

GRADUATE ADMINISTRATORS' COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, January 14, 2021

8:30 – 10:30 am

via Zoom Meeting ID: <https://odu.zoom.us/j/91900910678?from=addon>

Attendees: Robert Wojtowicz, Bryan Porter, Missy Barber, Genny Conwell, Bill Heffelfinger, Craig Bayse, Dale Miller, David Chapman, Jane Dane, Karen Eck, Khan Iftekharuddin, Lamar Reams, Tisha Paredes, Wie Yusuf, Humberto Portellez, Miltos Kotinis, Robert Bruno, Regina Karp, Dorothy Lockaby, David Cook, Laura Ray, and Linda Bol.

Welcome

Robert Wojtowicz greeted Council members.

IELTS/SPEAK Waiver Policy & ITA Program Development:

IELTS/SPEAK Waiver Policy: Laura Ray opened the meeting by sharing the proposal to waive the SPEAK Test with the IELTS speaking score. The current policy states that international students must successfully complete the Speak Test or Retest. Students with a TOEFL score of 26 or higher on the speaking band can request a waiver for the SPEAK Test. We would like to add the IELTS test as an option. Council was informed that a score of 26 on the TOEFL test is equivalent to an 8.0 on the IELTS test. Laura asked Council for the process to approve this proposal and there was open discussion regarding this. A motion to approve this policy was moved and accepted.

There was open discussion about next steps and if the language related to the proposal should be added to the Graduate Catalog. Laura Ray informed Council that this is not an admission related issue because they already accept IELTS test scores and that this is actually needed for GTAI purposes. The discussion continued with a suggestion from Missy Barber to change the financial awards policy, adjust the GTAI waiver, and inform the Graduate Program Directors that this option is now available. Robert Wojtowicz asked if this is considered an editorial change. Wie Yusuf recommended that we send this request to Committee C, add it to the list of issues to discuss, and requested the completion of the issue form. Robert Wojtowicz requested that Laura Ray work with Missy Barber and Bryan Porter to accomplish this.

ITA Program Development: Laura Ray opened this discussion by providing information regarding the ITA Program Development and needs assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to find out what ODU graduate programs need from the ITA program. She informed Council that she would like to send out a survey within a week to compile information, disseminate, and have this completed by mid-February. Robert Wojtowicz suggested that Laura coordinate with Tisha to accomplish this. Further clarification was requested about the need's assessment regarding international teaching assistants, students where English is not their first language, and classroom instruction. Laura Ray reassured everyone that they are interested in a holistic program and that questions regarding language, academics, cultural, and support will be included in the assessment. Laura Ray also reported that ELC is working on another major needs assessment project for Ph.D. students in higher education from the Public Schools system. Council was informed that Robert Wojtowicz and Jane Dane would like to be included in this assessment.

Enrollment Update: Jane Dane provided a report on graduate enrollment. Spring 2021 Graduate headcounts are up by 13.2% and (FTEs) are up by 15.5%. She informed everyone that more students are enrolling this spring, taking more classes, and that the spring course offerings were adjusted. She also reported that fall 2021 applicants are up by 25% and admits are up by 62%. She shared the enrollment report during the meeting and will send these reports to Missy to share with Council members.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the Thursday, December 9, 2020 meeting were approved.

