

University of Pittsburgh Faculty Senate
Student Admissions, Aid, and Affairs Committee

February 22, 2023 3:00 PM

Minutes

(video recording available upon request)

Called to order 3:00pm

Attendance

Elected Members

Natasha Baker, Dental Medicine
Barbara Rauscher Dewhirst, School of Nursing
Nancy Glynn, Co-Chair, SPH
Thottala Jayaraman, Dental Medicine
Clare Russell, Dietrich School, Department of English
Uma Satyavolu, Dietrich School, Department of English
Susan Skledar, School of Pharmacy
Sybil Streeter, Co-Chair, Dietrich School, Department of Psychology

Chancellor's Liaisons

Amanda Godley, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies

Guests

Susan Jones, University Communications

1. Approval of Minutes: November 2022 and January 2023 minutes were approved
2. Update on Graduate Student Education – Vice Provost Amanda Godley

Dr. Godley, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies shared an overview of our graduate programs at the University we to date have 359 different graduate programs, across 14 schools, including 62 programs are 100% online.

She stated her office is still trying to figure out how many programs are hybrid because hybrid can mean any combination of online in person. So they are working on trying to come up with a good definition of that as well. But they know there are quite a few hybrid programs as well.

Many of our schools have professional doctorates, and that's area actually a national area of growth. We have both research focused masters and professional masters. Initially, the professional masters that are are growing quickly across the country, and research masters are on the whole kind of shrinking across the country.

Pitt also has more certificate and micro credential programs for students who don't earn a degree per se, except some of those certificates are what's called stackable. So you could take a graduate certificate for 10 credits and then another one for 10 credits another one for 10 credits, all within a

particular area, say finance, and then get a master's degree from those 3 certificates. That's also a growing trend.

Pitt has an amazing reputation for graduate programs, both in the us and internationally by the latest Shanghai rankings. We're ranked eighty-second internationally 26, sorry, 36 nationally and eighteenth among public universities.

As for the student body, we typically have over 9,000 graduate and professional students in a given year, with the highest number in professional masters programs.

Enrollment snapshot by racial identification. About 18% of students identify as Asian or Asian. American, 7% is black. 6% is that next or Hispanic, 4% is 2 or more races and 54 as white. Over the last 10 years we've seen about a 25% increase in the percentage of students who identify as black in graduate and professional programs here, and about a 50% increase in the students who identify as Latinx. We also have about 22 of our graduate and professional body student body is international, and that stayed pretty steady over the past 10 years. There was a little decline during Covid with folks can get visas, but we're back up to where we've been pretty steadily, and also about 49% of students are in state which I think is really important to know, and they receive the in state tuition discounting as well as undergrads.

Accomplishments of our graduates:

- 430 graduate students who are on national or international fellowships or traineeships. Some of those like those sponsored by the NIH are institutional meaning. The University applies to have students enter these training programs and the Ph.D. Programs fully fund them.
- 140 students who have one individual fellowships or training ships across the University. The largest number is in the NSF Graduate Research Fellows area, which we've tended to have students in STEM fields, but it's also open to social sciences. Trying to get more students in the social sciences to apply for these.
- 8 Fulbrights last year
- 29 students on NIH T32 grants, which are institutional training grants
- 8 students on F32's, individual training grants
- Ford Foundation awards, American Heart Association fellowships, Gilliam foundation a lot of different ones, so, and we recognize them every spring at the graduate Honors commencement

Admissions:

- Decentralized across our approximately 350 different graduate and professional programs. They understandably have different admissions, criteria and committees.
- Have over 20 different admissions systems used across the University, and that's important, because we're working hard to try and get centralized standardized information about admissions. Office has been working to try to reduce the number of different systems that are used. In some cases it's just simply not possible, because for accreditation issues or certain professional organizations require programs to use their own admission system.
- Been able to centralize somewhat through the use of the the caste systems. The centralized admission systems offered by liaison, and we made that move a couple of years ago. And what it's allow us to do is collect more standardized data and more university-wide data about the applications received about applicant demographics. Example: Start being able to tell not just

racial ethnic demographics and gender demographics, but if a student was a first-generation college student, and how many first generation college students apply to grad school at Pitt and do we see change across years.

Standardized Testing:

- 2021 survey to all graduate and professional programs revealed a very large proportion of graduate and professional programs at Pitt did not require the GRE or another standardized test, approximately 75, more or less do not require the GRE, don't accept it or have it optional.

Financial Aid:

- Financial aid and support is decentralized at the University. Financial aid and support for students is distributed from the office of the Provost through OAFA, usually in the form of student loans. Sometimes schools can have their own endowments and other internal scholarships.
- One of the challenging things that the graduate level is that many students don't complete the FAFSA, and so it's difficult for us to get the kind of information we'd like to on student need.
- Federal loans are not as generous for graduate level as they are for undergrad. And so I think that makes that further reduces the number of students who complete the FAFSA and apply for Federal loans.
- Most of our PhD students have appointments as graduate, student, assistance, graduate student researchers, TAs, TFs, or trainees, or fellows, and that brings with it a full tuition, scholarship, health insurance, and a stipend.
- Trying to move to a more centralized, less cumbersome, more transparent system for financial aid as well.

