

GRADUATE ADMINISTRATORS' COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, December 8, 2022

8:30am – 10:30am

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

Attendees: Robert Wojtowicz, Bryan Porter, Missy Barber, Anthony Dean, David Cook, Debbie Bauman, Denise Claiborne, Dale Miller, Humberto Portellez, Christopher Fleming, Karen Vaughn, Lamar Reams, Lesley Greene, Megan Corbett, Paul Currant, Rafael Diaz, Regina Karp, Renee Felts, Vickie Carnegie, Wie Yusuf, Bill Heffelfinger

Welcome

Bryan Porter welcomed attendees.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for Thursday, November 11, 2022, were approved. First to approve, Lamar Reams, second from Bill Heffelfinger.

New Business

- Forms & Policies Committee – Bryan Porter

Policy on Graduate Financial Awards (GA Policy) – final review. Bryan asked for a vote today on the policy because it needs to move forward. He brought up a few points that have been debated since the last GAC meeting. He pointed out a significant change in the section of Eligibility (E. Section 5). At the last meeting, it was agreed that online programs can have online TAs. The new language addition states that US citizens or legal permanent residents residing in VA and are full-time students in a degree program may be appointed with the permission of the GPD, dean or designee, and the graduate dean or designee.

Bryan stated that in discussions with Gloria Boone, new policies for remote work opportunities are currently in the works for faculty and staff and that policies regarding out-of-state TAs may also be considered.

Other language states that US citizens or legal permanent residents residing outside of Virginia and international students who are fully online must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Anyone residing overseas is not eligible for hire at ODU and this is applicable to students, faculty, and staff.

Lamar Reams asked for confirmation on the hiring of an online student as a GA.

- 1) full-time student in a degree program,
- 2) US citizens or legal permanent residents residing in Virginia, and
- 3) GPD approval. Then it must be approved by the college's dean or designee and the graduate dean or designee.

There were no further questions from the Council.

Bryan brought the next point to the table – H. Appointment Workload. He brought up how the hours are split. The 10/10 split is acceptable if it is under the same appointment code, including 10 hours with ODU and 10 hours with ODURF. Deviations from the 10/10 split must be approved by the dean or designee of the college and the dean or designee of the Graduate School.

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Lesley Greene stated that she thought that at the last GAC meeting, it was agreed that the hour split would undergo approval by the GPD, the college's dean, and then the Graduate School would be notified of the approval. Bryan confirmed this but stated that when the matter came before Forms & Policies, it was decided that the Graduate School should hold approval rights. And gave it to the Council for a majority vote. Tony Dean spoke for Engineering and voted yes.

David Cook stated that when discussing this issue in Forms & Policies, it was acknowledged that the Graduate School has a measure of responsibility in the split of hours, and it made sense to have them approve anything extraordinary.

Speaking from a Committee C perspective, Wie Yusuf said it would recognize the importance of the Graduate School being aware of how hours are being split in the hiring of GAs.

Dale Miller of Arts & Letters said it is a non-issue. Debbie Bauman of Health Sciences approved the Graduate School's approval role. Lesley Greene then agreed to it.

Bryan pointed out the new language that states that the assistantship workload may increase to 40 hours per week during the summer with the same requirements for dividing appointed hours. Bryan asked for the Council's consideration regarding section I. Additional Employment. Bryan pointed out an exception clause for part-time and full-time employment that states that exceptions to the policy can be made only with the approval of the GPD, academic advisor, the dean or designee of the college, or equivalent administrator or designee with a written recommendation of the GPD and the department/school chair. A new sentence details an additional exception:

Other exceptions may be made if there is a MOU on file between an employer and ODU. Further, students hired as graduate assistants shall immediately report changes to their additional employment status (i.e., considering outside employment) to their graduate program director.

Bryan stated that a college asked for an hour mark per week that can be defined as full-time. He said that he has hesitated to do so because it could change at any time. He asked the Council for their thoughts. Lesley Greene agreed with Bryan and said the definition can be left up to the relevant office. Debbie Bauman described a case at HS where an adjunct was mistakenly hired in excess of 29 hours per week and parental leave was paid. She said she favors putting in a number of hours that would eliminate the possibility of exceeding the 29 hours per week. This prompted a discussion with several members of the Council discussing a possible loophole in the description of part-time employment, it was agreed to leave the language as is considering that Senate C and others still need to review the policy.

Next came section K. Minimum Stipend Levels. It was quickly reviewed for everyone to see the minimum levels. And the new language that was discussed earlier in the meeting regarding summer employment.

Summer minimum stipends for 20 hours per week are \$5,000 for the full term, with the possibility of half-term or half-time appointments (i.e., equivalent to 10 hours per week for the full summer term) at \$2,500.

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Doctoral-level GAs shall receive a minimum stipend of \$10,000 for the fall and spring semesters. Summer minimum stipends for 20 hours per week are \$6,500 for the full term, with the possibility of half-term or half-time appointments (i.e., equivalent to 10 hours per week for the full summer term) at \$3,250.

