

GRADUATE ADMINISTRATORS COUNCIL (GAC)
Minutes of October 19, 2006

Attending: Philip Langlais, Chair, Brenda Neumon Lewis, Elliott Jones, Mike Overstreet, Wayne Hynes, David Branch, Cheryl Baker, Osman Akan, Robert Wojtowicz, Stacy Plichta, Laurel Garzon, and Bruce Rubin

1. The issue of the time for Council meetings was raised by Elliot Jones. It was requested that the Council start its meetings at 9:00 A.M. instead of 8:45 A.M. Everyone was in agreement.
2. Approval of October 5, 2006 Minutes

It was moved and voted by the Council that the October 5, 2006 minutes be approved as submitted.

3. Action Items:

- A. Revisions to the Graduate Continuance Policy

Dr. Brenda Neumon Lewis explained to the Council that while trying to implement the new continuance policy concerns were raised about incorrect wording in the new policies. The new policy included incorrect wording for degree-seeking students in the 3rd paragraph under Probation/Suspension Policy ...If they fail to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.00 after completing the “next 12 credit hours,” they will be placed on indefinite suspension and prevented from enrolling in graduate courses. The recommendation was to remove the word “next” from the language and reword the text to the following:

“Graduate students on probation will have up to 12 credit hours to raise their GPA to 3.00. If they fail to do so they will be placed on indefinite suspension.”

Dr. Lewis told the Council that as the policy is currently worded it allows students to remain in academic difficulty for at least 24 credits-possibly more if students get into difficulty late in their tenure; that students could be forced to amass a large number of credits to attain 3.00 GPA required for graduation; that the intent of the change from the old 2004-06 policy was to correct the negative impact to part-time students of the semester review; and that the current wording creates new problems for application and implementation. The members discussed their concerns about the wording of “next” and the issue of the number “12 credit hours” and recommended the following change to the wording should be changed but that there should not be a change in the meaning. The change in wording follows:

“When graduate students are placed on probation they will have up to 12 credit

hours to raise their Cumulative GPA to 3.00. If they fail to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.00 they will be placed on indefinite suspension.”

This change was unanimously approved by the Council.

Dr. Lewis also told the Council that there was a problem in the new policy that includes a typographical error in wording for the non-degree seeking students in the first paragraph under Probation/Suspension policy on page 45 of the new University Graduate Catalog which says*Students who fail to complete a cumulativeGPA after completing “an” additional six credit hours will be indefinitely suspended and prevented from enrolling in graduate courses.*

She said that this wording literally allows a non degree student to take as many as 18 credits before being suspended, and that the intent of GAC was to limit the number of credits that poorly performing non-degree students could take. It was recommended to change the language in the text to the following:

*....Students who fail to **achieve** a cumulative **3.00GPA** after completing **“the”** additional six credit hours will be indefinitely suspended and prevented from enrolling in graduate courses.*

The Council voted unanimously to approve these changes.

Dr. Lewis told the Council that she would also change the word from “an” to “the” in the Life-long Learners policy so that it is consistent with the other changes previously approved by the Council. She said that she would create a clean copy of the policy including the changes and send them out to the Council members for their final okay.

B. Task Force Reports

(i) Task Force on GPD Roles and Functions

Dr. Elliott Jones reported for his Committee tasked with the description of common and core vs discipline specific graduate program administration functions, reports, and accountability: role of GPD and other administrative personnel. He said that his Committee reviewed the *Faculty Handbook* on duties of the GPD and put together a draft survey that will be sent to each GPD and that the Committee will schedule meetings with the GPDs in each of the colleges. The committee will collate the information obtained from the survey and meetings and prepare an assessment of their findings and report back to the Council. Dr. Jones said that during their discussions they have found a range of disparity among colleges regarding support staff, and regular GPD meetings within the colleges.

Dr. Phil Langlais told the Council that at a site visit he recently conducted for CGS, the institution had conducted a survey of GPDs, Chairs, and Deans regarding the assignments, duties, reporting and compensation/support of graduate program administration. He would ask that University for an electronic copy of the survey and permission to use the survey at ODU by this Task Force.

(ii) Task Force on Assessing Graduate Programs

Dr. David Branch reported that the Task Force has not met and deferred their report to the next Council meeting. Dr. Langlais provided the members of GAC with a booklet from the CGS on “Assessment and Review of Graduate Programs”. He said that the university is already using this booklet to review the International Studies program. A discussion arose regarding what benchmarks were used and who are the appropriate peers that should be used when setting common metrics. The question was asked about how many institutions use outside benchmarks and what are the benchmarks. Dr. Langlais said that he would supply a list of 35 peer institutions that the Task Force could use to gather basic factors. He said that Marty Sharpe uses IPEDS (a national database that has over 500 institutions using it). He said that he would talk to her to see if it can be made available to the Task Force.

(v) Task Force on Guidelines on Assistantship Assignments and Grievances

Dr. Robert Wojtowicz reported to the Council that his Task Force was working on the guidelines on assistantship assignments and grievances policy and are in the process of drafting assistantship agreements to be used when appointing graduate assistantship positions. He said that the *University Graduate Catalog* states that all graduate assistants shall be provided with a written job description of their responsibilities, and be evaluated at least once by their supervisor during the period of the award, preferably before the end of the first semester of service. The Council members suggested that a one year review be made to cut down on paperwork. Suggestions were made to the Task Force to include information about intellectual properties and confidentiality issues and FERPA. A Council member suggested that the confidentiality statement be explained and signed at the GTA-Institute.

4. Additional Items:

- A. Dr. Garzon brought up the issue about students in a joint or consortium program receiving their financial support from the Federal Government grant through ODURF while working on a trainee ship at another institution that is not the institution of record. She said that the turn around time is very long and students while waiting for the grant to be applied to their accounts accumulate late fees.

Dr. Langlais suggested that the students go ahead and pay for their tuition and be reimbursed. He said that possibly a part of the problem is the interpretation of the MOU or Agreement. He said that he will consult with Mr. Tabor Cronk, University Counsel, to see if there are any legal implications in these agreements. There is also a similar problem with the MFA in Visual Studies joint program with Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University as to who pays the tuition for a NSU student who has received financial support from Old Dominion University and is only registered at NSU and not at ODU. Dr. Langlais told Dr. Garzon to submit a list of the students that have late fees to him and he will try to have the late fees waived for those students. He also said that he would set up a meeting with ODURF to address this processing issue.

- B. Dr. Akan raised questions regarding the membership of the dissertation/theses committees. He asked if all of the members of the committee need to be certified for graduate instruction, if research faculty can serve on a committee, do members have to be adjunct, what levels of participation for outside people, what is the ratio of ODU faculty, and who can chair or co-chair a committee. Dr. Langlais said that this will be an agenda item at a future meeting.
- C. Dr. Hynes asked for clarification on the Thesis Option policy (p.46 University Catalog). It is unclear what the 6 hours of research means. Three hours of research and three hours of thesis? This will be discussed at the next GAC meeting. Dr. Lewis indicated that she would draft language for review by GAC.

5. Adjournment