

**Graduate Administrators' Council (GAC)**  
**Minutes for Thursday, March 26, 2015**  
**Koch Hall Board Room**  
**9:00 am to 10:30 am**

---

Attendees: Robert Wojtowicz, Chair, Andres Souza-Posa, Brian Payne, Bryan Porter, Richardean Benjamin, David Selover, Jane Dané, Mary Swartz, Bill Heffelfinger, Ravi Mukkamala, David Earnest, Kevin DePew, Raleta Summers, and Missy Barber

**Announcements**

- Dr. Wojtowicz reported that both Lunch & Learn events were well attended. The February Lunch & Learn topic was “Exploring a Graduate College.” Good data was gathered for the exploratory committee. The March Lunch and Learn topic was “Forms & Policies.” This meeting was beneficial and reinforced the need for greater communication about what is going on in Graduate Studies. Dr. Wojtowicz said that the Office of Graduate Studies is planning to launch a graduate newsletter for Graduate Program Directors and Department Chairs
- Doctoral Mentoring Award – Dr. Wojtowicz advised Council that the Doctoral Mentoring Award winner had been chosen and would be recognized at the Faculty Awards Dinner.
- Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards – Dr. Wojtowicz reported that the winners of the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards had been chosen. They also will be recognized at the Faculty Awards Dinner. He commented that the participation rate this year was very low. He advised that acknowledging and rewarding outstanding graduate teaching was a useful tool and he hopes there will be an increase in participation next year.
- Exploratory Committee – Dr. Payne reported that the exploratory committee has met on several occasions and had good discussion. Some discussion has been about what we would need in a graduate office or school. They have also done a couple of different exercises to identify what other schools are currently doing. There was agreement that the University needs something different. Over the next two weeks, the committee will be working on identifying activities that a graduate office or school should do or shouldn't do and what we currently do. Several programs and organizational charts were reviewed. Out of more than 20 peer schools, only 5 don't have a graduate school
- Advanced Degree Luncheon – May 6, 2015 – Dr. Wojtowicz asked Council to identify a master's and a doctoral student that would be willing to speak at the Advanced Degree Luncheon. Dr. DePew asked about the possibility of a distance student. Dr. Wojtowicz said he thought it would be ok, we would just need to work out the technology with the Alumni Office.
- Graduate Research Achievement Day – Dr. Wojtowicz reported that the number of participants is down from last year. He said that he would extend the deadline to Monday, March 30, 2015 and he asked Council to encourage students to participate.
- Graduate Research Achievement Day – Request for Facilitators – Dr. Wojtowicz requested volunteers for facilitators for Graduate Research Achievement Day. Dr. Ardalan, Dr. Selover, and Dr. Payne volunteered. Three more volunteers are needed. Dr. Wojtowicz asked Council to see who might be available in their colleges that would be willing to serve.

## **Enrollment Task Force Update – Brian Payne**

- Jane Dané provided data on programs on enrollment increases and decreases at ODU. Each member of the committee has been tasked with talking to GPDs and Chairs about what is working well and what isn't and to get recommendations on how to increase enrollment.
- Dr. Wojtowicz suggested that the report of data collected from GPDs from last semester that Bill Heffelfinger coordinated would be helpful to start the conversation.
- Jane Dané will bring a copy of the spreadsheet to the next meeting.
- There was a general discussion about enrollment trends over the long term, available resources, and incentives to grow programs.

## **Thesis and Dissertation Preparation – Use of Graphics**

- The use of graphics is permissible, but when the document is scanned, it is scanned in black and white. When Marlene Coles comes, we will raise the question with her.
- Dr. Souza-Posa said there needs to be some official guidelines for graduate program directors.

## **Thesis and Dissertation Subcommittee**

- The subcommittee will meet tomorrow. The paperwork has been completed and submitted to ProQuest for electronic distribution of documents. Laura Vann has been identified as the point person in the Registrar's Office, however, the plan is to shift responsibility to the Office of Graduate Studies. Centralizing the process in the Office of Graduate Studies will make it more streamlined and efficient.
- Dr. Porter stated that he has a student ready to submit for the pilot program. Dr. DePew says that he will have a student ready for fall 2015. Dr. Wojtowicz said that after the spring pilot program, we will do an open call for summer, then implement campus-wide.

## **Forms and Policies Subcommittee**

- Normal Courseload Policy – Updated with language for the VISA office. It includes advancement to candidacy and master's students in their final semester.
- Council approved the policy with the updated language.
- Graduate Assistant Policy – Dr. Wojtowicz advised Council that changes were made to the policy after feedback from the auditor was received. He described the new categories for Graduate Research Assistant and the differences between the two.

## **Approval of Minutes for Thursday, February 12, 2015**

- Minutes approved as submitted with one change noted. David Earnest should be added to the list of attendees.

## **Separation Policy**

- Dr. Wojtowicz advised Council that he, in conjunction with the forms and policies subcommittee will be writing a new separation policy. He asked everyone to share the reasons why students would need to be separated from a program. The reasons are as follows:
  - Voluntary Separation

- Academic or Student Conduct Violation
- Lack of Satisfactory Progress in Thesis or Dissertation
- The department has a continuance policy that differs from the University's continuance policy and the student fails to meet the criteria, i.e., receives a failing grade.

### **Parental and Medical Leave Policy**

- There was a brief discussion about parental and medical leave for graduate assistants. It was pointed out that graduate assistants do not meet the definition of employee. It was suggested that we review the policy developed by the Women's Caucus. Some research needs to be done on what other universities are currently doing. It was decided to table this issue until fall 2015.