

Graduate Administrators Council (GAC)
Koch Hall Administration Building Board Room
October 16, 2008
9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Attending: Philip Langlais, chair, Brenda Neumon Lewis, Mike Overstreet, Martha Walker, Brenda Stevenson Marshall, Robert Wojtowicz, Sharon Judge, Isao Ishibashi, Mona Danner, Ali Ardalán, Osman Akan, Ted Remley

Guests: Dr. Jeffrey Richards, Bill Heffelfinger, Diane Keleher, Mike Little

Approval of October 2, 2008 Minutes

Minutes were approved without changes.

Announcements/Updates

Dr. Brenda Neumon Lewis announced that she would be sending a request to department chairs for VCGS for their nominations of students to present their research in Richmond. Five or six students will be selected for the trip.

Dr. Langlais reported that as a result of state budget cuts, the five percent budget plan will be implemented immediately for the 2008-09 fiscal year. He advised council members to begin preparing for an additional budget cut of seven and a half to ten percent to be implemented in the 2009-10 fiscal year.

Dr. Langlais reported that the Graduate Strategic Enrollment Management (GSEM) committee has moved on to a broader set of questions regarding enrollment, quality and setting targets. Dr. Langlais stated that there will be cuts to stipends and tuition waivers. The relative distribution of these cuts across the campus will be determined by the deans, the Provost and the President.

Continue Discussion of Survey on “Administration of Graduate Programs”

Dr. Jeffrey Richards summarized the job of the graduate program director and what the position will be. He reviewed the duties (outlined on pg. 8, Section A of final report) and compared them to the duties currently outlined in the Faculty Handbook.

Dr. Richards described how the duties of the GPD are divided into two categories. The first category (Section A) is a list of duties that are deemed, necessary components to the position of GPD. The second category (Section B) lists duties that are important but not as significant as the first group. Importance and grouping were determined by statistical data as affirmed in the survey. Dr. Richards described the basic formula used to determine which factors would be in Section A or B, stating that items with a 70% or greater best practice rating would be in Section A and others in Section B. 53 faculty members participated in this survey with representation from each college. Dr. Richards recommends that GAC use this data to redefine the description of the GPD in the Faculty Handbook.

Dr. Mona Danner suggested adding a category for organization of program files to Section A. Dr. Brenda Stevenson-Marshall agreed with Dr. Danner stating that file maintenance is extremely important. Dr. Ali Ardalán agreed but was concerned that all GPDs do not have the resources for proper file management. Dr. Mike Overstreet agreed stating that maintaining accurate files lies at the departmental level. After considerable discussion, Dr. Danner withdrew her suggestion and Council agreed.

After further review of the final report Dr. Overstreet suggested a listing of the items with colons to avoid repetition. Dr. Richards agreed and stated that there are other ways that the document may be formatted and is open to editing the document. Dr. Robert Wojtowicz suggested modifying the introduction of the second paragraph and Council agreed. Council also suggested adding the word “additional” before repeated categories.

Dr. Langlais made a motion to approve the final report with the stated modifications, Council approved the motion. Dr. Langlais then made a motion to take the modified final report to Provost’s Council and Senate to change the Faculty Handbook. Council approved this motion.

Dr. Danner had questions about some of the items listed on page five of the final report, stating that further explanation was needed. Dr. Richards explained that the wordage was taken directly from the survey without explanation of meaning and he had to interpret the meaning of certain statements/phrases.

Dr. Langlais asked “what can the Office of Graduate Studies do to help GPDs?” Dr. Richards responded that the Office of Graduate Studies should provide a go-to place for questions, a welcome letter, list of duties, etc. Dr. Richards also suggested a contacts list for when GPDs have questions. Dr. Danner suggested FAQs and a GPD help site on the Graduate Studies webpage. Council agreed that the GPD manual is a helpful tool for GPDs and it should be made available on-line. Dr. Langlais agreed but stated that it would be very difficult to keep updated because the content comes from many different offices on campus.

Discussion of Admission Change from Citrine to BANNER

Bill Heffelfinger gave an overview of the phasing out of the Citrine system, which will no longer be used after January 2009. The new system will be BANNER based and documents will be scanned directly into the system, allowing the user to view and print images moving toward a paperless system.

Mr. Heffelfinger asked Council if they would prefer to receive continuous emails or one email regarding the status of an application, stating that each required piece generates an email. Dr. Overstreet responded that each program has different needs. Dr. Ali Ardalán asked if the email subject line can be coded so that the recipient can decide whether or not they want to read the email. Mike Little said that it is possible but cannot say how easy it would be to make it happen.

Dr. Langlais suggested receiving two emails, one stating the application has been received and the second stating the application is complete. Both Drs. Ardalán and Ishibashi stated that they would prefer to receive individual pieces of information.

Mr. Heffelfinger went on to explain the admissions process with the new system stating that GPDs can make decisions before all pieces of the application have been received. They would have to email Graduate Admissions for approval, as a safeguard, a response would then be sent to the GPDs email account from Graduate Admissions.

Dr. Overstreet stated that the GPDs should have the authority to change preferences. Mr. Little said that could not be done under the current timeframe and workload but would like to meet with GPDs for more input. Dr. Overstreet agreed, stating that discussion is needed in order to identify GPDs needs. Dr. Langlais then asked each associate dean to identify two GPDs to meet with Mr. Heffelfinger and Little to discuss GPDs needs. Each college will contact Mr. Heffelfinger to set up an appointment.

Mike Little stated that the initial plans for rollout will remain intact. Afterward, updates and changes will be made to improve functionality.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:00 a.m.