

**Minutes of the Graduate Council**  
**November 13, 2019**


**Members in Attendance:**

Amy Freund, Kevin Hofeditz, Alan Itkin, Duncan MacFarlane, Renee McDonald, Anthony Petrosino, James E. Quick, Dinesh Rajan, Johannes Tausch, Paul Yovanoff  
*Ex officio members:* Heather Shaw

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**Business:**

- **Introduction of new member:** Dr. Quick announced that Heather Shaw in Development and External Affairs would be joining the committee as an ex officio member. She will serve as a liaison to the Office of Development and External Affairs as the committee considers issues that will impact the use of funds from the recent Moody Foundation commitment to create the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. Ms. Shaw was one of the leaders of the development team that worked with the Moody Foundation to craft the commitment, and she brings a unique understanding of the goals and expectations of the Moody Foundation in making it. Dr. Quick recognized Renee McDonald for her contributions on the Graduate School Task Force that developed the proposal that ultimately led to the Moody Foundation commitment. Dr. Quick also recognized Alan Itkin and his predecessor as Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies, Reva Pollack, for their contributions to the effort to create a graduate school at SMU.
- **Approval of the summary of the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting:** Dr. Quick asked the Graduate Council to vote on approval of the summary of the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Council members asked if they could have more time to review the summary. Dr. Quick asked the Council members to review the summary, send comments or corrections to himself or Dr. Itkin, and to be prepared to vote on approval of the summary at the next meeting. Dr.




and internationally renowned scholars to conduct high-impact, cutting edge research at SMU. Other funding will stimulate interdisciplinary work across the university and support high-impact projects.

Council members asked what the stipend level would be for full-ride graduate fellowships. Dr. Quick stated that it would be about \$30,000 per year, but that the goal is to be nationally competitive. Council members discussed funds for graduate students to travel for conferences and agreed that this form of funding is very important to Ph.D. students' research and professional development. Dr. Itkin mentioned that the Office of Research and Graduate Studies increased the maximum dollar amount provided by graduate student travel grants from \$500 to \$750, and that students with a fellowship from the office can apply for one of these grants twice a year. This policy will presumably continue as the graduate office becomes the new Moody School.

- **Proposed administrative functions of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies:** Dr. Itkin presented a proposal for how the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies would

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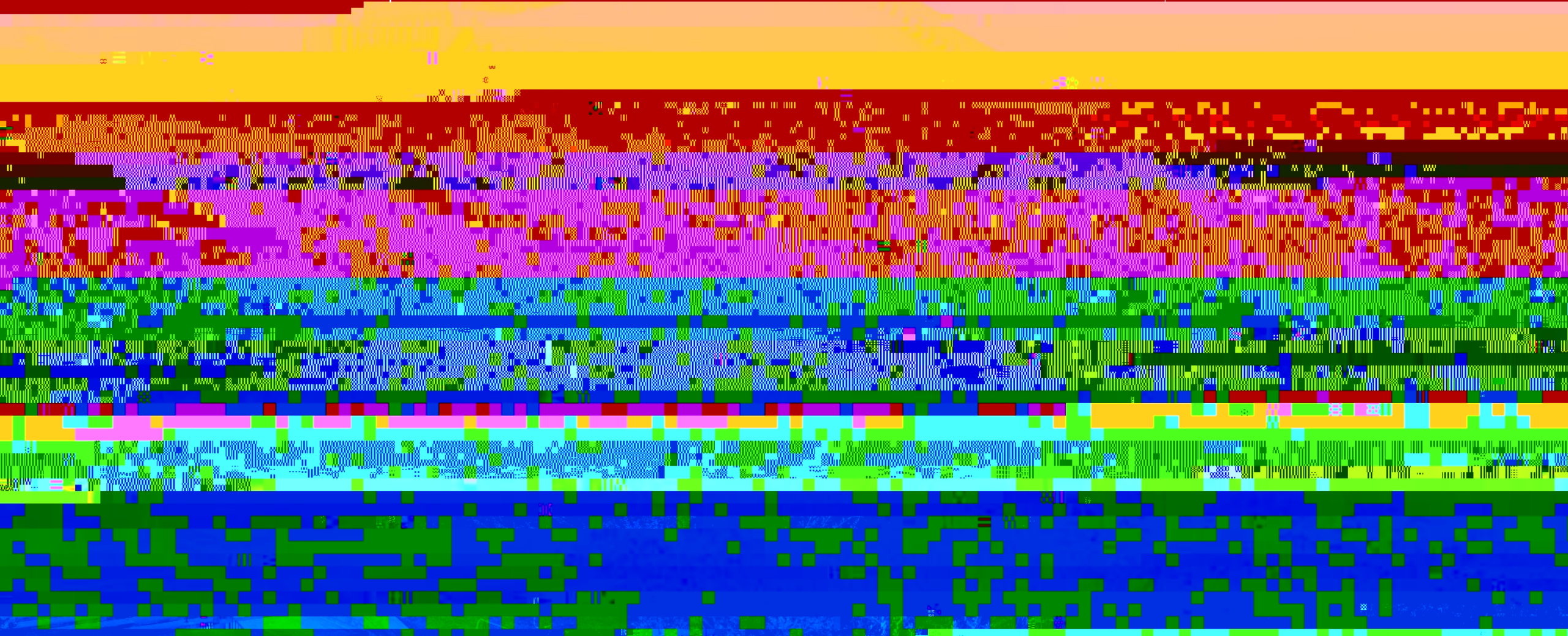
final review of applications could be designated and supervised by the dean. That would offer



