GRADUATE ADMINISTRATORS COUNCIL (GAC)
Minutes of January 25, 2007

Attending: Phil Langlais, Chair, Brenda Neumon Lewis, Jeffrey Richards, Robert Wojtowicz, Osman Akan, Ali Ardalan, Laurel Garzon, Brenda Marshall, Wayne Hynes, Mike Overstreet, Sach Albin, Cheryl Baker, Bruce Rubin, and David Branch
Guest: Robbin Fulmore

Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Research, Phil Langlais, congratulated Brenda Neumon Lewis on receiving the 2007 Womens' Caucus Award.

1. Approval of January 11, 2007 Minutes

It was moved and voted by the Council that the January 11, 2007 minutes be approved as submitted.

2. Departmental Approval of ISSS Forms

Dr. Sach Albin distributed four forms (Reduced Courseload (RDL) Approval Request, Recommendation for Extension of VISA Document, Request for CPT-Semester Internship, and Request for Optional Practical Training) that require the signature of the academic advisor. Dr. Albin was concerned that in all cases the academic advisor is not the appropriate person that needs to sign these forms. He felt that the Graduate Program Director should be the person required to sign off on these forms. Robbin Fulmore, Director of International Student and Scholarly Services, told the Council that it was very confusing to her office as to who are the authorized individuals that should be signing these forms. She said that if she could receive an updated list of authorized individuals each semester it would be very helpful. She said that it would help considerably if the Registrar could send her a list of the authorized Chief Departmental Advisors and the Office of Graduate Studies would send her updated lists of Graduate Program Directors. It was suggested that the wording on the forms "academic advisor" be changed to "GPD/Chief Departmental Advisor." Ms. Fulmore said that she would make the suggested changes so that they are all consistent and bring the revised forms back to the Council.

3. Task Force Reports

(i) Administration of Graduate Programs

Dr. Bruce Rubin, distributed a revised questionnaire which incorporated suggestions made at the last Council meeting. He said that the task force added two open ended questions at the end of the questionnaire. It was suggested that a blank line be added at the end of each category for "other". A discussion ensued regarding who is responsible for mentoring and providing support to new students. Should the GPD or other graduate students be assigned to mentor new

students, especially international students? It was suggested that the types of "mentoring" be listed under a separate category.

It was also suggested that the title of the questionnaire include the word "support" such as how best to support graduate programs. It was suggested that a"Student Support" category be added. During the discussion, Dr. Rubin told the Council that the initial responsibility of the Task Force was to put together a questionnaire regarding the functions essential for a successful graduate program and that the deans needed this information to find out what the GPDs felt were necessary criteria to run a good graduate program. He felt that suggestions to include the number of hours it takes a faculty member to achieve the categories was getting away from the initial objective of the survey and that this information could be gathered from a second survey. There was extensive discussion regarding the need to gather data about the amount of time and percent of effort spent on each of the survey items.

The Council agreed that when the questionnaire is distributed will affect the response rate and it was suggested that early April would probably be best. It was also discussed who should be sent the questionnaire. It was agreed the questionnaire will be sent to the GPDs, chairs and deans. Certain parts of the questionnaire will relate to GPDs, some to chairs, and so on. The issue regarding resources was discussed and once the results of the questionnaire are finalized the next task would be to take it to the next level and have a dialogue with the deans.

Dr. Rubin said that he would add some more categories as suggested and bring the questionnaire back to the Council.

(ii) Assessing Graduate Programs

Dr. David Branch told the Council that his committee needed to meet with Marty Sharp regarding the appropriate denominations for the graduate program metrics. He will report at the next meeting.

(iii) Assistantship Assignments and Review

Dr. Robert Wojtowicz distributed the revised forms to the Council. He said that he added the check boxes indicating "agree" or "disagree" next to the line for the students to sign on the Evaluation Form. The Council suggested that where the GPD signs it should say that it was "Reviewed" by the GPD, and the Supervisor's signature be first, then the student, and the GPD be listed last. On the Agreement form at the bottom it was suggested that in order to be consistent with the title to add the word Agreement after responsibilities. Dr. Wojtowicz said that he would make the corrections and bring the revised forms back to the Council.

4. GTA Institute

Dr. Langlais distributed the materials that are given out at the GTA Institute. He asked the members to look at the materials, specifically the topics and content. This item was deferred to the next meeting.

5. Update on Meeting with the graduate Appeals

Dr. Brenda Lewis told the Council that she had met with the Appeals Committee to discuss the issue regarding the quality of the appeals letters, and the issue of the proportion of appeals submitted from degree programs. Four members of the Appeals Committee felt strongly that the quality of the letters should be taken into consideration in the decision to deny or approve the appeal. She said that the Committee suggested that (1) a set of guidelines be developed that clearly identified the expectations that will be distributed to the GPDs and students; and (2) there should be guidelines for students who appeal to include expectations and what should be included in their appeal packets. It was discussed that the policy in the catalog should include these guidelines. The Appeals Committee also asked Dr. Lewis to determine the proportion of applications submitted to the number of students in specific programs rather than an entire college. It should be made clear to the graduate program directors and students what is expected of them.

6. Additional Items

Dr. Laurel Garzon asked that the issue regarding comprehensive exams for those students on suspension or probation be discussed at a future meeting.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 A.M.