

Colorado School of Mines – GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
September 20, 2023, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, via Zoom

Attendees:

Voting Members: 23 total (12 - majority needed for quorum). Quorum was present.

P	Soutir Bandyopadhyay (Chair)		Danielle Ostendorf (LB)	P	Andy Osborne (NSE)	P	Owen Hildreth (ME)
P	Adrienne Marshall (HSE)	P	Bettina Voelker (CH)		Jaeheon Lee (MN)	P	Jared Carbone (EB)
	Yaoguo Li (GP)		Juan Lucena (EDS)	P	Jim Ranville (GC)	P	Pejman Tahmasebi (PE)
	Suveen Mathaudhu (MME)		Zhexuan Gong (PH)	P	Ryan Venturelli (GE)	P	Dong Chen (CS)
P	Adrienne C. Kroepsch (HASS)	P	Nikki Farnsworth (CBE)	P	Rena Zhu (GSG)	P	Reza Hedayat (CEE)
			Yamuna Phal (EE)	P	Gabriel Walton (UCTE)		

Other Regular Attendees and Guests

P	Tim Barbari (OGS)		Carolyn Freedman (OGS)		Jenny Briggs (OGS)	P	Seth Vuletich
	Wendy Adams (HNRS)	P	D. Scott Heath (RO)	P	Paul Myskiw (RO)		Roxane Aungst (OGS)
P	Sam Spiegel (Mines Online)		Suzanne Beach (Payne)		Jen Gagne (Grad Admissions)	P	Kendra Stansbury (RO)
	Jon Johnson (Mines Online)		Atef Elsherbeni (EE)		Richard Krahenbuhl (GP)		

Special Guest(s): Valerie Holt, Vibhuti Dave, Jeff Ackerman, Doug Nychka, Renee Falconer, Colin Terry

Welcome

Soutir Bandyopadhyay

Briefings and Information Items

Office of Graduate Studies

Tim Barbari

Working with ITS to move forms that have a workflow to Onbase (thesis committee and defense form). Could use some volunteers from those students who are about to form a thesis committee to try out the new workflow system as well as if they are defending this fall.

Registrar's Office

Paul Myskiw

Update on Mara's position: There were a total of 55 applicants which were narrowed down to 6 that were interviewed, and we are hoping to bring a couple to campus in the next couple of weeks with an offer shortly after.

Continuing the conversation from the last meeting about PRG and PRUs. In the past two years there have been 59 PRU grades compared to 4737 total research grades entered. No proposal currently, doing more research on how many dismissals have been because of PRUs. Leaning towards doing an automatic grading. The next meeting will have a proposal to move us forward. While the default will be PRG, we still want faculty to use PRU grades for their intended use of sending a message to students that progress is not being made. We believe that those faculty that want to use the PRU grade will go in and make the change.

- **Question:** Are we voting on this now? No, go back to your department and present the idea and then we can vote at the next meeting.

Graduate Student Government

Rena Zhu

Working on two related proposals that are to be presented to this council at the next meeting. Additional background research is being done before it is presented.

Update on the "Absenteeism" policy and processes

Vibhuti Dave

(Handout in canvas to be shared with faculty and colleagues) This policy currently resides in the UG catalog under academic regulations. Student life does monitor and administrates these excused absences for the graduate students using the same policy also, there are cross-listed courses (400/500 and 4 + 1 program) which is why it is being presented to the graduate council.

It was needed to make the policy more relevant post-covid. Address when there is a drop/removed policy built into the syllabus. We need to provide guidance on when it is ok to provide make-up or when a dropped grade is ok. Constraint on courses with labs or other special activities that are difficult to make-up.

Absences are organized into 5 categories:

1. Physical and mental well-being
2. Documented and policy supported personal reasons.
3. School authorized reasons (conference etc.)
4. Athletic commitments
5. Confidential and time sensitive (administrative only)

*Students are discouraged from abusing the policy and any patterns may be investigated.

Short-term absence form has been created due to policy changes post covid to notify faculty of the absence and will note when the absence falls on the day of an exam. These are not reviewed but are kept by the Office of Student Life. General excused absence forms are verified and approved through student life. Athletic commitments are provided by athletics.

This policy will provide additional guidance when make-up work is required versus when you can use a dropped grade. Review the draft policy for specific language surrounding this change.

