

Colorado School of Mines – GRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA
November 15, 2023, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, via Zoom

Attendees:

Voting Members: 17 total (11 - majority needed for quorum). Quorum was present.

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

Other Regular Attendees and Guests

P	Tim Barbari (OGS)		Carolyn Freedman (OGS)	P	Jenny Briggs (OGS)		Vibhuti Dave (UG)
	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)		Valerie Holt (AES)
						P	Kristeen Serracino (AA)

Special Guest(s): Eric Toberer, Colin Terry, Lori Tunstall, Colin Schneider

Welcome

Soutir Bandyopadhyay

Briefings and Information Items

Office of Graduate Studies

Tim Barbari

Repeated Course and GPA Policy for Graduate Students

I wanted to introduce this so that you can take it back to your respective departments and programs. We can have further discussions and vote in subsequent council meetings. This is to go back to an older policy that dates to 2007-2011. There was a repeated course policy allowing student to repeat a course and then to use the most recent grade in the GPA calculation. We are proposing a slight change of instead of having it be the most recently attempted course, it would be the highest grade received. Per the attachment, we are replacing the old language to include this.

- **Comment:** Two years ago, the undergraduates introduced a grade forgiveness policy as well. Given that we have a lot of combined students who go from undergrad to grad, it does make sense to have a similar policy.
- **Question:** Why was the policy switched initially?
- **Answer:** We are unsure why the policy was changed, but this seems to be a common policy at other universities to alleviate GPA difficulties, especially at the graduate level.
- **Comment:** We have experienced a strong desire from students (approximately a dozen per semester) to be able to have a grade replacement policy like this to get back in good academic standing. This is especially common among international students that had a semester where needed an adjustment period. The council of graduate schools in Colorado have also expressed that this has been beneficial to their institutions.
- **Question:** What prompted the discussion to bring this policy back?
- **Answer:** It's primarily because of the GPA hole that students find themselves in. Currently, if a student received an F and retakes the course to receive a better grade, the F is still included in the GPA calculation. Students will commonly take courses that they do not need

- to boost their GPA. This could be an opportunity to retain students that are struggling or for international students that are adjusting.
- **Question:** There was a policy change about a year ago to have a faster dismissal of students who were in a GPA hole. Do we need to fix that policy as well?
 - **Answer:** That policy was brought to graduate council last year, but it didn't pass. It was decided to stay with the policy we have now.
 - **Question:** Does the policy change add any complexity to the dismissal process?
 - **Answer:** No, not at all.
 - **Comment:** We may want to put an upper limit saying the student can only repeat the course a certain amount of times in order to prevent probation/suspension.
 - **Comment:** In the past, we've had a policy with no upper limit and found that students were replacing F's with F's, repeating courses dozens of times, but their overall GPA never got worse. I would highly encourage setting an upper limit and mirroring the undergraduate limit which is the first two attempts are excluded from the GPA and any attempts after would count.
 - **Comment:** The previous comment administratively is very tedious and difficult because it becomes a manual process which can take several days to complete. I encourage a harder limit of repeating a course only once, especially since it's at the graduate level and is meant to be stricter.

Registrar's Office

Paul Myskiw

Registration is underway this week for the spring semester. We're seeing normal issues with registration. With the recent change of the 400/500-level courses, we've seen more pressure with the 400-level courses filling before graduate students were able to get into them. We've addressed this issue by working with faculty to reserve seats or restricting by program. The best solution is to cross-list courses and create a 400/500-level version and distribute seats in each section, which can be adjusted as needed.

In the past, we've had a graduate admissions rule that an official final transcript showing undergraduate coursework and degree earned must be received before graduate conferral. Admissions typically would take off the hold so that students could register, however, we have found that students are ready to graduate, and we still do not have their undergraduate transcript. Last year, we let graduate students know that they must submit final transcripts to us before they can register for the spring semester. We currently have about 70 students with a registration hold due to transcripts. A dozen or so have reached out to let them register, and we've been telling them no to ensure students are admissible.

Comment: I am concerned about enforcing this rule as it discriminates against international students. WES, who assist with getting translated and official international transcripts, is backlogged and hold the process even though the student has submitted the request and paid for the services. Therefore, in some cases, it is not the fault of the student but rather of bureaucracy moving very slowly which prevents them from registering for the spring semester. They then run the risk of not getting in the courses they need to graduate.

