

# GENERAL SESSION AGENDA

Monday, July 20, 2020

2:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

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- I. Approval of April 27, 2020 minutes (attached)
- II. Announcements and updates
  - A. New DGS update
- III. For discussion or action
  - A. Course proposal name change – African 983: Interdepartmental Seminar in African Studies Topics.
  - B. Fall 2021 Admission Targets (attached)
  - C. Smart Restart Letter from History Grads (attached)
    - Response from Abadie/Normand (attached)

<b>GRAD PROGRAM EVENTS</b>	
<b>July 20</b>	RO releases new course schedules for Fall 2020
<b>July 21</b>	Grad Staff & Grad Student Forum
<b>Aug 20</b>	New Faculty Orientation
<b>Aug 24</b>	New Grad Student Orientation
<b>Aug 25</b>	New TA Orientation
<b>Sept 1</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Grad Council Mtg of AY 20-21
<b>Sept 2</b>	Fall 20 Instruction begins
<b>Sept 14</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Dept Meeting of AY 20-21

Graduate Council  
**GENERAL SESSION MINUTES**

Monday, July 20, 2020

2:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., Blackboard Collaborate (Online)

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Present: Dennis (Chair), Ciancia, Hennessy, Houck, Rock-Singer; Abadie, Normand, Gramer; Cerepak, Crifasi, Lehrer, Walsh.

- I. Minutes of April 27, 2020 meeting – Approved
- II. Announcements and updates
  - A. New DGS update – Dennis
    - i. Prof. Daniel Ussishkin to begin August 1, 2020
- III. For discussion or action
  - A. Course proposal name change – African 983: Interdepartmental Seminar in African Studies Topics - Approved
  - B. Fall 2021 Admission Targets – Approved
  - C. Smart Restart letter from history grads – Discussed
    - i. GC Faculty invited to online Grad Forum, 7/21/20, 10:00 a.m.

In 2019, the Grad Council approved targets for the fall 2020 cohort based on a calculation of long-term program targets that was adjusted for the current program situation with regard to various factors, such as being over or under target recently, the student/faculty ratio, available TAs and external fellowships in specific fields, etc. For the fall 2021 cohort, I propose using the same calculation method to set target percentages, but having the new DGS (Daniel) and Leslie make adjustments in fall, 2020, once they know more about Grad School funding and the needs of current students. The calculation below was made by averaging the total number of faculty and FTE in each program divided by the department totals, to produce a percentage share of the base targets for each program.

Number of faculty per field, by bodies, with at least a partial pay appointment in History. Each person is assigned to one primary area. People with overlapping interests can put in part of an offer from their home group and combine it with a partial offer with someone from another geographic area to take a student:

**Average of Body/FTE % of Dept. whole.**

Africa=	5.71%
East Asia=	11.42%
Europe=	31.58%
HSMT=	13.23%
Latin America=	3.02%
Middle East=	3.80%
South Asia=	1.90%
Southeast Asia=	3.80%
United States=	25.52%

**Total Bodies: Bodies as % of Dept.**

AF=3	05.17%
EA=6	10.34%
EUR=17	29.31%
HSMT=9	15.51%
LAC=2	03.44%
ME=2	03.44%
SA=1	01.72%
SEA=2	03.44%
US=16	27.59%
Total=58	

**Number of faculty per field, by FTE:**

Total FTE	%of Dept. FTE
AF=3	6.25%
EA=6	12.50%
EUR=16.25	33.85%
HSMT= 5.25	10.94%
LAC=1.25	02.60%
ME=2	04.16%

SA=1            02.08%  
 SEA=2           04.16%  
 US=11.25       23.44%

Total=48

Students per faculty member: **Department average** for 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 = **2.25**. In 2019, we calculated that with current funding, the average faculty member could take a graduate student once every three years, and with a 7.5 year average time to degree, 2.25 students at any given time was about right. Some faculty do not take graduate students, so it is OK if some faculty take more, as long as they can advise them well and have agreement of their field. However, currently, we have two geographic groups that are well over the average: Southeast Asia currently has a three-year average of 4.3 students per faculty member, and the US group has 3.0.

