

## GRADUATE ADMINISTRATORS' COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, October 14, 2021

8:30am – 10:30am

Via Zoom Meeting ID: <https://odu.zoom.us/j/92937685226?from=addon>

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**Attendees:** Robert Wojtowicz, Bryan Porter, Missy Barber, Genny Conwell, Karen Eck, Dorothy Lackaby, David Cook, Humberto Portellez, Lesley Greene, Regina Karp, Jane Danè, Dale Miller

### **Welcome Remarks**

Robert Wojtowicz welcomed attendees.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes for September 9, 2021, were approved.

### **Announcements**

- Museum of the Moon Exhibit- Friday through Sunday, October 15-17, 2021, 5pm to 9pm  
Robert Wojtowicz detailed all the activities that will be featured during the three-day festival and encouraged everyone to attend.
- Graduate School Information Session with ODU Online- Monday, October 18, 2021, 6pm  
Genny Conwell said that the event is geared to give tips on a work-life balance for students. Career Development Service, ODU Online staff members and ODU Graduate Admissions will also be attending and offering information. The event is virtual and held via Zoom. Robert Wojtowicz added that this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> event partnering with ODU Online and it has been a successful alternative to ordinary outreach.
- New Graduate Administrators Orientation- Tuesday, October 19, 2021, 9am-11:30am  
RSVP via the following link: <https://odu.zomm.us/meeting/register/tJUpc-Ghpz4JG9GexVJaqpAe22z3DE82wAYD>  
Missy Barber confirmed that the upcoming training is for all new graduate administrators and for existing staff that may want to take a refresher course.
- CourseLeaf Course Inventory Management Training – Go to the following link for more information: <https://www.odu.edu/acadaffairs/courseleaf>  
Missy Barber explained the course is specifically for those creating and editing courses in CourseLeaf. The link above features different days for attending the training.
- Graduate Catalog – Missy Barber confirmed that the Graduate Catalog is now available, and a copies can be purchased at Colley Avenue Copies and Graphics for \$18.97.

**New Business** – *Note that the order of the agenda was moved to accommodate Nina Gonser's participation at 10am. The minutes reflect the new order.*

- **Forms & Policies – Bryan Porter**
  - FYI – Continuance Policy  
Bryan Porter updated those in attendance with a brief overview of the existing policy for reinstatement, which dictates students have 45 calendar days to file a request for reinstatement or a request to appeal a dismissal. The timeline matches the statute of limitations for appealing a bad grade. He noted that the policy has worked well for

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dismissals but has created some problems when the separation is due to a suspension. Once a student enters probation and fails to raise their GPA (3.0) in 12 hours, the Graduate School suspends them on behalf of the program. Once suspended, they have 45 days to request reinstatement, reset their GPA to zero and work out a plan of study with the program. The additional language to the policy will benefit those students who have missed deadline due to valid reasons (COVID, family or health issues). Any exceptions to the policy will be made on a case-by-case basis.

He noted that there will also be additional language describing the graduate appeals committee's role and actions in the review process.

There was general positive discussion regarding the new flexibility.

- New G11 Form – Bryan Porter

G11 is a new form created from two discontinued forms. The time limit policy was discussed and approved at the last GAC meeting (*9/23 Minutes – allows for an extension request for student who is in a program after eight years and dictates they must seek and receive permission from the program to remain*). The G11 was created to track the students requesting the extensions. The form includes options for Master, Doctoral and ED Specialist students and will require two levels of approval – the GPD and the dean or designee.

Robert Wojtowicz made the point that there won't necessarily be a limit to extension requests and then opened it up to discussion. Lesley Greene and Regina Karp both agreed that it should be no more than one extension. Regina Karp said that it involves significant work for the faculty to recertify courses and slows down the process. Dale Miller said he is not in favor of an across-the-board limit to the number of extensions allowed. This led to general discussion where everyone agreed that a hard cap is not necessary and allows for programs to analyze each case individually.

Robert Wojtowicz wondered if adding to the form (not to the policy) that extensions shall "ordinarily" be granted, allowing for "extraordinary" cases.

With the time limit policy on the screen, Robert Wojtowicz said that if a hard limit is placed, it will have to be pulled back from Committee C. Regina Karp said she likes the flexibility granted to programs and departments but stresses that there shouldn't be endless accommodations. Robert Wojtowicz moved to bring the policy back to this Council in November. Everyone agreed.

- Proposed new Faculty Handbook Policy for Graduate Faculty – Robert Wojtowicz

He opened the discussion with the question - Is there a need for a policy that defines what it means to be a graduate faculty member? And what should go into the policy? He noted that the policy is found in different places among the colleges. Some are in handbooks and some in by-laws. When Linda Bol brought up that Darden has the certification policy in the handbook, Robert said that certification criteria was going to be separate from the general definition of what it means to be graduate faculty. To which Regina Karp noted that one doesn't preclude the other because you must be graduate certified to be

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graduate faculty. Wie Yusuf agreed with Regina, prompting open discussion. Dale Miller asked if tenured faculty must be recertified every five years. There was general discussion, regarding the recertification process, the definition of it and its timeline. When asked, Megan Corbett advised the Council to wait on changing the conditions of recertification until after SACSCOC's affirmation which comes late Summer 2022.

- Program Prioritization Initiative (PPI) Discussion – Robert Wojtowicz  
He asked if everyone had a chance to look at the PPI report that brought together recommendations submitted by every college and urged everyone to review it and submit recommendations to their deans for an upcoming meeting.

