

GRADUATE ADMINISTRATORS' COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, January 13, 2022

8:30am – 10:30am

Via Zoom Meeting ID: <https://odu.zoom.us/j/92937685226?from=addon>

Attendees: Bryan Porter, Robert Wojtowicz, Jane Dané, Missy Barber, Sandeep Kumar, David Cook, Renee Felts, Karen Eck, Vickie Carnegie, Megan Corbett, Paul Currant, Dale Miller Wie Yusuf, Humberto Portellez, Dorothy Lockaby, Linda Bol, Robert Bruno, Chunsheng Xin, Regina Karp, Miltos Kotinis, Bill Heffelfinger, and Debbie Bauman.

Welcome

Robert Wojtowicz welcomed attendees.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for December 9, 2021 were approved.

Announcements

- CourseLeaf Course Inventory Management (CAT) Training (Missy Barber) – the link www.odu.edu/acadaffairs/courseleaf was offered for everyone to use if they would like to sign up for CourseLeaf training. Missy also noted that there is a catalog revamp in the works because they have more updates, and it could possibly change the format so each program may have their own page to make it easier for students to search for information. Once approved, they're hoping to get to the updating process after the catalog is published over the summer.
- Graduate Student Forum Recap (Robert Wojtowicz) – He reported that there were approximately 50 attendees to the 2022 forum. Some news shared during the forum revolved around vaccinations. Students living on campus are required to have boosters. Jane Dané confirmed that all students coming on campus must comply with the regulations. Those working in labs must adhere to research protocols. As for traveling for the university, including any travel funded by ODU or any of the research foundations, Karen Eck brought everyone up to date that staff must register their travel plans on www.travelregistry.odu.edu.com.
- Brown Bag Update (Missy Barber) – The event on January 18th will focus on Graduate Student Mental Health Issues including representatives from the counseling department and it will include the mental health services provided United Healthcare services through telehealth.
- Graduate Student Appreciation Week (Bryan Porter) – GRAD week is from April 4-8 and judging of the virtual poster session will be held on April 7th. He mentioned a recent meeting with Xavier Palmer-Lewis and Karen Vaughn where it was agreed the posters would be submitted directly to the Commons for review which will streamline the process. He also mentioned that on the evening of April 7th, the Lightning 5 Science Pub will be held at Smartmouth Brewery in Norfolk. For the moment, there are only two events scheduled during GRAD week but there are some events that are still up in the air. Wie Yusuf mentioned that Career Pathways will be holding a networking event with ODU Alumni with graduate degrees featuring a wide variety of careers, not only academic. Bryan and Wie said they would talk more about the event after the GAC meeting.

Off agenda items were brought to the table by Bryan Porter.

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1. Jane Dané - Enrollment information
2. Megan Corbett – Transfer credit policy

Enrollment Information - Jane Dané reported that spring enrollment picked up. Headcount was behind 0.2% and the FTE also behind by 1%. Graduate School numbers led the way with headcount numbers up by 3.46% and FTE up by 3.19%. Regarding spring pipeline numbers, Jane said both master's and doctoral programs had taken a downturn, but still reflected the large numbers that came in during COVID and the high enrollment experienced last year. She mentioned that summer looked solid and graduate students were up 70%. For fall 2022, applications show a 14% downturn but admits jumped up by 14%. She thanked everyone for working quickly on applications. She broke down the numbers showing master's admits up by 20.51% and doctoral down by 2.13%.

Jane also reported on the university COVID-19 policies regarding vaccinations and on campus presence. The option regarding uploading vaccination proof or exemption should have been followed by all UG and graduate students – but 777 students were not in compliance and therefore, not allowed on campus. They were only able to take online courses and would have an HC (Health Center) flag on their accounts. They could seek out their advisors to remove the HC hold while they registered for their online courses and the hold w

Robert Wojtowicz remarked on information from a recent article regarding doctoral survey results that numbers for awarded PhDs had dropped slightly. He mentioned the new R1 status the university had obtained and will update the council soon as to what kind of strategic investments could be coming down from Provost Agho and Morris Foster that would aid in supporting PhD enrollment.

Transfer Credit Policy – Bryan Porter prefaced Megan Corbett's explanation by reminding attendees of the policy approved by GAC that states credits cannot be transferred from a conferred degree. He acknowledged that the policy is a little conservative and opened the floor to Megan for her explanation of the SACSCOC point of view.

Megan began by stating that there is no specific standard set by SACSCOC that says the university cannot have this policy.

However, there are some standards that have implication if the transfer credit is accepted from an already conferred degree. She explained the first standard deals with transfer credits guaranteed for accuracy and quality and conferred transfer credits would have to be guaranteed in the same way. The second standard speaks to program links because it is essentially "double-dipping" and counting those credits towards more than one degree. She stated any transfer credits accepted must follow the already established transfer policy.

