The meeting was called to order at 2:31 p.m. by Michael Shaw, Chair

I. Vote to allow Jen Zuercher to attend remotely
   • All were in favor of allowing Jen Zuercher to attend remotely.

II. Announcements
   a. Course Review Committee (CRC) Report – On Sharepoint
   b. Graduate Committee on Assessment (CGOA) Report – On Sharepoint
   c. Enrollment Management Report
      • None.
   d. Student Affairs Announcements
      • Jeffrey Waple clarified that any student is able to purchase their textbooks if desired and that information is provided during the rental process. A conversation followed that clarified that students cannot choose between textbook purchase or rental as the textbook rental fee is not a stand-alone fee.
   e. International Affairs Announcements
      • Mary Weishaar announced that a couple hundred new international students are expected for spring, mostly graduate students. The week before the spring semester starts is compressed due to the holidays, and ISSS is asking students to leave the Thursday morning hours before the semester starts open to attend orientation.
   f. Graduate School Announcements
      • Jerry Weinberg announced that Pre-Award Specialist position interviews will take place shortly. The Grants & Contracts Associate & Senior Compliance positions are both posted. The SIU System Collaborative grant was awarded to two faculty in the School of Dental Medicine and two faculty in the School of Medicine, and their project is related to tooth loss effects on social functions. 34 research grants were awarded to graduate students.
   g. Other Announcements
III. New Business

- Graduate Student Senators Ethan Boulanger & Olufunke Mercy Ayegbidun: Survey Results & Discussion

- Ethan & Olufunke & Olufunke Mercy Ayegbidun surveyed graduate students online and also did an in-person meet & greet. The survey asked graduate students about their challenges, and they received approximately 135 responses.

- One of the common complaints was the ratio of graduate assistant stipends to the cost of living. The other main concern was the reduced number of graduate assistantships this fall.

- Other concerns expressed included insufficient guidance from faculty on advising and instructional needs, feelings of isolation in graduate programs and a disconnection from other graduate students. Other comments included requests for free parking, capstone courses being too condensed in seven-week courses, costs of printing on campus, the cost of mandatory health insurance, guidance on thesis preparation, and requests for tutoring for graduate students. Other students expressed more personal concerns regarding time management, stress management, and balancing life responsibilities.

- Suggestions from Ethan & Olufunke included:
  1. faculty advisors clarifying expectations and connecting more frequently with students
  2. provide graduate classes where students can start preparing for their thesis
  3. support students in retention via financial support
  4. have a graduate students’ townhall or meetings within individual departments to receive feedback from students.

- Jerry Weinberg asked if the slides can be shared, and they will be shared on the committee’s SharePoint site.

- Wai Cheah asked about the breakdown of responses by major/department to allow the results to be more meaningful. Ethan responded that they are not able to provide that breakdown yet.

- Bernadette Sobczak asked if there were any positive responses, and Ethan shared that the survey questions focused on challenges. During the meet and greet discussions, they received some positive feedback. The online survey was done via Qualtrics and consisted of approximately 19 questions.

- Mike Shaw mentioned that advising at the graduate level is done typically by the program faculty, and the structure differs from one program to the next. Mike discussed the importance of mentoring for graduate students and their retention in programs. It may need to be more emphasized that faculty should utilize mentoring resources that exist and facilitate connections amongst students in programs. He also commented that he understands the pain caused by the reduction in assistantships. He appreciates the information provided by the senators and has had continued discussions with university leadership on the need for GA stipends to be increased. He agreed that more information on
who the respondents were would be helpful and that the response rate should be considered.

- Bernadette Sobczak asked about the majors who completed the survey. Ethan said he has the data but it hasn’t been broken down in that manner.
- Cinnamon VanPutte asked if graduate students are eligible to take out federal student loans. Jeffrey Waple confirmed that domestic students can, but international students cannot. Mary Weishaar commented that she has voiced her concern about how losing a GA opportunity impacts international students’ opportunity to continue in their programs.
- Jayme Swanke commented that GAs don’t work more than 20 hours a week so it is by nature a part-time position and, therefore, would not be a living wage.
- Mary confirmed that international students must verify that they have funds to support their first year of study in order to obtain a visa but not their second year.
- Heather Johnson asked if the survey distinguished between participation in online vs. on-ground students, and Ethan confirmed it did not.