Wie Yusuf added that the Faculty Senate also had recommendations regarding the PPI report and added that if any faculty had more feedback that they should contact their Faculty Senator. When asked by Robert Wojtowicz about her views since she was on the task force. She assured everyone that feedback was reviewed and used in compiling their final report and she felt it reflected existing recommendations from the task force itself, as well as those from the colleges.

- Task Force Discussion  
Bryan Porter brought everyone up to speed on the Distance Learning task force and the benchmarking subcommittee which launched a week and a half ago. They are to write recommendations over the next 90 days for how ODU Online can achieve doubling online enrollment. He pointed out that of the top 20 public research institutions in the US, ODU is on the list with approximately 6,000 fully online degree seeking students of both undergraduate and graduate level. The goal is to reach 12-13 thousand which would place ODU in the top 8 public research universities.

Top priorities have been analyzing business models, workload issues and looking at what other organizations are doing. The committee is chaired by Morris Foster and Helen Crompton. He urged that if anyone is facing obstacles or difficulties with online students or programs in their departments to pass on recommendations to either him or either of the two chairs. They will be submitting a report on ODU Online in January 2022.

Jane Dané underscored the importance of increasing the online enrollment rather than switching students from in person to virtual. And added that it is equally important to ensure that our programs address the needs of the students and the mode in which they want their courses delivered. Bill Heffelfinger added that some students will switch from on campus to online and we must be accepting of the changes.

Robert Wojtowicz then shared information from the Marketing, Branding and Communication task force. The committee has been gathering information, principally from Strategic Marketing & Communications. The committee itself has been subdivided into subcommittees and he is on the Arts and Community Engagement overlapping with Karen Eck on Research and Graduate Studies. Karen Eck confirmed they meet weekly and are in the process of performing a SWOT analysis looking at marketing, communications and branding as it pertains to research, graduate education and workforce development. The resulting report will go back to the primary task force

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and will be included in the main report that will be presented to President Hemphill before Thanksgiving.

Karen Eck also confirmed that there are wide gaps in communications regarding research and graduate education. Missy Barber added that she and Bryan Porter sit on a committee for strategic communications and have been urged to write their own articles for review because the communications team does not have the manpower to cover all the news coming out of ODU.

This led to general discussion in favor of creating internships for strategic communications following the initiative created by Athletics which features students (from both the bachelor's and master's programs) as interns to bolster social media campaigns and short press releases. This mutually beneficial system enhances the strategic communications for the university while enhancing student portfolios.

Jane Danè then brought everyone up to speed on the collection of data regarding institutional spending on marketing. The study is like one done a few years ago and it is still in the process of finding a more efficient means of marketing. She also mentioned that census numbers for enrollment are being gathered through the final months of the year and will be launched sometime in January. She reminded everyone that GPDs all have access to numbers via their dashboards and can view the current data.

Regina Karp commented that all marketing should be based on creating a shared sense of what Old Dominion is about and what the university is trying to do.

- Graduate Program Director (Faculty Handbook) – Nina Gonser

Nina Gonser attended the meeting to take any questions regarding a change in the handbook regarding remuneration and release time. She started by saying that this change was brought about after a conversation with the provost and audit recommendations. This created a standard for GPDs in the amount of course release time or remuneration. She said it will be one or the other during the academic year (defined as Spring and Fall). Before the question portion, Robert Wojtowicz pointed out that this is the way it is done at most colleges. Dale Miller asked if there is a specific formula for the remuneration. In response, Nina Gonser said there will be a faculty compensation committee created to discuss those formulas and standards for remunerations for GPDs, UPDs, thesis and dissertation, etc. The faculty compensation committee will convene over the spring term and establish those formulas so they can be enacted over the next fiscal year. For those who currently get both, Nina Gonser said there is a need to create standards across all divisions and a financial commitment to support the stipends and an appropriate formula to calculate the stipend based on the work that is being done. Currently, some get a course release, then get an overload payment as well as the stipend. She stated they need to be careful about those kinds of activities and ensure that payments and course releases are appropriate. Robert Wojtowicz said that it is essentially an equity issue and going against the idea of "it has always been done this way" that glaring inequities are going to be fixed going forward. Answering David Cook's question, the committee will be made up of faculty chairs, deans, and administrators. There will be fair representation across the different colleges as well as across different ranks.

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After a question regarding the lack of support for a pay cut, Nina Gonser clarified that the policy affects the academic year defined as spring and fall, excluding summer. She noted that faculty works on a ten-month contract for spring and fall and the summer stipend paid through Academic Affairs. She noted that all the policies and practices are currently based on the fall and spring academic year and that that definition is now before Committee C.

Robert Wojtowicz then confirmed with Bryan Porter that this was the only remaining portion of the policy left to be voted on. Regina Karp made a point that if she wasn't clear on the effect it would have on her summer stipend for the GPIS directorship, she couldn't vote on it. Robert Wojtowicz said there should be a separate meeting with Regina Karp, Nina Gonser and Jonathan Leib, interim dean of the College of Arts and Letters regarding this issue. All agreed.

Bryan Porter then said that GAC does not have direct control over the fiscal implementation of this change to the GPD policy and asked for Nina Gonser's confirmation that she is under budgetary and policy constrictions regardless of opposition. Nina Gonser confirmed that but added that she appreciates everyone's position and wants to ensure that everyone understand the impact but that in the end, this is a decision policy handed down from Academic Affairs. Bryan Porter summarized on behalf of the group that there will be exceptions and leadership situations where Academic Affairs will take case by case reviews in those circumstances.

To that, a vote was unnecessary and it was deemed editorial on behalf of Academic Affairs and the meeting was closed without a vote.