

GRADUATE COUNCIL

Faculty Senate

MINUTES

Thursday, March 20th, 2025, 2:30 PM

Graduate School Conference Room, RH 2215

PRESENT: Cinnamon VanPutte (Chair), Soondo Kweon, Liz Cali, Carole Frick, Chin-Chuan Wei, Dan Segrist, Adriana Martinez, Jill Smucker, Gloria Sweida, Eric Wrobbel, Cheryl Borowiak, Bhargav Patel

ABSENT: Andrea Keller, Therese Dickman, Ramana Madupalli, Priscilla Codjoe, Rony Die, James Monahan

EXCUSED: Bernadette Sobczak

GUESTS: Denise Cobb

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 p.m. by Cinnamon VanPutte, Chair.

I. Guest Speaker: Provost Denise Cobb

Provost Cobb wanted to give the Council an update on the program prioritization process that is ongoing. There had been an open forum on Monday that didn't go quite the way she had planned. The meeting room the forum was held in was too small and the announcement sent out that morning had not included the name of the program to be discussed. The proposal under consideration recommends to sunset the undergraduate Physics major/minor and move remaining Physics faculty to the Chemistry department. She wanted to encourage the Council to assure students that the Physics program does still exist at SIUE and students enrolled in Physics courses or the Physics program should not be alarmed. Current and fall 2025 incoming Physics students will have a path to graduate regardless of what is eventually decided concerning the Physics program. SIUE will continue to offer physics courses because physics is essential to many other degree programs.

She also acknowledged that with the proposal to end or change a program, there are people involved whose identity is tied to the program they teach. However, the University cannot continue on the path it's been on of adding programs without removing some programs. For the University to thrive there has to be opportunity for investments to be created which can't happen when resources are spread too thin.

A Council member wanted to bring to the Provost's attention inaccuracies in how some faculty may interpret the revenue from their program and the various ways that value could be misquoted, especially in the media. Provost Cobb responded that press responses will always be varied but her focus is to keep listening and allowing for discussions to take place. She also discussed the overall financial health of the University and how each program affects that in ways that might not be represented in just the revenue of the program. There are also rising costs to consider and making sure there is an allowance in the budget for things such as increases in fees and utilities.

The Provost also mentioned the challenges recently with the release of new executive orders at the end of the work week meant that Interim Associate Dean Liz Cali needed to work extra hours on the weekends. She mentioned how the University System is evaluating the executive orders. The University is operating within legal guidance .

A Council member asked when faculty promotion letters would be sent and the Provost responded that they had all been sent except for one folder that was ready for her to sign.

Provost Cobb let the Council know that another set of program prioritization proposals would be released next week that is focused on specializations.

II. Announcements

- A. Course Review Committee (CRC) Report – None
- B. Graduate Committee on Assessment (GCOA) Report – None
- C. Enrollment Management Report - None
- D. Student Affairs Announcements - None
- E. International Affairs Announcements- None
- F. Graduate School Announcements
 - i. Liz Cali reminded the Council that the new Graduate School Dean and Associate Provost for Research will be starting June 1st. He has been meeting with her twice monthly in preparation for his arrival. She wanted them all to know that the new dean has a lot to bring to the table and that it is a collaborative transition. He will want to meet with them all after he starts.
 - ii. Liz discussed the upcoming HLC visit March 31st and April 1st and pointed out the Chancellor's email from earlier that week. She wanted all Council members to pay attention to the five open forums that will take place during the visit. She encouraged the Council to look at the five criterion that will be discussed at each forum and attend each one that most pertains to them. It is important that knowledgeable faculty are present to represent SIUE. Elza Ibroscheva will also be contacting some for scheduled focus sessions. The open forum schedule should be announced within the next 24 hours.
- G. Other Announcements – None

III. Approval of Minutes of February 20, 2025

Carol Fricke motioned to approve the minutes. Gloria Sweida seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. Public Comments - None

V. Report of the Educational and Research Policies (ERP) Committee

- A. GR2425-08: Graduate Student Continuous Enrollment Policy, 1L6

Bhargav Patel let the council know that ERP had reviewed the Graduate Student Continuous Enrollment Policy, 1L6 that had minor corrections and the corrections were approved.

A question was asked about policy 1C1 that had been brought before the Council previously. Liz let everyone know that the policy has to go through a progression of approvals before it is finally approved so it is a lengthy process.

VI. Report of the Programs Committee

A. Full Program Review: Mathematics

Gloria Sweida let the Council know that the Committee had reviewed Mathematics and voted that the program needs intervention, is below capacity but is also in good standing. The committee is happy the program is considering eliminating specializations but they encouraged better communication between the dean and department.

VII. Continuing Business – None

VIII. New Business - None

IX. Adjournment

Gloria Sweida motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:37 PM. Adriana Martinez seconded the motion. The motion carried.