Trends in Graduate and professional Education across the country:

- Seen a huge increase in demand for masters and professional programs. That's the fastest growing aspect of graduate and professional programs across the country, together with that, is an incredibly fast growing demand for online masters and professional programs.
- Programs with growth include: masters in computer science or a masters in health informatics, MBA and masters in Health administration
- A big trend connected to the demand for masters and professional programs, is what people call degree inflation. The sense that you know to further one's career goals, a bachelor's degree is no longer enough, and more education is needed. So together with that in the demand for online education we're seeing increased calls for access and affordability, particularly students who are under represented.
- Seeing across the country online and hybrid graduate programs increasing, but actually the demand enrollment in in person masters programs is decreasing.
- Nationally, seeing more calls for part time, programs and programs that have flexibility built in. Also seeing more calls for what I talked about before this stackable certificates and micro credentials where you might start off getting a 4 credit micro credential in to go back to my original example, like something in financing. And then, if you take 6 more credits, then you have a certificate, and then, if you take 20 more, you have a master. So it's a way for people to

get recognition on a transcript for completing a graduate program without committing to 30 credits at the get go.

- Also seeing a increased demand for accelerated programs from undergrad to graduate. So the ability for students to kind of compress their education in particular area, and get a master's degree in in one year, post baccalaureate, when it might have taken 2 years if they did them separately. That's another Major Trend.
- At the doctoral level a big national trend is holistic mentoring and advising. So really thinking about students. Well-being not just the research project for the doctorate. How, what are they? What are the students goals? How are they achieving balance in life. How are we supporting their individual career? Goals and she, her, hers): life paths? There's a big change in our assumptions about what PhD Students do after they graduate. Fewer and fewer are going into academia, particularly faculty positions. Many are going into industry, but importantly, the demand for PhDs has not gone down.
- In terms of international students at Pitt and elsewhere, the largest group of international students in the past have been from China, and we're seeing fewer students, locally and nationally, from China, applying to graduate programs and more students from India, as a middle class in India grows at a very quick, very fast rate.
- Dr. Godley showed data for Pitt for the past 10 years (see slides). Mostly masters, professional masters programs that have decreased, while PhD has stayed fairly steady, and professional doctorates have even risen a little. So in some fields. Professional doctorates like nursing, are kind of taking the place of masters degrees for specialization.

Graduate Studies Office Strategic Plan (see slides for detail):

- Spent whole year working on a strategic plan for graduate studies and getting the input of various stakeholders from faculty to students, to Deans, to Senate committees.
- Wrote a mission statement and focused in on 7 goals for the future. So in our mission statement. We look both at supporting graduate programs and also graduate students. Pitt very much committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in graduate studies in a variety of ways and to contribute to the strength of the university through thinking about how graduate studies can continually evolve.
- Want to continue to grow our graduate and professional programs and research. That is a huge part of the University of Pittsburgh's identity at the same time that we want to be sure that students are here are supported, that students receive the kind of holistic support they need to succeed. We also want to help streamline graduate admissions to take some of that administrative burden off each of the 350 different programs. Example: The onboarding process for graduate students with appointments has is now going to be specific to graduate students, and it's going to allow both graduate students to receive a clearer message about onboarding for their appointments. And it's going to allow basically program administrators to skip a step in getting student records in place for that to happen. So there are lots of small ways in which we're trying to really streamline administration for folks and make it more efficient and less cumbersome.
- Trying to pay for hotel rooms for graduate students who go to conferences which turns out to be a really complex process.

- Expanded the graduate studies team to focus on: 1) career and professional development, 2) helping schools develop new innovative graduate and professional programs, such as online masters programs and 3) focusing on diversity equity inclusion and belonging among grad students.
- Expanded Pitt2Pitt scholarship program, which is currently in its third year. This is a program of up to \$7500 a year of scholarship, money for Pitt seniors, and all Pitt alumni, including seniors and alumni, from the branch from the regional campuses.
 - Over 100 professional masters programs that participate
 - Comes from the idea that we know a very high proportion of our undergrads want to go on to grad school. We know they're terrific students, would like them to stay at Pitt. Godley, Amanda (she, her, hers): And we've also as part of that embarked on the expansion of a 30 year.
 - Expanding the prestigious program for doctoral students called the K. Roy Orvis Fellowship Program. Next year we will be expanding those fellowships from 17 to 30 across the University and students will receive holistic mentoring and cohort based mentoring as part of that program, as well as a fellowship for their first year and 5 years of guaranteed funding.
- Launched a program, a peer mentoring program for new international graduate students.
- Started to expand more support for under represented students just at Pitt, including support for first generation students through both the Book Club and through coordination with some of the work that's happening at the undergrad level. Like the McNair scholars program.
- Trying to really make it transparent to students who go to if they need help and support, including the Ombuds people.
- The counseling center has developed more groups just for grad students or just for international students.
- Supporting holistic admissions is going to be really important. At the graduate level we are starting to think about admissions. If the Supreme Court rules this spring or summer, that affirmative action is illegal, or it must be discontinued. Streeter, Sybil Anne: Amanda, can I just ask one follow up question about something that you touched on in your presentation? But a few years ago in our committee we looked into the

Communication with students and faculty:

- Adding a monthly newsletter to grad program directors and administrators (committee was supportive of that) Baker, Natasha: It's very cool. Can I ask one more thing. I'm really interested in the self assessment is that in the context of the career exploration is that self assessment
- Graduate and professional student Appreciation Week, which is the first week in April. We are working with GPSG, the graduate student government to hold all of our sponsored events.

Discussion on timing of Graduation Applications

- Vice Provost Godley will discuss with Registrar regarding options to change this stressful situation for doctoral students.
- Updating academic policies in process. Some are being decommissioned.

3.2023-24 Co-chair candidates - Nancy and Sybil reminded committee to let us know if you are interested in being a co-chair next year.

Future meetings

March 22: Data governance and Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC); Chad Burton, Data and Privacy Officer, Pitt IT

Meeting Adjourned 4:12pm