

Graduate Administrators Council (GAC) Minutes
Minutes of Tuesday, October 20, 2009
Koch Hall Board Room
9:00-10:30

Attending: Philip Langlais, Chair; Brenda Neumon Lewis; Sarah Snowden; Osman Akan; Ali Ardalan; Mona Danner; Danica Hays; Isao Ishibashi; Sharon Judge; Christopher Osgood; Mike Overstreet; Patricia Pleban; David Selover; Robert Wojtowicz

Welcome/Introductions

Each member introduced himself/herself to the rest of the committee.

Approval of October 8, 2009 Minutes

Minutes approved with one minor correction in the section on Modeling and Simulation to read "appointment of faculty still need to *be* worked out."

Updates/Announcements-P. Langlais

Graduate Administration Workshop 10/21

- o October 15th was the first Graduate Administration Workshop. The next workshop will be on October 21st. Overall, the evaluations were positive. Most of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the workshops were valuable. Dr. Langlais indicated that the comments were also positive and reflected the different concerns and interests of the different level of the persons attending the workshop.

Dissertation /Thesis Guide

- o Dr. Langlais stated that he would submit a request to the Provost and Deb Swiecinski to hire someone to revise the dissertation manual in Arts & Letters. Once the funding is approved Dr. Langlais will ask Dr. Wojtowicz to proceed with the project.
- o There was some discussion about waiting to begin the project because a decision regarding electronic theses and dissertations has not been made; however, the Council agreed that the revision of the manual should not wait and should go forward.

Health Insurance Issue-International Students- P. Langlais

- The Council discussed concerns raised by a number of international graduate students regarding their health care costs. ODU policy requires that all international students have insurance. It seems that the costs have risen for the spousal coverage since the university entered into a contract this academic year with Aetna.
- Dr. Akan stated that he has received several communications from a Dean and students regarding this issue and hoped that The Council could take the lead in finding a solution for the students. Under the new insurance coverage, costs are lower for the individual student but have risen for students with spouses and children. The students maintain that they cannot afford the additional costs.
- Two issues were identified: One is the immediate need to assist the students who indicated they do not have money to pay the additional cost required to cover their spouses and children. The second is a long term solution to the need for a comprehensive health care program for all graduate students.
- Dr. Langlais stated that the first step is to determine how many international graduate students have spouses and/or dependents and are affected by the higher than anticipated premiums. He would ask Ted Farmer, in Graduate Studies, to collect this information and to determine how many of these students with dependents were receiving assistantships or fellowships.
- Additionally, it was agreed that we need a policy and a budget to help fix this problem. One suggestion is to see if stimulus funds can be used to address the short term problem. The caveat was raised that whatever solution is decided on it should not create additional problems.
- Also it was suggested that the insurance information should be included in all acceptance letters so students know well in advance of their arrival of what their costs will be.
- Dr. Langlais mentioned that insurance for all of our graduate students, domestic and international, is an issue that we have been dealing with for some time. Two proposals for university funding of a mandatory health plan for all graduate students had been submitted to the former President but were not approved. He also pointed out that the problem crosses several Vice Presidential areas which make it more difficult to find an acceptable solution.
- Council agreed that it would be helpful to review the contract with Aetna. Dr. Danner suggested that we attempt to negotiate the costs with Aetna.
- It was also suggested that we should receive input from those students who have been affected by the new contract with Aetna.

- Council suggested that all relevant parties from the various units who are involved with this issue come to a Council meeting. Dr. Langlais agreed to invite individuals from Student Affairs, ISSS, Graduate Admissions and the Health Center to the next Council meeting.

Graduate Appeals Committee Recommendation- B. Lewis

- Dr. Lewis presented recommendations from the Graduate Appeals Committee. Several recommendations were put forward:
 - that an additional member be added to ensure that the committee would not have split decisions regarding students' reinstatement applications,
 - that a member of the committee does not have to be a GPD but should be graduate certified,
 - that the members should serve a term of three years with a staggered rotations; finally,
 - that the Graduate Appeals Committee becomes the second level of reinstatement appeal. That is, that GPD's would make the initial decision regarding a student's appeal request to their programs and the Graduate Appeals Committee would only deal with the cases in which students wanted another level of review after they had been denied reinstatement by their program.

In addition, the Graduate Appeals Committee suggested that the new process include the following: 1- a question on the form that student complete about prior honor code violations; 2- allow the Committee to consider poor language and writing skills in the student letter as a factor in making a decision regarding the future academic success of the student; and, 3- that there be a waiting period prior to a student being allowed to submit a reinstatement application. There was considerable discussion among the Council members on the last two considerations. The Council wanted further information from the Graduate Appeals Committee as to why the latter two considerations were put forward. Dr. Lewis indicated she had asked the chair of the Committee and one of its members to attend the Council meeting but neither was available. She indicated she would discuss the Council's questions and concerns with the Graduate Appeals Committee chair, Professor Gayle McCombs, and bring the information back to the next Council meeting.

Discussion on Minority Recruitment Strategies - C. Osgood

- Dr. Osgood indicated that this topic was first introduced at a Council meeting in terms of a diversity statement that he thought would be helpful for faculty

seeking grants. He noted that the Council had passed an Inclusiveness Statement that was now on the Graduate Studies web site. Dr. Lewis indicated that it was also in the University Graduate Catalog. Dr. Osgood wondered what other strategies were being used to attract minority students. Dr. Akan mentioned several initiatives in the College of Engineering that are being used to attract women and an initiative by Dr. Gail Dodge was also mentioned. Dr. Lewis indicated that she had access to the McNair Directory and would forward it to the members of Council to share with individuals in their colleges.

Other

- Dr. Danner stated she thought that the University Registrar, Mary Swartz, should be a member of the Council. After discussion, there was consensus that having the Register on the Council would be a good idea. Dr. Lewis indicated she would take the Council's recommendation to the Vice Provost.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 A.M.