

## **Graduate Administrators Council (GAC)**

Koch Hall Board Room

Thursday, May 21, 2009

9:00-10:30 a.m.

**Attending:** Brenda Neumon Lewis (chair), Chris Osgood, Robert Wojtowicz, Osman Akan, Ali Ardalan, Mona Danner

### **Approval of May 7, 2009 Minutes**

Minutes were approved without changes.

### **Updates/Announcements**

Dr. Neumon Lewis informed GAC that the Inclusion Policy has been approved by Provost's Council, and it will soon appear in the University Catalog and on the Office of Graduate Studies website. She stated that the Provost's Council was pleased with the policy and is considering developing a similar University Policy.

Dr. Neumon Lewis also informed GAC that the Admissions Decision Appeal Policy has been submitted to Faculty Senate; however, they have finished convening for this academic year and did not have a chance to discuss the policy. For this reason, the policy will not be included in the next University Graduate Catalog.

On Dr. Phil Langlais' behalf, Dr. Neumon Lewis informed GAC that the Provost and Deans have agreed upon a policy on the allocation of assistantships for Modeling and Simulation and that Dr. Langlais would be sending letters to the Deans this week.

Dr. Neumon Lewis reminded GAC that each college has the right to set higher Continuance standards than those of the University. Additionally, she asked that each college keep the Office of Graduate Studies informed of program and college suspension decisions. Dr. Danner asked, would the college need some sort of approval before they make continuance decisions, and would they need to put a copy of their policy in the University Graduate Catalog? Dr. Neumon Lewis confirmed that each college should have their policy published in the Catalog and in their programs' handbooks so that students are aware of the policy. Also, to ensure the suspended student's records have been updated, the Office of the Registrar should be contacted when a suspension decision has been made.

### **Graduate Residency Policy**

After many lengthy discussions, the Council agreed the current Graduate Residency Policy needs to be revised. It currently states that doctoral students are required to spend at least two semesters on campus. It was also determined that some distance learning programs are unable to

meet that requirement. Dr. Neumon Lewis presented a revised policy to GAC which is for all graduate students rather than only doctoral students. Generally, the term “residency” refers to being in place, geographically, at a University. Dr. Neumon Lewis informed GAC that SACS requirements refer to “residency” as taking resident credit at a University. Dr. Neumon Lewis stated she developed new language using language similar to SACS. Dr. Osgood commented that he has reservations about awarding a college degree without ever seeing the student. Dr. Ardalan suggested to change the policy to “A majority of the total credits for the master’s level and doctoral degree must be comprised of courses completed at ODU.” After discussion, Council agreed on the revised policy. Dr. Neumon Lewis stated that either she or Dr. Langlais will present the revised policy at the next Provost’s Council.

### **Catalog descriptions of Continuous Registration & Discussion on Request for Leave of Absence Policy**

In previous meetings, Dr. Isao Ishibashi brought up issues concerning the current description of Doctoral Candidates in the 2008-09 Graduate Catalog. Because he was unable to attend this meeting, Dr. Akan proposed Dr. Ishibashi’s suggestions to the Council. Dr. Ishibashi felt that “candidacy” was defined differently in various places of the catalog, and that this should be made consistent. He indicated “passing a candidacy exam” and “advancement to candidacy” have two different meanings in his college. In the College of Engineering, it is possible for students to pass the candidacy exam before completing coursework. In this college, there is a long process for a student to become a candidate, whereas in other colleges, completing all coursework and passing the candidacy exam makes a student a doctoral candidate. To close this loophole, it was suggested that the wording of the Graduate Catalog should be updated to reflect the proposed changes:

#### **Graduate Assistantship Guidelines**

##### **G. Enrollment and Registration Requirements (p. 45)**

“...doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy, completed required dissertation credit hours, and need only to complete the dissertation must register for at least one hour of dissertation (899) to be eligible for full tuition exemptions...”

##### **K. Tuition Assistance (p. 46)**

“ A doctoral student who has advanced to candidacy, completed required dissertation credit hours, and needs only to complete the dissertation must be registered for at least one hour of dissertation (899) to be eligible for full tuition assistance.”

#### **Graduate Policies and Procedures**

##### **Continuous Enrollment Policy:**

##### **Doctoral Students After Advancement to Candidacy (p. 47)**

“After successful advancement to candidacy, all doctoral students are required to be registered for at least one graduate credit hour each term (fall, spring, and summer)...”

