (high-impact goal)
- Social connections with graduate students and faculty – events? (easier but less impactful)
- Stipend – how to raise (important but hard to do)
- Foreign student information before coming here (housing options, etc.)→ "Onboarding cheat sheet" (work with GSA?)
- Develop recommendations about best practices for communicating among advisors, chairs, and graduate directors

-Preliminary discussion of meeting times for Spring 2026 (David H. will send out dates in a Doodle poll)

-Next meeting date will be publicly announced soon

-Gretchen W. agreed to substitute for David H. at the Jan. 12 (1:00-2:00) committee chairs' meeting

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Notes taken by: David Hitchcock