Additional considerations for each Program
Africa: Six students in last five years, on target, but only 2 in last three years, one below target. Obligations very low after 2021-2022. Room to take someone this year.
East Asia: Bulge in support obligations 2020-21, TAships are somewhat out of balance due to course releases and leaves. East Asia has been below its long-term target of funded students, but has brought in three military and self-funded students who are not on package.
Europe: Support in balance. 14 students over three years.
HSMT: Support in rough balance the last 3 years, nine students in three years. Two new faculty coming in who may end up teaching large courses.
Latin Am C: recruited 3 for 2019 on target of 1. Zero in 2020. Lack of TAships for second year.
Middle East: Dan and Aaron wanted a student in 2020, but the accepted student did not come. Could round up for them to have two offers this year.
South Asia: Need to ask Mou if she wants to start taking grads yet.
Southeast Asia: No target for 2019. One student (Ik) coming in 2020. Still has highest student/faculty ratio. Bulge in 2021, 2022? But fairly close match TAships to students because Mike Cullinane regular has TAships for Anne and Al's advisees.
United States: 3-year matriculation a little above target. Two over assigned target last cycle. Student/TA ratio a little in the red. Excess student/faculty ratio.

I propose that the GC approve allowing the new DGS and Leslie to apply the base percentages calculated above, and specific fields factors in recruiting the 2021 cohort. If in fall, we decided

to reduce the incoming class by 1/3 in order to reallocate Grad School money to current students, this would give a target of 10 in History (15 has been the target) and 1.7 in HSMT (2.5 per/year is the long-term base target agreed to in the 2017 merger). Figures below could be adjusted in fall before the call for nominations goes out based on final information from grad school on the yield-rate calculation, funding, TAships, current faculty/student ratios, and recent recruits.

Applying the averages calculated above to the target for the smaller cohort would give about twenty offers total in History and four in HSMT. Fractional offers could be combined with other programs to make an offer. This method works better than having a separate IPS target.

Africa target =  $05.71\% \times 10$  targets, x 2 offers per target = 1.14 offers (1.5 offer)

East Asia target =  $11.42 \times 10$  targets, x 2 offers per target = 2.28 offers (2.5 offers)

Europe target =  $31.58 \times 10$  targets, x 2 offers per target = 6.46 offers (6.5 offers)

HSMT = 1.7 targets, x 2 offers per target = 3.4 offers (3.5 offers).

Latin America =  $3.02\% \times 10$  targets, x 2 offers per target = 0.6 offers (1 offer)

Middle East =  $3.80\% \times 10$  targets, x 2 offers per target = 0.76 offers (2.0 offers, bump up because nobody came for fall 2020, Dan and Aaron want to get program started).

South Asia =  $1.90\% \times 10$  targets, x 2 offers per target = 0.38 offers (1 offer, depending if Mou wants to start taking grads)

Southeast Asia =  $3.80\% \times 10$  targets, x 2 offers per target = 0.76 offers (0.5 offers, recruited successfully for fall 2020, highest faculty/student ratio still, approximately double the standard ratio).

US =  $25.52\% \times 10$  targets, x 2 offers per target = 5.1 offer (5 offers, over s/f ration).

### **Summary:**

Africa: 1.5 offers

East Asian: 2.5 offers

Europe: 6.5 offers

HSMT: 4 offers

Latin America: 1 offer

Middle East: 2 offers

South Asia: 1 offer

Southeast Asia: 0.5 offers

US: 5 offers

## Lisa Normand

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**From:** Robert Christl <robert@taa-madison.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 15, 2020 8:57 PM  
**To:** Leslie Abadie; Lisa Normand  
**Cc:** Leonora Neville; Joseph Dennis  
**Subject:** History grads and Smart Restart  
**Attachments:** Smart Restart Letter.pdf

Hi Leslie, Lisa:

I'm sending along a letter collectively drafted by graduate students in the department addressing the university's Smart Restart. As it says in the letter, it is a product of many conversations and outreach to gauge how grads are feeling about a potential return to in-person work in the fall. We hope that this can be a jumping off point for our conversations on July 21.

