

PROVOST'S COUNCIL RETREAT

August 7, 2012

Minutes

The Provost's Council Retreat was held on Tuesday, August 7 from 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. in the Learning Commons. Those present were Carol Simpson (Chair), Osman Akan, Ali Ardalan, Oktay Baysal, Sharon Blythe, Debbie Bauman, Richardean Benjamin, Andy Casiello, Chandra de Silva, Jim Duffy, Linda Irwin-DeVitis, Sharon Judge, Janet Katz, Brenda Lewis, Terri Mathews, Connie Merriman, David Metzger, Shelley Mishoe, Ginny O'Herron, Renee Olander, Chris Osgood, Chris Platsoucas, Bob Spina, Linda Vahala, Charles Wilson, Robert Wojtowicz, and Gil Yochum. The focus of the retreat was graduate education.

1. Carol Simpson asked each Dean to report on the strengths and limitations of graduate programs in their colleges. Comments from the Deans were as follows.
 - Strengths
 - Faculty and faculty hires
 - Awards and recognition received by faculty
 - Library resources
 - Supportive alumni base
 - Internship opportunities
 - Increasing caliber of students
 - Program rankings
 - Program accreditations
 - Quality of graduates
 - Rising entry standards
 - Increase in proposal activity, external funding, publications, research output and quality
 - Faculty involvement in internationally recognized journals
 - Growth in Ph.D. programs
 - Collaborations and partnerships
 - Growth in online education
 - Limitations
 - Inadequate funding for graduate student stipends and packages
 - Need for more faculty and reduced teaching loads/class size
 - Decline in international students
 - Lack of resources and coordination for recruitment and marketing graduate programs
 - Large number of part-time students in some programs
 - Competition from other institutions
 - Undercut on tuition from some competing institutions
 - Decrease in tuition support from outside agencies such as school divisions
 - Lack of data on where graduates go
 - Lack of health insurance for international students

- Lack of graduate housing
 - Need to simplify EIs and 108S forms
 - Some colleges have year-round programs but do not have year-round faculty
 - Fulbright students come with only two years of funding
- Opportunities and Suggestions
 - Look at doctoral programs where students do not begin work on their dissertation until the fourth year to see if changes are possible
 - Investigate areas of potential collaboration across colleges, including certificate programs
 - Develop more hybrid and online courses
 - Promote accelerated bachelor's to master's programs
 - Seek more internships and experiential learning opportunities
 - Investigate potential sources for extramural funding
 - Increase collaboration with the Peninsula Center

2. Graduate Certification Page in Faculty Activity Sheet

Chandra de Silva informed the group that there is a new feature in Digital Measures to track faculty who are graduate certified. Questions should be referred to Dr. de Silva.

3. Proposed Format for Future Graduate Program Reviews and Schedule of Reviews

Chandra de Silva discussed the proposed format for future graduate program reviews and the proposed master calendar for the reviews. A graduate program review is intended to be used as a tool to help in determining a program's ability to respond to future challenges and opportunities, evaluate strengths and weaknesses, determine priorities, and aid in shaping plans for the future of the program. Dr. de Silva proposed the following standards to be addressed in the reviews.

- I. Mission and governance
- II. Institutional commitment and resources
- III. Curriculum and teaching-learning practices
- IV. Student performance and faculty accomplishments
- V. Assessment of strengths and weaknesses

Dr. de Silva also discussed the proposed action plan for external reviews and listed the programs that will initiate or conclude an external review in 2012-13. In addition to the standards proposed for graduate program reviews, he proposed templates for the self-study and the external review team's report, a dean's action plan, and a sample itinerary for the external review team's site visit. Institutional Research and Assessment will supply the data for the self-study in a standard format ahead of time. Dr. de Silva asked for feedback and suggestions; absent any suggestions, he will proceed with the format.

4. Policies and Procedures to Ensure Growth and Quality of Graduate Programs

Carol Simpson summarized the common themes from the day's discussion.

- We have high quality faculty, and this is fundamental to the success of graduate programs.
 - How do we retain quality faculty and add more?
- The quality of incoming students is increasing, which increases the quality of the programs.
- There is room to grow in international applications and international students.
- There is also room to grow in interdisciplinary opportunities. The deans were asked to make connections and to leverage our expertise with others.
- Resource allocation is an issue. The deans were asked to look at what can be reallocated within to support graduate programs, where we need to add resources, and what would be gained with the addition of resources.
- Placement of graduates is critical; the Alumni Office can help track and follow up with graduates.
- Promotion of graduate students' achievements is important.
- Differential tuition may be considered, but a compelling argument will be needed.
- What is the role of the Office of Research in helping to improve graduate programs?
- What is the role of the Career Management Center in relation to graduate programs?
- Continuance and graduation rates for graduate students need attention. Carol Simpson emphasized that we have a problem in this area and asked why it is taking our students too long to graduate. She asked the colleges to look at completion rates for every graduate program and to aim for a 60% or higher six-year graduation rate.

The following comments were made in relation to continuance and graduation rates.

- A format for the data from Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) would be useful.
- A consistent method and/or electronic system is needed to track why students leave. It was noted that there is a leave of absence form in the Registrar's Office, but students do not always complete it and it is not enforced.
- Information from other state schools might be useful.
- The raw data behind the reports from IRA would be helpful. (Chandra de Silva will make the data available. He will also ask IRA for data on the number of graduate students with financial support who do not graduate.)

In summary, Carol Simpson listed the areas that were discussed.

- Faculty quality
- Student quality – need academic scholarships
- Completion rates
- Job placements – need to work with CMC and Alumni Office
- Recruitment
- Resources – stipends/packages (The deans were asked to think about whether it's better to have fewer but better packages.)
- Role of Office of Research
- Role of Academic Enhancement
- Role of Graduate Studies
- Coordination of IRA data
- International – ISSS/OIP
- Interdisciplinary
- Certificate/master's/doctoral
- Asynchronous/flexible/accelerated
- Niche areas/programs
- Differential tuition
- Promotional [marketing of programs/audience(s)]

It was also suggested that workshops and programs be developed for graduate students who are not preparing to be faculty.

The suggestion was made to group items on the list that are connected and identify stakeholders to serve on working groups to address impediments to success.

Dr. Simpson noted that marketing materials from each area need to have a common ODU look and feel and asked the deans to think about individual programs that could benefit from a common theme. Color brochures and fliers are expensive to produce and need to be created with specific market and purpose in mind to maximize the return on investment. She also asked the deans to keep the University Relations unit apprised of articles of interest related to faculty and programs.