IV. Approval of Minutes of October 20, 2022
- The minutes were approved with no changes.

V. Public Comments
- None.

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

a) GR2223-06: Responsible Conduct of Research and Individual Development Plan Policy
   - Update due to NSF requirements. Approved in ERP with minimal discussion.

b) GR2223-07 University Admissions Policies 1E1
   - Included needed updates regarding international students and the School of Pharmacy. Approved in ERP with minimal discussion.

   Jen Zuercher brought the above forward for Graduate Council approval. The items were approved with no opposition.

VII. Report of the Programs Committee

a) Interim Program Review: Electrical & Computer Engineering
   - Interim review report accepted with minimal discussion.

b) Interim Program Review: Mechanical Engineering
   - Interim review report accepted with minimal discussion.

c) Master’s Degree in Forensic Science 92A
   - New program proposal from several departments in CAS. Many questions were asked by the committee. The committee requested submission of several clarifying documents, including confirmation that the Illinois State Police supported a graduate program (since received), a sample curriculum (since received), letter of commitment from the Provost regarding support for faculty hires to support program (not yet received), budget clarifications that confirms
state appropriation to support program (not yet received), and an update that confirms the program will be administered by the College of Arts & Sciences and not the Graduate School (since received).

- Mike Shaw suggested that since there are still two items missing that were requested, that Graduate Council could hold a separate vote by email once all items are received.

- Jerry Weinberg provided some clarification on the state appropriation to support the program. The appropriations must be lobbied for each year in order to be approved, which happens with other existing special state appropriations. The expectation is that this appropriation will be renewed each year as it is supported by the Illinois State Police. He also clarified that in order for the program to begin in fall 2023, it must receive IBHE approval during their spring meeting, which has a submission deadline of January 11th.

- Mike Shaw mentioned that in prior years, new program budgets were not often a consideration of the Graduate Council as other administrative offices were charged with overseeing budget structures. He asked if the committee approves the academic side of the proposal but includes mention of budgetary concern if they committee would be willing to approve. Heather Johnson said the reason that it was a concern is that the letters of collation from Chemistry, Biology, and Anthropology all expressed concern over the need for additional faculty in order to support the program, so it becomes a curricular issue if the budget support is not confirmed.

- Jerry Weinberg suggested that any needed discussions regarding the curricular piece of the proposal happen today and then an electronic vote be taken once the support letter(s) are received. Therese Dickman mentioned that there are Library resource allocation concerns.

- Heather Johnson brought the interim program reviews forward for Graduate Council approval. The items were approved with no opposition.

- Cinnamon VanPutte motioned to allow for an electronic vote on the MS in Forensic Science proposal once the support letters are received, and Mike Shaw seconded. The motion was approved with no opposition.

VIII. Continuing Business

- Mike Shaw mentioned further discussions regarding graduate student retention would wait until there are more specific charges from the administration. Jerry Weinberg said that the Graduate School will make additional efforts to make faculty aware of the mentoring resources available. Jerry also mentioned the Mentoring Agreement available on Kuali Build, and Jill Smucker provided some details about the online agreement and what is available in the form, which can be initiated by either the student or the mentor.

- Heather Johnson asked if there is a sense that size of the program may be a factor in challenges with mentoring. Ethan commented that he can see that from his personal experience in Computer Science that as the program has grown there has been challenges in advising. Olufunke said that for her personal experience in Biological Sciences you must have a mentor upon admission, and she connects with her mentor almost daily. Cinnamon VanPutte asked if there is a University-wide version of an
introductory course to research and writing, and Jerry responded that each program has their own model and curriculum design. Cinnamon asked about creating a one credit hour orientation to graduate studies, and Jerry responded that some programs have been resistant to the idea. Jayme Swanke commented that Social Work does extensive onboarding with new graduate students regarding curriculum, practicum expectations, and other areas. Despite the extensive onboarding and resources available, they still have students who do not utilize the resources provided to seek answers to their questions. They also assign students faculty mentors and those mentors are not often utilized by students. Wai Cheah mentioned students did not attend the orientation offered by his department, and Jerry Weinberg mentioned ideally orientation programs would be required. Jerry also said that the Graduate Council can assist in these efforts by focusing on mentoring and onboarding efforts during the program review process.

- Bhargav Patel asked about peer support and mentoring. Jayme mentioned they utilize current students and alumni in their onboarding, but ultimately the new students must foster those connections. Cinnamon mentioned new students at the School of Dental Medicine are assigned to specific second year students to encourage those peer relationships. Heather commented that many students may not be able to participate in “extra” opportunities due to working multiple jobs. Olufunke mentioned that departments could survey their own students to gain a sense of their needs at the end of each semester.

IX. Adjournment

- Wai Cheah motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.