

4.3.6 Academic Advising of Graduate Students

Presentation of Findings

4.3.6/1 of 4 Systematic And Effective Program of Graduate Advising

While there is a system of academic advising in place (see next section), there is no overall assessment of the effectiveness of that system. Currently no uniform survey of graduate student satisfaction is conducted. However, a Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey was piloted in Spring 2001. To create a system parallel to undergraduate assessment, which requires students to complete the Student Satisfaction Survey in their last semester of study, the Graduate Administrators Council has recommended requiring completion of the Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey prior to graduation. This recommendation has been approved by the University Provost and will be sent to the Faculty Senate for consideration. These data will help assess the effectiveness of graduate advising as well as other aspects of the graduate experience.

Degree-seeking graduate students are advised by the graduate program director in their area or by a graduate faculty member designated by the graduate program director. Some programs require nondegree students to be advised (Faculty Handbook, p. 89). Advising continues throughout a graduate student's academic degree program and, depending on the program level and the degree requirements (e.g., thesis vs. non-thesis, master's vs. doctoral level), may include changes in advisors and advisory committees as a student moves from coursework to comprehensive examination to thesis or dissertation. Specific details can be found in the Catalog: Appointment of an Academic Advisor (p.61), Thesis Advisory Committee (p. 61), Guidance Committee (p. 62), and Dissertation Committee (p. 64). In all cases, graduate program directors, advisors, thesis directors, thesis committee members, dissertation directors, and dissertation committee members must meet graduate certification requirements.

Graduate program directors and faculty advisors have access to student records through the Banner system (for which training is available) and use this information to properly advise students on their programs of study. The graduate program director should be a tenured faculty member who is certified for graduate instruction in the program. The appointment of non-tenured faculty is discouraged, and should be made only in exceptional circumstances approved by the provost (Faculty Handbook p. 137).

4.3.6/2 of 4 Reasonable Number of Advisees

All graduate students are admitted and advised by their graduate program directors or by advisors and/or committees appointed by the student's graduate program directors. The responsibilities of the graduate program director are described in the Faculty Handbook. The numbers of advisees are included in the calculation of faculty teaching load, and the responsibilities of the advisor are also described in the Faculty Handbook. The advising responsibilities for graduate students are reasonably spread among faculty and staff.

4.3.6/3 of 4 Effective Orientation Program

The University does not have an orientation program for full-time and part-time graduate students. Some, but not all, individual programs provide orientation to their students. However, this normally includes only degree-seeking students.

The University does have a mandatory orientation for all new teaching assistants, in the form of the Graduate Teaching Assistants Institute held each fall and spring. Sessions include information about relevant University policies (disabilities, sexual harassment, academic dishonesty, responsibilities of instructors), teaching techniques (writing syllabi, grading written work, technology in the classroom, leading group discussions), and

dealing with students (discipline, grading, diversity, the role of graduate student as teacher). Students are evaluated on a short practice presentation. All students whose native language is not English must take and pass the SPEAK (Test of Spoken English) before they are allowed to become a teaching assistant. The policies for graduate assistantships are outlined in the Catalog (pp. 53-56).

**4.3.6/4 of 4
Evaluation of
Orientation and
Advising
Programs**

The University does not have a system of regular evaluation of graduate orientation and advisement programs, with the exception of the Graduate Teaching Assistant Institute, which includes evaluations from participants. These evaluations are used by the Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies and staff to assess the effectiveness of the program and improve the Institute.

Conclusion

The University is not in complete compliance with these SACS *Criteria*: 4.3.6 / 1 of 4, 3 of 4, and 4 of 4. It is in compliance with 4.3.6/2 of 4.

Recommendations

4.3.6/1 of 4 *Each institution must conduct a systematic, effective program of graduate academic advising.*

The University must develop an assessment tool to document effective advising. The University has already made progress toward this goal. The Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey is designed to gather data from graduate students as they complete their degrees. It will provide annual data on advising and other topics.

4.3.6/ 3 of 4 *An effective orientation program must be made available to full- and part-time graduate students.*

The University must develop an orientation program for all graduate students. Given the diverse population of graduate students (full-time/part-time, distance learning, higher education center, degree-seeking/non-degree) the University currently does not have a mechanism to provide a comprehensive orientation program to all graduate students. The University will explore creative means for delivering graduate orientation, including establishing a Web-based University-wide orientation program linked to the existing university Web site. Further, the six colleges should explore the feasibility and practicality of establishing a college-specific Web-based orientation program.

4.3.6/ 4 of 4 *Orientation and advisement programs must be evaluated regularly and used to enhance assistance to students.*

The University must establish a regular assessment of its orientation and advising programs.

Suggestions

4.3.6/1 of 4 *Each institution must conduct a systematic, effective program of graduate academic advising.*

Sections related to graduate advising in the Faculty Handbook, Old Dominion University Catalog, and the Registration Information and Schedule of Classes Booklet should be reviewed for consistency of language.

Must Statement Compliance Table
4.3.6: Academic Advising of Graduate Students

Must Statement	Compliance Statement	Supporting Documentation <u>Exhibit Numbering Key:</u> Criteria#/MustStatement#:Exhibit
4.3.6/1 of 4. Each institution must conduct a systematic, effective program of graduate academic advising.	Non-Compliance	4.3.6/01:01 Faculty Handbook, pp. 89, 137 4.3.6/01:02 Old Dominion University Catalog 2000-02, pp. 61-64
4.3.6/2 of 4. An institution must ensure that the number of advisees assigned to faculty or professional staff is reasonable.	Compliance	4.3.6/02:01 Faculty Handbook, pp. 137-138, Graduate Program Director http://web.odu.edu/ao/affairs/catalogs/fac-han/faculty/Dept_Chair_gpd.htm#1 4.3.6/02:02 Old Dominion University Catalog 2000-02, p. 56, 61-64, Graduate Admission 4.3.6/02:03 Faculty Handbook, Policy Concerning Faculty Teaching Load (p. 88) and Academic Advising (p. 89), http://web.odu.edu/ao/affairs/catalogs/fac-han/faculty/Faculty_Rights.htm#5
4.3.6/3 of 4. An effective orientation program must be made available to full- and part-time graduate students.	Non-Compliance	4.3.6/03:01 , pp. 53-54 Old Dominion University Catalog 2000-02
4.3.6/4 of 4. Orientation and advisement programs must be evaluated regularly and used to enhance assistance to students.	Non-Compliance	