Comment: Students are told at the time of admission that official transcripts are part of the admissions process. All students, including international students, are notified multiple times before the fall semester even begins about transcripts that are missing. We also do a final check during the fall semester and notify students that we are putting a hold on them. In our experience with WES, they are usually waiting on multiple items for the student to submit for them to do the transcript translation and that is usually the holdup. There are also 2-3 other

services in the US that do transcription translation in addition to WES. We commonly see students who wait till September to start the process of transcription translation, but it takes up to 12 weeks for the process to be completed. By that time, they are missing out on priority registration.

Graduate Student Government

Rena Zhu

We are working with Resident Life to put together resources for housing, which is becoming a bigger issue around Golden. We have also updated our website to provide more information on insurance for graduate students. We are sponsoring an international student town hall for tomorrow (11/16).

New Business

1.1

GEOPHYSICS

Yaoguo Li

[CIM 10/24]

2 course changes:

GPGN509: MULTIVARIATE INVERSION

Reactivating this course due to adding a grad version of GPGN409. We want to make the 409 content available to graduate and 4+1 students, with grad level differences. None of the original content of GPGN509 will remain. This is a cross-listed course of GPGN409 Inversion, that was just revised to include machine learning components. The cross listing will allow graduate students to take it with increased course requirement. GPGN409 revision has been approved by UG.

Question: Are the course numbers reused?

Comment: Typically, course numbers are used for 5-7 years before they are able to be reused. Mines tend to reuse course number despite how long its been since it was used previously which causes issues during auditing. We should be mindful and shoot for the 7 year time frame to reuse course numbers.

Answer: 510 has not been used for 80 years. 509 has not been used previously.

Comment: Cross-listed courses do not have to have the same last two digits.

MOTION: Motion to suspend rules for one meeting hold to approve GPGN509 course changes by Yaoguo, seconded by Tina. Motion to approve GPGN509 rule suspension was passed with 17 approved and 1 abstention.

MOTION: Motion to approve course change for GPGN509 by Yaoguo, seconded by Tina. Motion to approve GPGN509 course change was passed with 14 approved and 1 abstention.

GPGN510: MACHINE LEARNING INVERSION IN APPLIED GEOSCIENCE

The previous course wasn't offered. A new sequence of classes with a Machine Learning component are being offered. 409/509 and 410/510, thus we need the 510 course re-activated to complete the sequencing and cross list the UG version. To keep up to date with technology in the field of geosciences, we are adding and modifying curriculum to include aspects of AI and ML.

This is a revamped version of existing GPGN605 so that we can include machine learning component explicitly and renumber the course to streamline student advising. Once GPGN510 is approved, we will deactivate GPGN605. This course will also be cross-listed

as GPGN410, so undergraduate students can take with slightly reduced course requirement.

MOTION: Motion to suspend rules for one meeting hold to approve GPGN509 and GPGN510 course changes by Yaoguo, seconded by Tina. Motion to approve GPGN510 course change was passed was passed with 17 approved and 1 abstention.

MOTION: Motion to approve course change for GPGN510 by Yaoguo, seconded by Tina. Motion to approve GPGN510 course change was passed with 16 approve and 1 abstention.

1.2 MECHANICAL ENGINEERING Owen Hildreth
[CIM 10/18]
1 program change: MSPHD-ME: MS & PhD IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
Update language to allow 400-level courses until fully phased out in the main graduate catalog.

1.3 MATERIALS SCIENCE Eric Toberer
[CIM 10/26]
1 program change: MSPHD-MLAS: MS & PhD IN MATERIALS SCIENCE
This change is made to eliminate redundant testing of the student of materials covered in core classes and replace it with a task that is beneficial to the student and their advisor and improve the training of the students. This change is in line with what is done nationally at top institutions, and we have attempted to make this as beneficial for the students as possible. We want to make the following changes:

- *B- or better in every course in the program*
- *If students fail the qualifying exam at the end of the spring semester, they will take a follow-up oral exam in the summer semester.*
- *Move from a B- to a B for the minimum core GPA.*
- *Move from a written exam to a literature review and project proposal.*

We held a town hall meeting and the vast majority of participants said either strongly yes or yes to the program change.

2.1 Curriculum Item(s) for Council Vote

Vote on the "Absenteeism" policy & process

Vibhuti Dave

Only here to listen to the feedback from the departments to take back to the committee.

