The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m.

I.  ACTION ITEMS:

1. Minutes from the November 15, 2018 Graduate Council meeting. A motion to approve was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

CERTIFICATES:

2. Proposal from the College of Journalism and Communications for a modification to the curriculum of the graduate certificate in Global Strategic Communication (#13290). Dr. Michael Weigold was present for discussion. A motion to approve was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

3. Proposal from the College of Public Health and Health Professions for a modification to the credit hours of the graduate certificate in Psychiatric Epidemiology (#13311). A motion to approve was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

II.  DISCUSSION:

4. Graduate Record Examination. Dr. Paul Duncan was present for discussion. Dr. Duncan provided background on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and noted that the current UF policy is that GRE scores are required across the board for admission to a graduate degree program. There are a series of exemptions such as the GMAT for admission to the business school, or the existing policy that students who have earned a graduate degree from another accredited institution, can be granted an exemption. There are no rules as to the minimum score. For international applicants, there is a minimum score if they are using the verbal score to meet the UF English Language requirement. There are two issues regarding giving the units the flexibility to decide whether to require the GRE: the question of how valuable it is and the impacts on marketing/development/recruitment/availability to students this change would have.

   GC Member: What do our peer institutions do?
   Dr. Duncan: There is a great deal of variability with what peer institutions do.
   Dr. Frierson: This change would apply to the master’s level programs only. There are master’s programs at other universities that do or don’t require the GRE. The concern that drove the discussion of this change is that some programs feel the GRE is a factor in reducing their number of qualified applicants. To reiterate, this change would not do away with the GRE but would give the units the option of whether to require it.
   GC Member: Would this change have an impact on evaluating programs or on their ranking?
   Dr. Frierson: There is not a big emphasis on ranking master’s programs. Units designate for themselves which programs are ranked.
Dr. Duncan: One program whose ranking may be affected is the on-campus, traditional MBA degree program. In that case, the student’s GMAT scores feed into the rankings. Other rankings are more survey-based and would not incorporate GREs.

Dr. Frierson: There are several types of MBAs. For “other” programs, the GRE test would be an inhibiting factor.

Dr. Duncan: One caveat is that if an online version of a program is explicitly advertised or marketed as being the equivalent of an on-campus counterpart (except for mode of delivery) those two version of the program must have the same GRE requirement.

Dr. Frierson: And the policy would have to stand for a year. Programs couldn’t change their GRE requirement halfway through a year.

GC Member: Has the Provost’s office been consulted? What is essential about the GRE?

Dr. Duncan: The Dean has spoken with the Provost’s office. If this change would adversely affect UF’s rankings, the answer would automatically be no. We will work on obtaining the peer institution information. The GRE is not a good indicator of degree completion, although it may be a good indicator of readiness for graduate study.

Dr. Frierson: With respect to the master’s programs, they will know that.

GC Member: Will this affect accreditation?

Dr. Frierson: I have not heard any concern about that.

GC Member: There are some concerns that some of the distinguished programs can opt out, which could make some programs seem inferior. How would this affect students seeking a terminal master’s degree?

Dr. Frierson: The GRE is still required at the PhD level.

GC Member: But could this mean that students in the same cohort could have different requirements?

Dr. Duncan: The implementation will certainly be challenging.

GC Member: Would the university ever consider dropping the requirement at the PhD level as well?

Dr. Frierson: Some programs would like to do away with the GRE at the PhD level too. To date, few schools have completely eliminated the GRE as a component of admission decisions. The schools that are deciding to not require the GRE are top tier schools such as University of Chicago, Harvard, and schools that other schools want to emulate.

GC Member: International institutions do not require the GRE and have found other ways to gatekeep.

Dr. Duncan: Regarding the College of Education, which has a complicated organizational chart—would the master’s degree programs retain the GRE requirement or walk away?

GC Member: It would probably be split. We have two areas of focus: a practice focus and an academic focus. We have lost candidates due to the GRE requirement. If a student is in the practice focus track, they are looking to become better teachers and don’t want to have to take the GRE. If they are on the academic track to the PhD, they should have to take it. It would be very helpful to have the option to opt out.

GC Member: Is this change being discussed because programs or not full or because they feel they are missing out on quality students?

Dr. Frierson: Primarily the latter. The question that has arisen about the GRE is whether it is worthwhile. The GRE has never been shown to be of value. The ETS itself says the GRE predicts student success for the first semester only. If the GRE is not required, we would hold to the grades and we will still attract strong applicants.

GC Member: Absent the GRE what would be the criteria?

Dr. Frierson: Experience and grades. International students will still have to take the TOEFL.

Dr. Duncan: Undergraduate preparation is the most important, e.g. the quality of the undergraduate school, the level of academic rigor. Students have been denied VISAs because of the absence of GRE scores.

Dr. Frierson: International students usually apply to more than one school, so they would likely have it anyway.

Dr. Duncan: We are discussing this today and wouldn’t likely have it ready for action until February or March. We have a deep interest in handling this thoughtfully. Talk about it with your departments and see others think of this.

III. INFORMATION ITEMS:

5. Graduate Programs – Distance and Self-Funded
   - Graduate certificate in Dyslexia Assessment and Intervention
The meeting was adjourned at 1:52 p.m.