

GRADUATE ADMINISTRATORS' COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, February 11, 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, Regina Karp, Dorothy Lockaby, Paul Currant, Matthew Schmidt, Renee Felts, and Linda Bol.

Welcome

Robert Wojtowicz greeted Council members.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the Thursday, January 14, 2021 meeting will be approved at the next meeting.

Announcements

- **3MT Competition:** Bryan Porter reminded everyone that the 3MT Competition is tonight at 6:00 pm and the public link was provided on the agenda. There are almost a 190 RSVP's. Thanks, was provided to Council for their assistance with promoting the event and was asked to attend.
- **Associate Dean Spotlight:** Xavier Palmer Lewis, Graduate Administrative Assistant for the Graduate School, started a series of profiles of the graduate associate deans. Dale Miller was our first volunteer, and his profile generated a lot of attention on our social media platforms. Volunteers for the next spotlight was requested and Lamar Reams agreed to be next.
- **Graduate Health Insurance Open Enrollment:** Missy reminded everyone that graduate student health insurance open-enrollment will end on February 15th. All students will need to be enrolled by this date.
- **Catalog & CourseLeaf Deadline for the 2021-2022 Catalog:** The CourseLeaf deadline for the text portion of the catalog is Monday, February 15th. Approvals may be provided next week for programs that are still waiting. More time can be provided if needed.
- **Why Graduate School Event:** Council was reminded that this event is on February 17, 2021 at 12:00 pm. This is a general information session about graduate school for our undergraduate student population. This virtual event is co-sponsored by the Graduate School, Office of Graduate Admissions, and Career Development Services. Messaging will mainly be provided to our undergraduate students, but we will provide the link to anyone interested.
- **Graduate Research Achievement Week:** Graduate Research Achievement week is April 5 – April 9, 2021. There are now more than 25 virtual poster submissions. Bryan Porter provided updates about the rest of the events during Graduate Appreciation Week also scheduled April 5 - April 9, 2021. The Lightning Five Science Pub is scheduled on Wednesday night, April 7th. The Alternate Career Ph.D. panel discussion is scheduled on Thursday, April 8th and will be finalized over the next two to three weeks.
- **Brown Bag Series Event:** This event will take place on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 12:20 pm and the topic will be on the New Graduate Assistant Position Numbering

System. Council was reminded that this originated out of the need to track the number of graduate assistant positions more accurately. Missy Barber will email the RSVP link next week.

Forms & Policies Committee

Graduate Credits by Transfer: This transfer policy was edited after it was approved, and the new language was provided during the meeting for review. Clarification was provided about credits that can be used from conferred degrees or certificates obtained from other Universities. There was open discussion about this new language and how experiences gained in these courses may be evaluated with a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) through the department of Continuing Education. Council was also informed that this process requires a fee from the student. A motion to approve the new language to this policy was passed approved.

Graduate Appeals Committee Tie Votes: Council was informed of an issue that resulted in a tie vote by the Appeals Committee and the recommended resolution from University Counsel was provided. Bryan Porter asked if language needed to be added in the catalog regarding this resolution. There was open discussion regarding why a seventh Appeals Committee member was not added in this situation. Because this is a rare occurrence, it was decided that the language in this policy did not need to change and an alternate seventh member would be appointed if the need arises. Council was asked to be transparent with the students about their final appeals decisions and resolutions. They were also asked to discuss their comprehensive exam process with their departments to prevent being exposed to appeals in the future.

Hybrid Definition: Robert Wojtowicz and Tisha Paredes provided updates from the definition of hybrid meeting. Council was reminded that the success in graduate enrollment was attributed to the flexibility in the course delivery system and there is a desire to continue to provide consistency after the pandemic. Robert Wojtowicz provided a detailed explanation and examples of the definition of hybrid. There was open discussion about courses provided via web conference, and alternative afternoon meeting times for graduate students. It was concluded that the 5:45 p.m. three-hour time block was the logical alternative. Council was informed that this discussion will need to continue at a later time with Shelley Jules-Plag included to verify spacing requirements. Clarification between asynchronous and synchronous will need to be determined after this is completed.

Enrollment: Jane Dane provided an update on enrollment. The graduate enrollment numbers remained the same as provided in the last report. Headcounts and FTEs are still up, and she will email the detailed enrollment report to everyone. She suggested that this fall semester may be the best time to move forward with plans to set the alternate meeting times for graduate students. As a result, it was decided to continue this discussion with Humberto Portellez, David Chapman, and Lamar Reams, and Shelley Jules-Plag.

iThenticate – Plagiarism Detection Software: There was a request to see if the University could invest in iThenticate as a plagiarism detection software. There was open discussion about the benefits, cost of this software, and how it compares to similar platforms already available.

Concerns were raised with investing in another software due to current constraints on resources and redundancy in services already provided.

This led to a discussion about the Grammarly software, which is a similar but advanced version of spell and grammar check provided by Microsoft. Robert Wojtowicz and Stuart Frazer were tasked with investigating the Grammarly subscription. It was reported that the annual cost of Grammarly is about \$60,000 and that the ODU Engineering and Athletics departments already have a limited subscription. There was open discussion about the benefits of purchasing and using Grammarly and its overall effectiveness. Advantages and disadvantages were provided, and Council was informed that the Writing Center is not enthusiastic about utilizing this software. This discussion was concluded by notifying Council that ODU will receive a free trial of Grammarly for one course during the spring 2021 to measure student usage and responses. These findings will be provided in a report and Robert Wojtowicz requested the assistance of Tisha Paredes for this study.

Other Topics for Discussion

Faculty Senate Updates: Wie Yusuf informed Council that the Faculty Senate approved the revisions to the Graduate Certification Policy, and a request was sent to the Provost to extend the deadline. Robert Wojtiwicz was asked to follow up on this request.

Next Meeting

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

Meeting adjourned.