

Doctoral Committee Meeting  
Notes  
Friday, November 5, 2021

**Present:** Emily Dacquisto, Susannah Paletz, Niklas Elmqvist, Eun Kyoung Choe, Ekta Shokeen, Katrina Fenlon, Jeff Waters, Kate Izsak, Joel Chan

1. Sub-committee updates
  - Admissions + office space
    - i. [Memo from the Admissions & Space Subcommittee](#)
    - ii. Internally sharing admissions / PhD students data: what data would you like to see?
      1. Number of applications, admissions, acceptances year to year / growth
      2. PhD student attrition
      3. Expectations regarding funding and other support (e.g., space, travel funding, summer funding, other resources, etc.)
      4. Vouching system
        - a. “What is the significance of me vouching for someone?”
          - i. Implications of vouching for someone that you are not looking to primarily advise
        - b. Some do not see the vouch as a real commitment or intention to accept the student as their main advisee
    - iii. How do we prioritize TA-funded slots?
      1. There are more faculty that want TA funding than we can provide
      2. Good news is there is a need going forward for more TAs in programming, data science, and design with the implementation of the two new undergraduate majors
      3. Will return to this discussion at a later time
    - iv. Reviewed the Applicant Evaluation Form and revised the scale from 1-5 to 1-7
      1. Remaining issues:
        - a. Should we add additional research expertise areas to the question "Which research area(s) best describes this applicant's research interests? Please check all that apply." and, if so, which one(s)?
        - b. Any suggestions for the language for the new 7 point scale for disciplinary match and merit?

- i. Update to: “Applicant is an exceptional match for iSchool research”
      - ii. A 7 point scale might not even be enough granularity
        - 1. Suggestion to do a 1-10 point scale
    - c. Also, should we add language for 4 (the middle number) or leave it for numbers 1 and 7 only?
      - i. For a 1-7 scale, then no
      - ii. For a 1-10 scale, then yes
    - d. Will circulate another draft of the review form once more
  - v. Development on PhD student space
    - i. Talk to 1st & 2nd year students to hear their feedback about the space
    - ii. Talk to Dave B. about space if we admit another ~20-30 student cohort
- Professional development
  - i. Tetyana will send out the job description for a PhD Ambassador this coming Monday
    - 1. Hiring will take place in a few weeks
    - 2. Need to figure out supervision
  - ii. How many students are on the job market this year? Should we provide specific support for them?
    - 1. ~9 students on the job market this year
- 800-level courses
  - i. [In-progress doc](#)
  - ii. Kate is not opposed to running a smaller course (~3 students), but it’s not ideal and we would need be careful about scheduling it twice
  - iii. We do not want to knowingly run a small course
  - iv. Next step would be to work with Jess Feltner or the [ischoolfacquery@umd.edu](mailto:ischoolfacquery@umd.edu) email to create the form in Jira
    - 1. Plan to create and implement the form early 2022
  - v. Discuss a more concrete timeline
    - 1. Plan for first review in early February
  - vi. Decisions will be made by the Committee (versus only Eun Kyoung & Kate)
    - 1. Should it be a subcommittee instead of something that takes place only during monthly meetings?
      - a. Yes, this is helpful
      - b. Also include the 1 credit reading seminars
- Teaching training for doctoral students

- i. [Teaching education doc](#)
  - ii. Plan for the courses developed by students to be offered as Gen Ed once and then faculty directors could decide to keep them or not
  - iii. Possibility for students to revamp a current course?
    1. Especially a newer version of a course that has been dormant
    2. This would involve approvals, faculty directors, etc. and would be more challenging in general
  - iv. Implications for course load in general for PhD students
    1. The two 1 credit courses should not be a heavy lift
    2. They are training opportunities to make sure they are going into the classroom successfully
    3. Students do not need to be Instructors of Record, they can stay as TAs if they chose to
  - v. Give more thought to the 1 credit requirement for TAs in the first year
    1. Would need to update the Handbook, think about any exception cases, etc.
    2. Possibly offer this in the Summer instead of their first semester?
2. Discussion: Spring priorities
    - Subcommittee for proposal reviews (special topics & 1 credit reading seminar)
    - Hold this discussion for next meeting
  3. Discussion: Application fee waivers
    - In addition to the fee waivers provided by the Graduate School: <https://gradschool.umd.edu/feewaiverinformation>
    - Could put in a request for the iSchool's special project funding to be able to offer fee waivers for the first 100 applicants or something similar
      - i. This could also be a gateway for providing Summer funding
    - Application fee waivers are intended for those who can contribute to the iSchool's research community