

**Graduate Council**  
**Wednesday, October 3, 2018**  
**KC 401**  
**2:00pm**

**Agenda**

**Discussion of Accelerated Bachelors Masters (ABM) program -**

In AY17, we began a discussion of challenges in The Graduate College's Accelerated Bachelor-Master's (ABM) program. The first of these related to minimum GPA for entering the program. Historically, The Graduate College utilized a minimum of 3.5, with the intention that undergraduates taking graduate courses should be in the upper 25% of their class. A number of programs argued the a minimum GPA requirement of 3.5 should not apply to their courses as the had a higher degree of rigor and the top 25% of their students had GPA's lower than 3.5. The Graduate College conducted an analysis of GPAs by program. The results suggested this perception was not supported by data. However, The Graduate College agreed to make the minimum GPA 3.5 or the top 25% of the graduating class GPA in that major, whichever was lower.

Last year, we brought other challenges to you. While the program worked well for some majors, it was not being strategically used in others, resulting in what appeared to be a non-strategic approach to ABM. We became particularly concerned when undergraduates were allowed to take multiple graduate courses in a single semester while already pursuing a full undergraduate load. In a number of situations, the undergraduate students could not perform well in their graduate classes, threatening their ability to obtain their undergraduate degree. In other situations, the ability to participate in ABM turned almost entirely on what advising a student received. We also had challenges arising from ABM students contending they "were told" if they were approved for ABM, they were "automatically" accepted into a graduate program and believed they could skip all other graduate application/acceptance requirements. Further, the lack of structure resulted in a significant burden on Graduate College and other University personnel as all ABM registration and changes have to be manually entered as exceptions across multiple University systems. Additionally, while The Graduate College supports the ABM program, each participating student represents an investment of \$900+ to the University's graduate funding. This investment needs a higher certainty of benefit to the University's graduate enterprise. Finally, with changes in federal financial aid regulations, a lack of a "structured" ABM program could lead students to being ineligible for federal financial aid.

As a result of these discussions and analysis, last February, we presented a number of proposed changes to the ABM program. We invited comments and input from you on this. Ultimately, we agreed that starting in Fall 2018, programs wishing to participate in ABM needed to have a structured program with identified "pathways" to ABM. However, given the current moratorium on curriculum changes, we are now proposing a two - step process.

First, during the curriculum moratorium we will tighten the language of the current ABM program to counter perceptions that students are not accepted as graduate students, but rather undergraduate students approved to take graduate courses counting in their undergraduate program. They will then still need to apply and be accepted to their graduate program. While it is understandable that a program's faculty may favorably view an undergraduate's performance in a graduate class as an indicator to likely success in a graduate program, participating students must understand that - under our current system - participation in ABM is not an automatic acceptance into a graduate program and they must still meet program requirements. Depending upon when the moratorium is lifted, we envision "sunsetting" this process no later than AY19.

The second phase is to develop "3+2" programs designed and approved through the curriculum approval process. We intend to adopt a program very much like the UGA Double Dawgs program. Please see <http://doubledawgs.uga.edu/> for program overview and specifically, [https://syllabus.uga.edu//files/SampleDD\\_ProposalSystem.pdf](https://syllabus.uga.edu//files/SampleDD_ProposalSystem.pdf) for what a proposal might look like. At the current time, departments can begin the discussion of creating appropriate "3+2" programs now, to be ready for when the curriculum pause is lifted. We would be happy to provide support to programs considering how these proposals should be designed.