

Graduate Administrators Council (GAC)
Minutes for Thursday, May 15, 2014
Koch Hall Board Room
11:00 am to 12:00 noon

Attendees: Brian Payne, Chair, Jane Dane, Mary Swartz, Shirshak Dhali, David Selover, Robert Wojtowicz, David Selover, Lynn Ridinger, Gail Dickinson, Isao Ishibashi, Missy Barber

Approval of April 24, 2014 Minutes

- Minutes were approved as submitted.

Announcements

- Dr. Payne updated Council on the status of the search for the Assistant Vice President for Graduate Studies. He advised Council that the candidates were going to be giving presentations, provided the location and times, and encouraged everyone to attend.

Health Insurance Update

- Dr. Payne said that a committee was formed to investigate the possibility of providing health insurance to graduate assistants. Health insurance coverage is already available to international students. Bids were solicited from insurance companies to provide coverage for both graduate assistants and international students. Funding of \$300,000.00 has been designated to support this initiative.
- Based on information provided from Institutional Research, it was determined that insurance would be offered to graduate assistants that earn \$5,000 or more per semester.
- Bids were received from five or six companies. Aetna and United Healthcare/Wells Fargo were the two most competitive. The basic provisions of the plan are the same. The rates were different. Aetna's rate was \$230 per month. United Healthcare/Wells Fargo provided a rate of \$144 per month for international students and international graduate assistants and provided another rate of \$172 for domestic graduate assistants.
- Council questioned the different rates provided by United Healthcare/Wells Fargo. Dr. Payne explained that the rates were different because students that were not subsidized would be more likely to enroll because they needed insurance. Thus, there would be a greater likelihood of claims from that group.
- All students making \$5,000 or more per year will receive an email with a link to enroll for health insurance. The form provided is a United Healthcare/Wells Fargo form. When students enroll, they have 5 days to pay for the whole semester. United Healthcare/Wells Fargo provides enrollment data to payroll. Payroll gives the subsidy back to the student. The subsidy has to be reimbursed this way because the subsidy is taxable to the student.
- Graduate assistants are on a 12 month contract, 5 months in the fall semester and 7 months in the spring semester. The spring semester includes summer. The rate is \$1728 for the whole year and the subsidy is \$900.
- Other students will not receive the link to enroll. They will have to go to the United Healthcare/Wells Fargo website to complete their enrollment. Dr. Payne advised that United Healthcare/Wells Fargo does not verify eligibility until the first claim is filed. Eligibility will be verified by the Office of Graduate Studies.

- Dr. Payne said that the deans have unanimously agreed to contribute up to \$150,000, to be distributed based on the greatest use.
- The amount of the subsidy will be determined each year.
- If students withdraw, they can get a refund.
- Family members can be enrolled, but they are not eligible for the subsidy.
- This is effective for the fall 2014 semester.
- The list of graduate assistants making more than \$5,000 should be available by August 1. The communication plan still needs to be developed.
- Academic Affairs has hired an IDS Admissions Administrator that will start in September. This position will help with administrative tasks relating to student health insurance.
- The health insurance coverage is not available to distance learning students. Students do not have to be full time to be eligible; they just need to be enrolled. Ideally, the insurance company is looking for about 1,000 participants.
- Compared to others, the plan is better than average and provides better coverage than the Affordable Health Care Act plan.
- Training and workshops need to be planned. Also, there will be a website to detail the application process.
- Council agreed to move forward with the proposal.

Update on Policy for Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Assistants

- Dr. Payne informed Council that Faculty Senate approved the proposal with a modification that if other funds are used, then students can register for 6 credit hours.
- Dr. Payne presented the new enrollment table. It was decided to remove the RA/GA S-5 language from the table.

Certification of Faculty for Graduate Instruction

- Dr. Payne advised that the Faculty Handbook policy on certification of faculty for graduate instruction had changed significantly. Council decided to review the policy and discuss it during a regular Graduate Administrators Council meeting.