- **Question:** What if the syllabus says that dropped grades are only for excused absences? This is a muddy area but if the policy is spelled out it should be ok. Legal recommends that there be a good reason that not every student gets the same learning experience. The issue arose when every student gets a set number of dropped grades and someone with an excused absence must use one of theirs for the assignment that was missed.
- **Comment:** Students are essentially self-excusing and there is a difference between excused vs unexcused absence. This is a lot of work for the faculty. The studenta should be on their own to make up the learning objectives. This is why many schools do not have a policy.
- **Question:** Why do we have a policy? We have been asked to provide guidance to protect students and the faculty.

There is still a lot of flexibility in the policy to set limits in the syllabus – read the policy for more details.

More discussion at the next meeting and a vote at the following meeting before it goes to Senate. If approved, it will go into effect Spring 2024 and will be published in the catalog for 2024-2025.

New Business

Council discussion on future online approvals.

Tim Barbari

(Approval workflow handout is available in Canvas) The approval workflows for online graduate programs:

1. New online certificate or degree & no residential program with the same type/name
2. New online certificate/degree is “equivalent” to an existing residential program (and vice versa)
3. Changes to a degree program (number of credits, required course etc.)

Ultimately, everything that is a modality change will come to graduate council. We need something that is clear and in writing and is not dependent on the Grad Council Chair. When it comes to grad council it would be helpful to understand what the change is.

- **Comment:** Scenario #2 should also be a recommendation instead of just a consent agenda (like the other two options). Online modality still warrants significant thoughts/discussion/feedback for what is working/not working and what can be better since this is still new to the university.

Grad council should only be looking at the academics and allow faculty senate to deal with the resources. Faculty Senate has a firm policy that course approvals are determined by faculty senate. It was tried to leave resources to the faculty senate but ultimately grad council can discuss what they would like. Senate should also weigh in as

Program Change: Master’s in data science

Doug Nychka

(Document uploaded in canvas) Request to add an online version of the Data Science master’s that is the same as the current residential version. This program will follow a 3 x 3 + 1 design (3 modules and a mini-module) Students will need to make the case for why they are taking the electives and be approved by the program curriculum committee. If the student can make a case as to how the three electives fit together it will be approved. The only restriction is if the student wants online only, they will be restricted to Mines 500 level courses that are offered online.

- **Question:** The issue last year was that the residential program required the 3 mini-modules and those were not offered online but the online modality did not require them. Will those be built online? NOTE: The mini modules are full course (1 hour/week x 16 week course). Can you substitute online courses for the mini-modules? Innovate X will be available to both programs but there may be courses available to the residential program but not to the online program. Professional development courses will be electives and will not be required (you can pick and choose)
- **Question:** This program is not completely flushed out? Yes, this is flushed out. Add innovate X as part of the professional development.
- **Question:** Is this being presented this way because CIM is down? Yes.

It is important to make clear that not everything is available online and some courses may not be offered every semester. Change the “professional development” from required to an elective (with approval) The 6 other required courses are already available in both modalities.

- **Question:** If there is only one choice then we shouldn’t offer this program? Is Innovate X an acceptable professional development course? Innovate X is very popular and Nychka can provide numbers on this course. Innovate X (online) is a good core course and is an acceptable substitution for the online modality.

The three statistic courses will be offered as online courses when short-staffed so even the residential students are required to take this online. This is a very different experience, and we should be aware of the differences.

- **Question:** Should you bring the catalog changes to the data science program that puts the Innovate X concurrently with the online modality? Since you are currently referring to something that is not there.
- **Question:** How many are affected by the loss of in-person classes to meet the students' needs? Just to bring this as a bigger conversation.

New course: Chemistry
CHGN 535 (Physical Biochemistry)
*For the next meeting

Tina Voelker

Adjourn

Soutir Bandyopadhyay

Next meeting:

Next meeting: October 4, 2023, 4:00-5:00 via Zoom. Please send all agenda items to Soutir Bandyopadhyay (sbandyopadhyay@mines.edu) 1 week in advance.

Consent Agenda The following proposals will not be discussed unless specifically requested by the Council. Please review the following items. With no objections, approval is implied, and items will be processed accordingly.

2.1 **Approval of Minutes** – September 6, 2023

Soutir Bandyopadhyay