Robert asked for comments from the floor. Wie Yusuf asked if this policy is detracting from students enrolling or applying for program in the College of Education. Robert shared the College of Education's stance that the university policy regarding transfer credits is less permissive than others and allows for better recruitment.

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Robert emphasized that if a policy exists, it must be adhered to and suggested that if changes are to be made, they can be but to keep in mind that it takes time. Megan Corbett added that SACSCOC does not stipulate what number of credits can be transferred but that according to reviewers, concern begins anywhere from six to nine credits. Bryan confirmed that the present policy allows up to 12, which he said, could be up to a third of a master's degree. Dale Miller added to the discussion that he believes the current policy is fine but wondered if a reasonable compromise would be to allow transfer, for example, credits above 30 from a master's into a PhD. The example being that if someone had 36 hours, they could transfer 6. He stated that it just could meet the concern coming out of Education without letting it get too complicated or out of hand. After commentary from Missy Barber, David Cook and Wie Yusuf, Robert concluded that there isn't much debate regarding changing the existing policy. And suggested that there should be a way for EFL and ED programs to cover the costs of the PLA system. Robert did not put it to a formal vote and the policy remains as is and in the hands of Committee C.

Robert then moved on to marketing before getting into the new business topics. He shared that Dale Miller had a question regarding distribution of marketing funds to the colleges and that most likely it will not happen as they are keeping a close eye on the budget but did say there should be a targeted marketing campaign regarding the university's new R1 status. Possibly the development of a social media campaign that could potentially be launched before the fall semester when students begin doing their college rounds. Regina Karp fully supported the idea for a campaign citing it would be a positive effect for every college and serve the university. Karen Eck added to the conversation that Morris Foster had mentioned at an earlier meeting the possibility of hiring an outside agency to help compile information about research strengths and do something with a professional look.

Open discussion regarding frustration with current marketing efforts by Spurrier - Robert pointed to the slow development and execution of a promotional video for the biomedical program shot back in early fall that wasn't completed in time for presentation at a national conference. Dale Miller asked a question regarding an update on the university's exclusive contract with the Spurrier advertising agency to which Robert said that many colleges across campus have expressed discontent with their services and the contract will be reviewed. Regina Karp then asked if there was any template the university could follow from others that would help ODU have noted impact from having reached R1 status. Robert commented that as soon as the Carnegie Group releases data in March, John Nunnery of the Office of Research will begin a "reverse engineering" of the data. It will help the university understand what contributed to the R1 status and said it would be positive, in the long term, for the university's potential for partnerships and for attracting both graduate students and faculty.

New Business

- **Faculty Mentoring of Students:** Robert Wojtowicz said that at the most recent Dean's Council meeting, he, and Provost Agho shared concerns expressed recently by international students regarding the quality of mentoring and advising on campus. Some give excellent reviews of their rapport with their mentors and advisors while others said there were morale issues in the program. Robert asked attendees for volunteers to work on a Qualtrics survey that might be distributed to students. Lesley Greene, Robert Bruno, Linda Bol and Megan Corbett volunteered for the project. Robert said he'd like to use the same group to create a graduate student exit survey. Wie Yusuf mentioned there had been an exit survey created a few years ago and Megan

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Corbett confirmed her office administers two surveys – one a senior satisfaction for graduating seniors and the other is a graduate satisfaction survey for all graduating graduate students. She said she will share the data via email. Robert asked for the preliminary survey created by these volunteers to be rolled out late February, early March at the latest.

- **Monday Meet Ups:** Robert Wojtowicz made another call for volunteers. Brian Payne's office is rolling out a book for the spring, *Relationship Rich Education – How Human Connections Drive Success in College* and has various groups participating in panels each Monday to discuss improving campus climate. The Graduate School will hold their panel discussion on Monday, May 4 and the last scheduled panel on Monday, May 11. He called for at least one student from each college to participate if possible. Each student participating will receive a copy of the book and a gift card. Robert urged the ADs to identify a good student from each college.
- **Hoarding Video:** Robert Wojtowicz said he understands that it has been a while since students were hooded on stage but that after years of threatening to do so, he will produce a hooding video so that faculty can do so quickly and efficiently.
- **Forms & Policies (Bryan Porter):** Before discussing the policies on the table, Bryan Porter emphasized to the attendees that the current meeting and the upcoming February 10 meeting would be used to approve any policies slated to go into the 2022-2023 catalog.

M5 – Appointment or Change of Master's Comprehensive Examination Committee: This is a new form to appoint or change a master's candidate comprehensive examination committee. Like the change that GAC approved on the D1 to identify the faculty with whom the student would work to grade and assess their case, the same issue was occurring with the master's milestone. There was no comparable way to identify faculty grading the master's comprehensive exam. This will identify the faculty to the student, the program and the GPD who will be doing the grading. Robert Wojtowicz added that there should be the addition of a box that identifies the exam as oral or written. Dale Miller asked if there should be a record of how the faculty voted, and both Robert and Bryan said it's not necessary. There were no comments from the other attendees.

