

2020 Report of the Chair of the Graduate Faculty Organization

Role of the Graduate Faculty Organization (GFO):

- Faculty assembly that is advisory to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies (GoGS).
- Oversees design and implementation of graduate education, including the didactic curriculum, and research efforts of the students of CoGS. Graduate Council, a representative subgroup of the GFO, directly advises the Dean on these areas.
- GFO Members serve as thesis sponsors of graduate students, actively participate in teaching graduate level courses offered by CoGS, vote on curriculum issues pertaining to the Program in which they have primary membership.

Who is the GFO?

- Faculty members with full-time primary appointment to a Basic Science Department that has a CoGS-approved Program leading to a PhD or MS degree may join the GFO. These Basic Science Departments are Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Cell and Developmental Biology, Microbiology and Immunology, Neuroscience and Physiology, and Pharmacology, all of the College of Medicine.
- Other faculty (for example, with adjunct appointment to a Basic Science Department) may join the GFO after nomination by a Basic Science Chair, and approval by the GFO membership by vote.
- Current Officers: Chair David Pruyne, Vice-Chair Peter Calvert, Secretary Eric Olson.
- GFO Representatives to the Upstate Faculty Council: Peter Calvert, Eric Olson. Alternate Representatives: Jennifer Moffat, Daniel T'So. Non-voting member of UFC: David Pruyne

Accomplishments of the GFO and CoGS Over the Past Year:

- Students of CoGS
 - Currently, 126 PhD students (including 19 new from Fall 2019), 5 MS students.
 - For 2020: 3 MS graduates, 11 PhD graduates, 2 MD/PhD graduates
 - Expected matriculation for Fall 2020: 16 - 19 students. Application numbers were down, but this is consistent with what other schools are experiencing this year.
- GFO Membership Expansion: 19 new faculty across ten primary departments joined the GFO since January 2019.
 - Highest number in at least 10 years, of faculty looking to serve as thesis sponsors for graduate students.
- The Office of Graduate Studies is fully staffed after a three-person turnover of personnel in Fall 2019.
- Appointment of new MD/PhD Coordinator Amit Dhamoon.
- Coordinated and participated in expanded Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program, with 30 undergraduate students mentored by faculty across all four Colleges and SUNY ESF.
- Updated guidelines for Qualifying Examinations, including reducing size of Committee from six to five faculty.
- Continued offering of Nanocourses, and development of new ones, bringing total number now to 22. <https://www.upstate.edu/grad/curriculum/nanocourses.php>
- Students participated in successful virtual Ross Memorial Student Research Day, with Keynote by Roland Nusse from Stanford.
- 8% increase in Research funding.

COVID-19 Adjustments to GFO and CoGS Efforts:

- Converted nearly all spring classes to online format.
- Research labs were put into hibernation, but starting a phased reopening this week.

- Will continue with online classes, thesis defenses, and seminars, with hope of return in the Fall to face-to-face classes with social distancing.
- Search for Neuroscience Chair is active, but on a temporary hold.
- 2020 SURF Program has unfortunately been cancelled for safety reasons.

Business to be Taken Up for the Next Year:

- Elect new GFO Officers for three-year terms.
- Revision of the Foundational Curriculum for CoGS students, to update content, methodology of teaching, and scope of curriculum.
- Consideration of converting Physiology, PhD program into a Vision Physiology Program, based on Upstate's strong expertise in this area.