Thank you so much for all you do to support us! If you have any initial questions, thoughts, or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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In solidarity,  
Robert Christl  
AFT-Wisconsin, Local 3220

Dear Leslie and Lisa,

Following UW-Madison's announcement of Smart Restart, the Teaching Assistants' Association (TAA) began collecting graduate students' thoughts regarding a hybrid model for a return to work on campus in the fall. Organizers in the History Department generated a survey as part of this campus-wide effort. In the week since the survey's publication, forty-one graduates from our department have responded. Based on the data collected, we have arrived at the following preliminary conclusions: a large majority of graduates do not feel comfortable working in-person; the slight majority who are willing to work in-person feel that they are obligated by the circumstances and have little choice; graduates who will not be working in-person are still very concerned for their colleagues' well-being; and graduates require a number of concrete measures to be taken in order to feel less at risk in the classroom. We are asking that departmental administrators respond to these concerns and requests at the July 21 town hall meeting.

As of July 15, forty-one graduate students in the History Department, or approximately one-third of all current history graduates, have responded to the survey, which was distributed to a large cross-section of members of all cohorts (except the incoming cohort, whose members will presumably all be on fellowships this upcoming academic year). The response rate is relatively high considering that some graduate students who will not be TAs in the fall may not have viewed taking the survey as necessary or helpful. When asked how they felt about teaching on campus in the fall, 84.6% of respondents said they felt "uncomfortable," 10.3% said they felt "comfortable," and 5.1% said they had "no opinion." By contrast, when asked if they were willing to teach on campus in the fall, 52.6% respondents signaled their willingness to teach, 36.8% said they were "not willing," and 10.5% had "no opinion." Almost all of the respondents who indicated that they were "uncomfortable" but also "willing" offered written comments explaining their answers. Some individuals in this group stated that they were willing to teach on campus in the fall because they considered themselves as being at low risk of falling gravely ill from the coronavirus and would make a sacrifice if that helped to ensure that high-risk graduate students could teach online. Others said they were willing insofar as they need to earn a living in the fall, and two respondents who self-identified as international students said they were worried about retaining their legal status and permission to stay in the U.S. Finally, two respondents simply stated that they felt they didn't have an alternative. Taken together, these responses suggest that graduate students who say they are willing to teach overwhelmingly do so because they are facing stark choices—between one's own safety and that of others who may be at higher COVID-related risk, between one's health and one's livelihood or student status. That many graduate students see themselves confronted with such choices is morally problematic, to say the least.

Another question on the survey asked History graduates to identify the changes that they feel would need to be made—i.e., what criteria would have to be met—for them to feel comfortable working on campus in the fall. Here, the most frequently invoked criteria (selected by 87.5% of respondents each) were "a lenient policy addressing the difficult circumstances of international students who may be forced to travel or are unable to" and "measures must be put in place to prevent overwork for teaching assistants." Regarding the latter, one respondent additionally noted, "There needs to be a mandatory meeting for all faculty, instructors, and TAs about

workload expectations to prevent overwork due to individual decisions by faculty.” A clear majority of respondents also demanded that the following criteria be met:

- Graduate employees must receive personal protective equipment (85%)
- A COVID-19-specific policy outlining what will happen if a TA gets sick and can no longer work (82.5%)
- Graduate employees should have the option to move all their sections online (77.5%)
- Graduate employees must receive hazard pay (75%)
- Graduate employees should have COVID-19-specific sick days (75%)
- Training for how to teach in a pandemic atmosphere (75%)

Other criteria individually added by respondents include a “sick leave policy that doesn’t depend on other, overworked grad students picking up the slack for free,” “department support for creative teaching solutions,” and “clearer guidelines on the work expectations for graduate students concerning their own research vs. their teaching responsibilities.”