For graduate assistants appointed in summer to work more than 20 hours per week, the minimum stipend must be proportionally increased according to the established rates.

Wie Yusuf suggested adding additional wording to the section defining summer minimum stipends and the Council agreed.

Summer minimum stipends for 20 hours per week are \$5,000 for the full term, with the possibility of half-term or half-time appointments (i.e., equivalent to 10 hours per week for the full summer term) at \$2,500.

Wie Yusuf brought up removing the term funding agency from the exceptions paragraph and it was agreed upon by the Council.

Supplements to these minimum stipend amounts may be made based upon the availability of funds and upon approval of the dean or designee of the appropriate academic college.

There was a small edit in the M. Grievance Procedure, and it was approved. The additional language helps students know they can disagree with a performance evaluation.

Should a graduate assistant believe that their assigned duties and/or the workload required to fulfill these duties do not conform to University Graduate Catalog policies, or if they disagree with a performance evaluation, they should first attempt to reconcile the grievance with their academic/nonacademic immediate supervisor.

Bryan reviewed the University Graduate Fellowships section that contained light edits bringing it parallel to general assistantships with a few additions made by Wie Yusuf, Lamar Reams, and Tony Dean. The Council agreed.

University graduate fellowships are awards granted for scholastic achievement and promise. Their objective is to enable full-time students to pursue graduate studies and research leading to advanced degrees without requiring them to render any service. Part-time and/or nondegree students are not eligible. In some cases, a student may be awarded a fellowship in addition to a graduate assistantship. Other fellowships outside of the University may be available (e.g., NSF, SREB, Virginia Sea Grant).

On the Tuition Waivers section, a sentence was added to introduce two new sections further down the policy.

See Tuition Remittance policy for students who receive funding from external awards.

Tuition Grants

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Tuition grants are scholarships disbursed through the Office of Financial Aid that are earmarked specifically for payment of tuition. They may be offered to degree-seeking graduate students who are enrolled full- or part-time. Tuition grants may be combined with other forms of scholarship or fellowship support. The decision to award a grant, including the amount, is made by the graduate program director in consultation with the chair, and the dean or designee of the college.

After discussion, the Council agreed on the paragraph. The discussion also added to the section on Tuition Waivers that everyone agreed on.

Tuition Waivers

Tuition waivers are partial-to-full remittances issued by the Office of Finance to accompany graduate assistantships. Waivers are only applied to graduate-level coursework. The decision to award a waiver, including the percentage, is made by the chair in consultation with the graduate program director and approved by the dean or designee of the college. Students holding tuition waivers who withdraw from courses may be held personally responsible for repayment of funds utilized.

After discussion, the following paragraph was lightly edited with input from Wie Yusuf.

Tuition Remittances

Tuition remittances are financial awards made in connection with a fellowship, an assistantship, or hourly position funded through a sponsored grant or contract by the Research Foundation. They may be full or partial in scope. Remittance must be applied prior to the student being eligible for a tuition waiver unless an exception is approved by the college dean or design and graduate dean or designee.

Bryan asked the Council to review the Return of Tuition Assistance and it was approved after light edits by Wie Yusuf.

Return of Tuition Assistance

A student who completes less than half of the graduate assistantship or fellowship appointment may be required to return their full tuition assistance (i.e., tuition waiver or tuition grant) award to the University or Research Foundation.

Bryan Porter asked for a motion to approve. Tony Dean approved, and Lesley Green was second.

Bryan Porter tabled the CGS Master's Exit Survey and asked everyone to go over the announcements on their own.

The meeting wrapped up with Bill Heffelfinger echoing Robert Wojtowicz's annual end-of-year message requesting colleges to urge students to register for the spring semester before the holiday break.

Wie Yusuf gave a brief update regarding the Career Pathways survey and urged everyone to get disseminate the survey link again to increase participation.

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Announcements

- Volunteers Needed (email to be sent):
 - SPEAK Retest – One faculty volunteer needed from any college. Wednesday, January 4, 2023, from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm, in person, in Constant Hall, room 1002.
 - Day 2 – GTAI Institute – Faculty Evaluators Needed (at least two per college) – Friday, January 6, 2023, from 8:30 am to noon. This event is in person in Constant Hall.
- GTAI Institute Registration Deadline – PAST!! Need completed ASAP.
- CourseLeaf Deadlines:
 - New Courses and Course Changes in CourseLeaf – PAST!
 - Curriculum Change forms – Friday, December 16, 2022.
 - Link to Curricular Change Form: odu.edu/acadaffairs/forms
- Save the Dates:
 - Advanced Degree Luncheon – Thursday, December 15, 2022, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Big Blue Room at the Ted Constant Convocation Center. Please be sure to RSVP. Invitations have been sent by the Office of Alumni Relations.
 - New Graduate and International Student Welcome Reception – Tuesday, January 3, 2023, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm, Webb Center, North Cafeteria. Invitations to be sent.
 - 3MT Competition – Friday, January 20, 2023, 6:00 pm, University Theatre. Invitations to be sent.
 - Graduate Administrators' Workshop – Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm, via Zoom. Invitation to be sent via email.