- **Comment:** There is ambiguity on what it means for the student to be abusing the self-service program/short-term illness. It is hard to advise the student and is hard for the student to know if they are abusing or not. We may need some guidance, what does this mean? If a faculty member notices that there is a pattern that is established (it only happens before an exam, or it always happens on a Friday) that would be something that would need to be investigated. The way the current policy is written, if a excused absence is granted then the faculty must provide a makeup assignment and an opportunity for the student to do the makeup.
- **Question:** In the current policy isn't the hurdle for an excused absence higher? The only thing

that is not being vetted is a short-term illness due to the change in policy at the doctors office post-covid.

- **Question:** How big of a problem is absenteeism and were these just isolated incidents? The biggest issue was mostly in the UG level courses with multi-section coordinated classes where the enrollments are extremely high and students we're missing a lot of work, or and especially they're missing lab work that was kind of not possible to make up. We needed to somehow, help faculty and give them flexibility on when they can make up versus when there can be a dropped grade, and the other thing like I mentioned before is that we needed to also address the fact that faculty were in violation of the current policy which legal would say you can't do. If it says that you must provide makeup, then you need to provide it.
- **Question:** Is it ok for professors to have language in their syllabus about their specific pedagogical situation. If something cannot be recreated, then that is where a dropped grad would come in.

UGC voted at their previous meeting, and it was approved with 12 approved, 2 opposed, and 1 abstention.

MOTION: Motion to approve absenteeism policy was passed with 11 approved, 2 opposed, and 3 abstentions.

2.2 AMS

Doug Nychka

[CIM 11/8/23]

1 program change:

MS-DSCI-NT: MSNT IN DATA SCIENCE

This request is to add an online version of the Data Science Masters that is the same as the current residential version. Thus, much of the justification included has been vetted from the original residential proposal. We also want to include a minor change to the current Data Science Masters to add a course.

- **Question:** Have you submitted materials on CIM?
- **Answer:** There is no submission on CIM.
- **Question:** Do you feel comfortable discussing something that is not submitted on CIM yet.
- **Answer:** No. We will postpone it until the next meeting (11/15). It will need to be a program change and a new program, so would require two submissions on CIM.
- **Question:** There was discomfort that was brought up in prior discussion regarding residential students taking online courses. A lot of courses are already offered online only that are taken by residential students. Have there been any problems/feedback from students?
- **Answer:** Some students have shared that they prefer residential courses over online courses. However, the online courses must meet a current standard through Trefny and, therefore, they are highly organized and well thought out. By and large, the students are happy with many of the intro courses being online.
- **Question:** There was mention during discussion that exams will not be updated for the online course. If not, what is the reason? Is it policy or lack of resources? Are you still committed to teaching these in-person courses for the students who are paying for in-person experience? What type of credits are professors overseeing the online course getting towards their teaching loads and service?

- **Answer:** There will be minor modifications, but the exams will not be updated. We have not heard that lack of resources is not a challenge. If the concern is cheating, data shows students who cheat, cheat, whether it's online or in-person. There will be two sections and we will give the option to the students to take it online or in-person.
- **Question:** What percentage of courses are currently offered online vs. in-person?
- **Answer:** There are currently 10 courses in the program. We are offering three statistics courses online. Three CS courses are in-person. The remaining four courses are electives which can be taken in either modality.
- **Comment:** We need to express caution when advertising resident programs taking online courses, specifically when it comes to non-resident students who pay out-of-state tuition. If they are expecting to take resident courses and the only option is online, it is important to note due to cost differentials. Also, if we're not offering an online course as an elective versus a required course that does not have a residential version, is there a different course they can take as a residential student?

In addition to the program changes, there should have been two course changes as well for changing Innov8x as an elective. We could vote on the program change first and then the course change. With a quick vote, no one felt comfortable voting without the elective courses approved first.

- **Question:** Is the Innov8x course available online?
- **Answer:** Currently, it is only offered online.
- **Comment:** This change would have residential students paying tuition for an online course. The out-of-state tuition is almost twice that of an online course. Until this is address, we do not feel comfortable voting on either the Innov8x course or the modality change.
- **Comment:** We will wait until next meeting to vote on this item.

Continuing Business (did not talk about these items)

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| 3.1 | Discussion on proposal on PRG/PRU | Paul Myskiw |
| 3.2 | Discussion on GSG proposal | Rena Zhu |
| 4.1 | Approval of Minutes – November 1, 2023 | Soutir Bandyopadhyay |

Adjourn

Next meeting: December 6, 2023, 4:00-5:00 via Zoom. Please send all agenda items to Soutir Bandyopadhyay (sbandyopadhyay@mines.edu) and Kristeen Serracino (kristeen.serracino@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.

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| 4.1 | Approval of Minutes – November 1, 2023 | Soutir Bandyopadhyay |
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