

Graduate Administrators Council (GAC)
Minutes for Thursday, January 16, 2014
Koch Hall Board Room
9:00 am to 10:30 am

Attending: Brenda Neumon Lewis, Chair, Shirshak Dhali, Imtiaz Habib, Robert Wojtowicz, Isao Ishibashi, Craig Bayse, Bill Heffelfinger, Ali Ardalan, Michael Moore, Lynn Ridinger, Gail Dickinson, Ravi Mukkamala, Brian Payne, Carolyn Rutledge, Missy Barber

Approval of November 21, 2013 Minutes

- Minutes were approved with corrections.

Announcements/Updates

- Doctoral Mentoring Award – Dr. Lewis reminded Council of the internal college deadline of February 3. Final nominations must be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies in March.
- Graduate Administration Mini-Workshop – Dr. Lewis asked Council to remind GPDs and faculty of the workshop on Thursday, January 30, 2014. She stated that the workshop will discuss the process for initiating new degrees and certificates and the implications for SCHEV and SACS notifications and approvals.
- Brown Bag Lunch and Learn – Dr. Payne will be conducting a Brown Bag Lunch and Learn on March 13, 2014. The topic will be the discussion of graduate program marketing. The purpose of the meeting will be to find out what everyone is doing and share best practices. There should be different marketing for graduate programs.
- Graduate Research Achievement Day – GRAD Day will be held on March 27, 2014, 12 noon to 2:00 pm. GRAD Day will be the pre-conference event for the NAGPS Regional Conference to be held March 27 – 29, 2014.

Policy to Admit 3 year baccalaureate degree holders

- Dr. Lewis stated that Dr. Agarwal has agreed to chair a small committee to look at changing our admission policy and what the impact to rankings and enrollment might be. Other committee members include Marcello Siles and Steve Risch. Dr. Lewis asked Craig Bayse to also participate on the committee and he agreed.

Graduate Enrollment and Recruitment - Brian Payne

- Dr. Payne informed Council about the current enrollment projections. Specific information was provided in the packets. He advised that if the projections are correct, we can expect that there will be fewer students next year. He asked that the Associate Deans encourage GPDs to think about promoting, maintaining, and encouraging growth.
- Dr. Dickinson asked if we had graduate level recruiters. Bill Heffelfinger said he is the graduate recruiter and Admissions is in the process of hiring a second person to assist him. Also, the question was raised about faculty assisting with recruiting. Heffelfinger said that they do have faculty that attend professional conferences. Funding is limited, but he is willing to work with departments and share costs.
- Dr. Payne noted that there is increased enrollment when there is greater flexibility in programs, i.e., online format.

- Carolyn Rutledge pointed out that the University is growing and we are pushing to grow more, yet the number of faculty is not changing. Dr. Payne responded by saying at some point we will need to look at the reallocation of resources to growing programs. Dr. Wojtowicz interjected that there is an element of risk when funds are reallocated.
- Carolyn Rutledge asked about the policy on graduate assistantships and how it can be used for students that are not on campus. Dr. Lewis informed her that there is no requirement for a graduate assistant to be on campus.
- Dr. Payne thanked everyone for their help in providing information for the enrollment projections.

Update on Health Insurance – Brian Payne

- Dr. Payne reported that the RFP for health insurance for graduate students has gone out. Bids are due by the end of the month.
- The RFP stipulates that all international students must have coverage. The insurance will provide voluntary coverage for graduate assistants who earn more than a certain amount. The University will pay a portion of the coverage for eligible graduate assistants. The program will provide the opportunity for all graduate students to have health insurance.
- Dr. Ardalan asked about the impact of the Affordable Health Care Act. Dr. Payne said there were still a lot of unknowns.

Regional Conference for NAGPS

- Dr. Lewis discussed the upcoming regional conference and stated that assistance from GAC is needed. There were about 60 students at the last regional conference which was hosted by George Mason.
- Dr. Lewis asked for volunteers to help with the conference. Dr. Wojtowicz, Dr. Dickinson, and Bill Heffelfinger said they would be willing to help.

Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching

- Dr. Lewis indicated that Dr. de Silva is presenting a proposal to change the Doctoral Mentoring Award to include Master's faculty. She indicated that a copy of the proposal was in the packet. She pointed out that the committee to review and determine the winner of the award would change from GAC to the Outstanding Faculty Committee.
- Dr. Wojtowicz suggested a change to the process under item IV on page 2. He said it would be useful to say specifically what goes in the packet, the vita, four letters of support, and endorsement letters. Also, with the doctoral mentoring award, only alumni were eligible to nominate someone. He wondered if including current students would cause problems.
- Dr. Dickinson suggested that the award be clearly geared toward mentoring and thought it would be better to take teaching out of the title.
- Dr. Ardalan said there was a huge difference between MA and PhD students and there is more mentoring at the PhD level. He thought that the MA faculty would be at a disadvantage. Carolyn Rutledge said that the Master's faculty in Health Sciences provide a high level of mentoring to discuss the proposal further.
- Dr. Lewis said that she would share all of the concerns with Dr. de Silva and will invite him to the next meeting.
- It was also mentioned that we want to place greater value and recognition at all levels, we are overlooking a dedicated cadre of faculty who teach at the Master's level and there needs to be recognition. It was also suggested that if there had to be one award, that it could be done by alternating the Master's and PhD faculty.

Continuous Enrollment Report – Ali Ardalan

- Dr. Lewis reminded Council that the members of the Continuous Enrollment Committee are Dr. Ardalan, Dr. Ishibashi, Dr. Benjamin, and Dr. Mukkamala.
- Dr. Ardalan presented the proposed policy which would allow doctoral students that are not working with faculty in the summer to not enroll.
- Dr. Ardalan mentioned two important points about the proposed change. If we are not offering the students a service, they should not be charged. Also, it is important to look at the financial implications for non-registration. He said that the committee did an informal survey within 4 colleges. Out of 372 students, only 22 would not register, which is about 6%. Based on the information received from Jim Duffy, this would not be a huge financial impact.
- After some discussion about the proposed policy change, it was agreed that the committee would meet and finalize the proposal and bring the complete document to GAC for review and approval.