

Graduate Administrators Council (GAC)

Koch Hall Administration Building Board Room

November 20, 2008

9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Attending: Brenda Neumon Lewis, chair, Laurel Garzon, Sharon Judge, Robert Wojtowicz, Yin Xu, Ali Ardalan, Mona Danner, Isao Ishibashi

Guests: Stella Mims, Geneva Walker-Johnson, Jay Wright, Mike DeBowes

Approval of November 6, 2008 Minutes

Minutes were approved with one change.

Updates/Announcements

Dr. Brenda Neumon Lewis distributed a flyer from GPIS announcing a call for papers for a spring conference.

Dr. Neumon Lewis reminded Council to submit the names for the Graduate Research Forum.

Discussion of Interface of Academic Affairs/Student Affairs relative to honor code violations and administrative withdrawals

Mike DeBowes, Director of Student Judicial Affairs, began by explaining the definition of academic dishonesty and explained the student appeal process to Council.

Dr. Ali Ardalan asked for an example of new information a student could receive in order to submit an appeal. Mr. DeBowes explained that there is a five day window in for students to submit an appeal. Laurel Garzon asked what is the timeframe to conduct a hearing. Mr. DeBowes said that there is no set timeframe but the standard is a couple business days. Dr. Garzon described how important resolving these issues in a timely fashion is for students in the College of Health Sciences.

Dr. Robert Wojtowicz asked if graduate students can be placed on the panel in cases in which a graduate student has been accused of academic dishonesty. Mr. DeBowes responded, yes, graduate students are welcome. It was recommended that each Associate Dean develop a list of graduate students who will be able to serve in this capacity.

Dr. Mona Danner asked if there are other ways to get graduate students involved in the appeals process. Dr. Geneva Walker-Johnson responded that students can be nominated to serve on panels. Dr. Neumon Lewis requested Jay Wright send the nomination criteria to the Office of Graduate Studies for distribution to the departments for nominations. Mr. DeBowes stressed the importance of Associate Deans and GPDs making strategic nominations and that students and faculty that serve on the panel undergo training prior to serving on a case.

Dr. Neumon Lewis asked for clarification on dismissal and reinstatement policies and procedures. Mr. DeBowes explained that suspension is for a certain period of time; students must complete tasks/requirements and must have the hold removed before they can be reinstated. He also explained that suspension and dismissal is in response to the University not a particular program. It was pointed out that students do not seem to understand that they cannot automatically return to a degree program after the suspension for an honor code violation.

Mr. DeBowes offered to add more distinguishing language to letters to clarify suspension/dismissal is from university or department. He is also preparing a checklist for students leaving or returning to or from the university.

Dr. Ardalan suggested that a set of academic and ethical standards are needed by the colleges. Jay Wright and Council agreed.

Dr. Garzon referred to Issue #2 on the Student Affairs/Academic Affairs handout stating that students are often confused by this statement. Dr. Neumon Lewis suggested that a statement in the student's letter indicating that only the degree program would have the authority to reinstate students into the program would solve the confusion.

Mr. DeBowes explained that during a trial the faculty member that brought the charge is present. After the trial the student and faculty member receives a letter with the outcome. Dr. Neumon Lewis added that the GPDs should be notified also. He agreed this could be done.

Dr. Garzon asked for clarification of the term "faculty" because some courses are co-taught. Mr. DeBowes stated that "faculty" refers to the single faculty member/instructor with which the dishonesty occurred. Mr. Wright added that one faculty member should be designated to discuss the issue. This can be done in person or over the phone for distance students.

Dr. Mona Danner added that the GPDs should be notified that charges have been brought and the result. Dr. Walker-Johnson suggested that the GPD file the charge instead of a string of people/faculty members. Dr. Robert Wojtowicz asked if a letter can be sent to faculty members indicating a resolution has been met, but no specific result given?

Dr. Walker-Johnson suggested another meeting for further discussion. Drs. Garzon and Wojtowicz volunteered to attend the meetings with Dr. Walker-Johnson and Mr. DeBowes. Dr. Wojtowicz said he will chair this ad hoc committee.

Mr. Wright added that "GPD" will be added to policy, stating that the letter will be sent to GPDs as well. Dr. Neumon Lewis thanked Dr. Walker-Johnson, Mr. DeBowes, Ms. Mims and Mr. Wright for coming to GAC. Council indicated it had been very helpful.

Follow-up on Posting and Access to Grad Enrollment Tracking Reports

Dr. Neumon Lewis asked Council for their opinion of the new graduate enrollment tracking reports. Dr. Danner responded that it is easy to use and it looks just like the old version.

Non-Compliance with VA Code for Awarding of Graduate Assistantships

Dr. Neumon Lewis stated that students on assistantships must be registered for nine credit hours. Dr. Ardalan stated that there are universities that are achieving the compliance standards in different ways.

Dr. Danner asked if this included dissertation fellowships. Dr. Neumon Lewis responded, yes, everyone should be at nine hours. Dr. Ardalan suggested proposing a 1-12 hour course with a flat fee to the Board of Visitors and Provost's Council. There was a lengthy discussion involving the concerns that the GPDs and Associate Deans had about the policy.

Dr. Isao Ishibashi stated that he will request unlimited unfunded tuition. Council stated that unfunded tuition is low. Dr. Neumon Lewis responded that unfunded tuition has not been discussed.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:03 a.m.