M6 – Exception of Time Limits Allowed to Complete Master's Degree: This form was resurrected with changes made to it in September 2021. Robert pointed out that students will have to request permission to complete the degree and the program must grant it. The reason for bringing it back is that it is a policy in the catalog and must be followed. Regina Karp stated that it is unusual for students to make this request and most stay within the time limit, but she wanted to go on the record that she disagrees with granting several semesters and suggests it be done by semester so there is a review process. After open discussion, it was understood that each program and GPD decides how many semesters on a case-by-case basis.

Continuance – The policy was made gender neutral. Moving forward, all policies under revision will be edited to include gender neutral language.

Revisions to the Reinstatement for Suspension Policy for Degree Seeking Students:

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- 1.b. - Regarding the 45-day statute of limitations placed on requesting reinstatement after suspension - To aid students who let the 45 days lapse (due to a variety of reasons – work, deployment, illness, family emergency, etc.) and still seek reinstatement, new language is proposed: *“unless a later request with appropriate justification is approved by both the graduate program director and Dean of the Graduate School or designee”*. This allows students to continue the process with approval.
- Section 5. If the student is denied reinstatement, they still have the option to appeal.
- In keeping with the university’s Time Limit policy in the Institutional Credit Requirements for Graduate Degrees and Graduate Certificates section of the Graduate Catalog, clarification for coursework/grades that were earned prior to the suspension by adding *“that were earned within the past eight years”* allows the student to keep transfer credits (grades at B or better) if they have not expired. For expired coursework the following language is proposed - *“Courses older than eight years must be recertified prior to internal transfer credit being awarded.”*

Wie Yusuf and Robert Wojtowicz requested a change in the wording at the beginning of the same paragraph stating *“...to complete the degree requirements within the eight year (master’s) and the eight year (education specialist and doctoral) time period as required...”* to *“...complete the individual degree requirements within the eight year time period as required...”*.

- Section 4 – Upon reinstatement

Item 2 – reinforces time limit on earned courses by inserting *“if they were earned within the last eight years or have been recertified...”*.

Item 6 – Regarding the role of the Graduate Appeals Committee additional language supporting the review is proposed: *“The Committee may seek additional information from the program or student to aid its review.”*

Dismissal from a Graduate Program – In support of the policy, the following language is proposed that targets conduct previously not covered by the policy.

Item 7 – *“Unprofessional and/or unethical behavior as a graduate assistant, student intern, student clinician, student teacher, student worker or other University affiliated role (see the University Code of Ethics and applicable profession-based standards; and/or”*

Item 8 – *“Any behavior that may involve criminal activity, that may...”*

An additional sentence was added to the first paragraph after the listed dismissal reasons in the Catalog regarding providing the dismissed student with a letter - *“The letter shall provide reasons for dismissal and information about appealing per the policy in this section.”* Bryan Porter urged attendees to ensure that all letters of dismissal are clear regarding the reasons for the dismissal, referring to the catalog, if necessary, exam grades, etc., as well as including the

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necessary language, including but not limited to, the link or excerpt from the Catalog that informs the student of their right to appeal and the process itself.

The second paragraph in the Catalog will also reflect the language provided in Item 6 of the Reinstatement for Suspension Policy for Degree Seeking Students – *“The Graduate Appeals Committee will “review materials submitted by the student. It may also seek additional information form the program or student to aid its review. The Committee will render...”*

Additional language is added to the end of the policy, restating the eight-year time limit on coursework. *“If the student seeks readmission to the same program after eight years and is accepted, they will work with the program to recertify courses for which a grade of B or better was awarded for those credits to count toward the degree as transfer credits. Their GPA will be reset to zero as in the case of students returning from reinstatement (see Readmission to the Institution Following Separation or Dismissal).”*

- ✓ Robert Wojtowicz called for motion to approve the revisions. David Cook approved and Dale Miller seconded.

G8 – Notice of Student Separation or Dismissal from Program

1. If the student is voluntarily leaving the program, this line is selected, and the only signature required is of the Graduate Program Director.
2. Personal Misconduct was added to the form bringing it in line with the revised Continuance policy previously discussed and continues to require three signatures (GPD, Department Chair, and Dean or Designee).

COVID Testing Requirement (Debbie Bauman)

Students received a COVID testing requirement letter on January 7 and there were questions regarding priority for the testing. Debbie confirmed that there was no priority for testing. The center was attempting to get results back as quickly as possible despite the high volume of testing with students and faculty returning to campus.

TABLED

1) Master’s Examination and Candidacy Examination

Bryan Porter briefly reviewed the additional language to both sections in the Catalog and said the document would be emailed to the attendees for review and the vote would be tabled until February.

2) Non-ODU members on Committees