We hope that—in addition to being an opportunity for listening and exchange—the meeting on July 21 will also provide clarity as to which of these criteria the History Department is able to fulfill and/or willing to lobby for with the central University administration.

Finally, in order to illustrate the depth of discomfort felt by graduate students in the History Department, we want to summarize the other written comments offered by respondents. These written responses reveal four key concerns from graduates about their new working conditions at UW-Madison. These are: the habits and behaviors of undergraduates that may potentially spread the COVID-19 virus; the risk of using public transportation; the increased risk of exposure to the people graduates live with; and the reality that the COVID-19 cases are rising in Dane County.

With regard to teaching in-person, graduate students worry that not all undergraduate students will take preventative measures in their daily lives, which could lead to other students or the instructor getting sick and could disrupt learning if the instructor has to take time off to recover. Related to this issue is the fact that TA’s don’t have a procedure to follow if they do contract COVID-19. Moreover, some graduates expressed fear of retaliation if they canceled in-person instruction because students refuse to wear a mask. Another issue is the logistics of students and staff using public transportation to commute around campus and to their homes. For those who lack other economical modes of transportation and require long bus rides to get to campus, in-person instruction becomes especially dangerous because it exposes them to a variety of commuters in close quarters for an extended period of time. In addition, several graduate students shared that they live with family members or partners who have pre-existing conditions or are in multiple high-risk categories for COVID-19. They do not feel comfortable working in-person with groups of students on a regular basis, especially since people in the 20-29 age group represent approximately 1,400 of the 3,250 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Dane County. This number will continue to rise when students return to campus in the fall.

The data we have presented demonstrates that there is a lot of anxiety regarding a potential return to in-person work. Although we appreciate Professor Neville’s email sent on June 25, graduate students remain concerned for their health, their families’ health, their students’ health, and the health of the Madison community that would be jeopardized by the university’s decision to bring

forty thousand students back to campus. Reports of individuals opposed to wearing masks, along with the recent spike in cases, have demonstrated just how difficult it has been to control people's behavior with regard to proper safety protocols, indicating that holding students to a pledge will not be sufficient, especially without appropriate means to enforce it. Clearly, preventative rather than reactionary and adaptive measures are needed. In this, we graduate students stand in solidarity with staff for whom working from home is not feasible.

We know that the department has been wedged between a rock and a hard place. We know that this health crisis has been aggravated by the federal government's catastrophic mismanagement of the pandemic; the state government's timid response to Republicans' and the State Supreme Court's obstruction of necessary public health measures; and the university system's reliance on tuition dollars (rather than state funding), which exploits students. Still, we believe that students and workers should not be compelled to navigate a societal crisis as individuals. They should not be presented with the impossible choices of lost income or potential infection with COVID-19, which poses, in addition to sickness and possible death, unknown long-term consequences. Any and all measures to keep our communities safe must be prioritized over profit.

Thank you for your attention to this letter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,  
The concerned graduate students of the History Department

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**From:** Leslie Abadie  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 16, 2020 3:42 PM  
**To:** Robert Christl; Lisa Normand  
**Cc:** Leonora Neville; Joseph Dennis  
**Subject:** RE: History grads and Smart Restart

Dear Robert,

We want to acknowledge receipt of the letter and to tell you that we appreciate the hard work behind it as well as its thoughtful, problem-solving approach. We share the concerns raised, and we have been working throughout the summer to address many of them at both the grad program and departmental levels. As the letter noted, there are several items that are beyond our immediate control and require a higher level of attention within the UW-system.

We are glad that History graduate students have voiced their concerns and we look forward to the discussion on Tuesday. As a side note, the forum will be recorded for those students who may want to listen at a later time.

Please pass this message along to everyone who had a hand in putting the letter together.

Thank you, Robert!  
Lisa and Leslie

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