# Graduate Council Meeting

November 13, 2019, 9:30-11:00am

Perkins Administration Building 311



**November 13, 2019, 9:30-11:00am, Perkins Administration Building 311**

1. Introduction of new member
2. Approval of the summary of the November 5 meeting
3. Discussion of Moody Foundation commitment
4. Proposed administrative functions of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies with regards to Ph.D. students
5. Postdoctoral appointments
6. Other items







# Administrative Functions of Moody School





## Proposal

### Final review of Ph.D. applications and release of offer letters

- Once review is completed at the school level, the application file will pass to the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies in Slate. *The Moody School will guarantee review within two business days.* If the application meets university and school standards as laid out in the catalog, or if review forms contain a reasonable explanation of why an exception to these standards is warranted, the application will be approved and the acceptance letter will be released.
- In the few cases where there are questions, the Assistant Dean of the Moody School will reach out to the appropriate Associate Dean in the school. Once questions are resolved, the application will be approved and the acceptance letter will be released right away.
- Acceptance letters will have two signatures: One from the School Dean (or designate) and one from the Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies.



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## **Review of registrar forms, approval of candidacy**

- Late add/drop and other Registrar forms that require a “school signature” will be forwarded by departments to the School Dean’s Office for review and signature and then to the Moody School. The Assistant Dean of the Moody School will sign the form and forward it to the Registrar for processing.
- Candidacy forms, signed by the Director of Graduate Studies or Department Chair, will be forwarded to the Moody School, so that the Moody School can add milestones to the student’s transcript. This will allow support accurate tracking of candidacy for data









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## **Awarding and disbursing dissertation completion fellowships**

- Ph.D. students in Lyle, Simmons, and Meadows will now be eligible for these awards. The award budget will be increased to allow for a larger target number of awards each year (aw)-1.5 882



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## **How Taking On Administrative Functions Supports the Goals of the University**

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## Aspirational Peer Universities

- University of Notre Dame
  - Reviews admissions decisions
  - Performs most proposed administrative functions for graduate students
  - Policies and Forms page: <https://graduateschool.nd.edu/policies-forms/>
- Vanderbilt University
  - Reviews admissions decisions
  - Performs most proposed administrative functions for graduate students
  - Academic Forms page:





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## Topics Germane to Improving SMU's Postdoc Processes and Policies

- Onboarding of postdoctoral scholars
- Timeline for hiring postdocs– can PI's advertise positions before the grant is officially awarded?
- Advertising positions: who should approve this?
- Teaching: how are credentials vetted?
- Teaching: what limit is there on teaching load?
- Proper coding of positions as postdoctoral scholar, research associate, etc.
- Processes to deal with performance issues
- Length of appointments
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## Vanderbilt University

- Postdoctoral Scholars are classified as their own type of employee, and have a set of benefits that is similar to but distinct from faculty and staff benefits.
- Postdoctoral Trainees (those funded on a federal training grant) have access to a health insurance plan through the same provider as for the graduate student health insurance plan; the department is billed for individual premiums for this plan.
- There are also distinct leave policies, including paid leave, parental leave, etc. Paid leave is reviewed and approved by the PI.
- Postdoctoral appointments are approved by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs under the Dean of the Graduate School (PI recommends to Chair who recommends to School Dean's Office who recommend to OPA; appointment letter is signed by Dean of the Graduate School).
- Five year time limit on postdoctoral appointments. Reappointments on a yearly basis.
- Set a minimum salary of ~\$50k.
- Benefits website: <https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/postdoctoral/postdoctoral-scholars/index.php>



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## Notre Dame University

- Postdoctoral Scholars are classified as their own type of employee and have a set of benefits that is similar to but distinct from staff benefits.
- Dean of the Graduate School ultimately approves postdoctoral appointment (requests are sent by the department to the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars).
- Five year appointment limit at Notre Dame (six years including other institutions). Reappointments on a yearly basis.
- Postdoctoral scholars website: <https://postdocs.nd.edu/policies->



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## **Boston University**

- Postdoctoral scholars who are employees are eligible for employee benefits.
- Non-employee postdocs (i.e. those on training grants and fellowships) have special health benefits.
- Five year limit on postdoctoral appointments (covers all appointments, if postdoc has multiple appointments at same university).
- Set a minimum salary of \$50,004.
- Office of Professional Development and Postdoctoral Affairs:





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## **Postdocs at SMU**

- In 2019, we reported 25 postdocs to NSF
- No standardized, formal postdoctoral appointment/reappointment process
- No tracking of postdoc success
- No services or resources specifically for postdocs
- No minimum salary
- No limit on reappointments
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