**Normal Course Load (p. 47-48)**

“...who have not yet advanced to candidacy must register for six hours (three hours in the summer), and doctoral assistants who have advanced to candidacy, completed minimum required course work including minimum required dissertation credit hours, and need only to complete the dissertation are allowed to register for one hour of dissertation (899) to be classified as a full-time graduate student and therefore be eligible for full tuition exemption...”

**Dissertation Load Registration (p. 53)**

“All doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy are required to be continually registered for an appropriate number of dissertation units during each semester and summer session. (See “Continuous Enrollment Policy”.) ... A leave of absence may be requested for up to a maximum of three semesters. These semesters do not have to be consecutive.”

It was also requested that “Dissertation Load Registration” on p. 53 of the Graduate Catalog be changed to “Dissertation Load Registration and Leaves of Absence” in an effort to more accurately reflect the content of the paragraph.

In addition to his other suggestions, Dr. Ishibashi requested that on *Graduate Form 28 (1-Hour ABD Notification for Graduate Assistants)* the following statement be changed to: “This confirms that [the student] has Advanced to Candidacy and completed required dissertation credit hours...”.

Dr. Neumon Lewis stated that she will make the above changes and submit a copy to GAC for the benefit of members who were unable to attend this meeting.

**Updates from 2008-09 Sub Committees**

**a. *GTAI Institute (Criteria for Evaluation of Oral Presentation and Recommendation for Continued Training)***

As requested from the previous GAC meeting, Dr. Ardalan presented a revised list of recommendations regarding GTAI and iBT Speaking scores. Dr. Ardalan informed Council that all references to “admission” were removed from the recommendations, as the sub-committee was not originally tasked with analyzing the scores’ relation to the admission process.

In response to the results of the collected data, the sub-committee recommended that the Speak Test be waived for teaching assistant candidates who score 24 or higher in iBT Speaking.

Also, it was recommended that for all other students, iBT Speaking scores of 22 be used as the minimum score for offering teaching assistantships and that screening the communication skills of these students through Speak Test and presentations at the GTAI be continued.

Recommendation #3 was reworded to remind GPDs who are responsible for assigning assistantships to conduct face-to-face evaluations to determine candidates' communication skills before offering them teaching assistantships. If a face-to-face evaluation would not be feasible, GPDs would be instructed to consider conducting interviews using audio and video technologies.

The recommendations to request the Director of the English Language Center to provide Speak Test scores and the Director of International Admissions to provide iBT Speaking scores of admitted students to GAC on an ongoing basis was not revised.

Because student evaluation results for graduate teaching assistants may not be readily accessible to Deans, it was recommended to "request Deans to request Department Chairs..." to provide these results to GAC.

The sub-committee's recommendation to extend "orientation" programs to include additional language/culture components for international students who may benefit from them was also not revised.

Dr. Osgood suggested that the sub-committee make sure to note that the requested scores are purely for investigational purposes, and that colleges would not be penalized based on these scores.

It was determined that the sub-committee would make additional revisions to the report, and will then send it to Dr. Neumon Lewis. Dr. Neumon Lewis stated that after receiving a revised copy of the report, she will distribute it to all members of GAC for comments.

***b. Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines***

Dr. Wojtowicz presented to GAC a proposal to create a new University Thesis/Dissertation Formatting Guide that can be used across Colleges and that can serve as a foundation for specific graduate program guides, should they be deemed necessary.

The proposal outlined the requested budget needed to complete this project. It was proposed that a graduate student trained in formatting and editing theses/dissertations receive a one-time sum of \$3,000 to complete the necessary editing over the summer. It is expected there will be a finished product by the fall. It was noted that this

graduate student has also worked in a similar capacity on an ad hoc basis for the Batten College of Engineering and Technology's Dean's Office.

It was suggested that the rationale read: "...A new guide will eliminate *unnecessary content* and streamline essential content that is common to all Colleges...".

According to information obtained at the previous GAC meeting, Dr. Neumon Lewis requested that Dr. Wojtowicz add to the proposal that he, Dr. Akan, and Dr. Danner serve in the capacity of supervisors on this project.

Dr. Neumon Lewis indicated that this was the last regularly scheduled GAC meeting for this academic year. Once it has been determined, she will communicate to Council members when the next meeting will be held.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.**