Announcements

- **One-Year Extension for Graduate Certifications – Update:** Council was informed that there was a request for a one-year extension for graduate certifications and that the language for this policy is ready to be sent to Committee C. There was open discussion regarding across the board extensions and blanket statements. Council was informed that Provost Agho was provided with the power to approve blanket requests. Council was also informed that Committee C is recommending the language regarding blanket statements and approvals, and that this recommendation will be sent to the faculty senate on Tuesday. Further discussion continued and Robert Wojtowicz concluded this discussion by confirming the need for this and that it will be helpful in some key areas.
- **Graduate Health Insurance Open Enrollment – Now through February 15, 2021:** Missy Barber reminded Council that the graduate health insurance enrollment is in progress and will continue through February 15th. All Graduate students will need to follow the same enrollment process.
- **Catalog & CourseLeaf Updates:** Missy Barber informed Council that training sessions are still in progress. She also reminded everyone that the deadline to submit curricular change forms and course changes has passed and the deadline to update the catalog is February 15th.
- **Save the Date – 3MT Competition – February 11, 2021:** Bryan Porter reminded Council that the 3MT competition is scheduled for February 11th from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. He will start promoting this event soon.
- **Graduate Research Achievement Week:** Bryan Porter reminded Council of GRAD Day (really “Week”) which is scheduled from April 5 – April 9, 2021 and that there is a call for virtual posters. Science Pubs is scheduled on April 7th. Karen Eck and Bryan Porter are working on the logistics of this event and requested suggestions for speakers to be emailed to them right away.

New Business

Forms & Policies Committee:

- **RCR Policy:** Bryan Porter informed Council that are two policies that were approved in the last GAC meeting that will need to be review again. The policy was shared during the meeting and recommended suggestions and clarifications about the needed changes were provided. Bryan Porter asked Council if they were okay with submitting this policy

to the faculty Senate with the discussed edits to the language and a motion to approve was passed.

- **Virtual Recruiting by Division or Area:** Robert Wojtowicz asked if we should work with the Office of Graduate Admissions to create virtual recruiting events. There was general agreement that he should.
- **Definition of Hybrid Course Delivery:** Robert Wojtowicz opened this meeting with a discussion about the definition of hybrid course offerings and issues surrounding this. A summary of what was presented at the Dean's Council meeting was provided. The fall 2021 course planning that compared on-campus, online, and hybrid delivery modes was shared during the meeting. Robert Wojtowicz suggested a tiered hybrid model as a resolution. This led to a question and open discussion about issues surrounding graduate stipends and amounts currently offered. Robert Wojtowicz suggested forming a group to study this in the future. He informed Council that will discuss the financial concerns with the Provost Agho.

Suggestions of classroom arrangements were provided and there was further discussion regarding the lack of consistency with the definition of a hybrid model. Tisha Paredes informed everyone that there is a federal definition of "contact" and a detailed explanation of this was provided. It was decided that a group will be formed to accomplish this that will include Tisha Paredes, Missy Barber, Humberto Portellez, Robert Wojtowicz, and David Cook.

- **Graduate Student Forum Debrief:** Council was provided with an update that 85 students and faculty administrators participated in the forum and that there were a lot of questions regarding COVID-19 vaccinations. Council was also informed that testing is available to individuals that are on campus. We are also waiting for updates from the Virginia and Norfolk Health department and that there has been discussion of ODU possibly leading vaccination distributions and partnering with Sentara.

Other Topics for Discussion

Graduate Certificates: Tisha Paredes opened this discussion by informing everyone that an email was sent regarding graduate certificates and that she discussed this information with the colleges. Nine graduate certificates will be discontinued. As a result, graduate admissions to these certificates will end as of May 2021 and students must have the option to finish these certificates no later than May 2025.

Program Prioritization: There was a question about the program prioritization survey and Graduate School involvement. Robert Wojtowicz informed everyone that the Graduate School assisted with developing some of the questions for this survey. Council was informed that there is a taskforce working on this survey and was asked to inform the taskforce of any items that need to be addressed. Tisha Paredes informed Council that an anonymous form with questions will be circulated possibly in February and the link was provided during the meeting.

Return to Stage Two Guidance Requested: Council was informed that December COVID-19 cases increased. As a result, Adam Rubenstein sent an email to the Associate Deans and Center Directors informing them that the semester will be starting in stage 2 of research. Human subjects research cannot begin unless it was approved in stage 2, but remote data collection can continue. Questions regarding this can be sent to Karen Eck, Adam Rubenstein, or Morris Foster.

Next Meeting

The next Graduate Administrators' Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 11, 2021 from 8:30 am – 10:30 am.

Meeting adjourned.