

GRADUATE ADMINISTRATORS' COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, December 9, 2021

8:30am – 10:30am

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

Attendees: Bill Heffelfinger, Rene Felts, Robert Wojtowicz, Jane Danè, Missy Barber, Bryan Porter, Vickie Carnegie, Paul Currant, Dorothy Lockaby, Milos Kotinis, Wie Yusuf, Megan Corbett, Dale Miller, Linda Bol and Liza Flores.

Welcome

Robert Wojtowicz greeted Council members.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for October 14, 2021 were approved.

Announcements

- 3MT Results – Bryan Porter
 - 1st Place – Jeremiah Ammons, M.S. Psychology – Topic: “Sit up and pay attention! A study on automated driving.
 - 2nd Place – Adenrele Oludiran, Ph.D. Chemistry – Topic: “Even antibiotics need a helping hand: Role of Piscidins against *Clostridioides difficile* pathogen.
 - People’s Choice – Yasir Alanazi, Ph.D. Computer Science – Topic: “Refining the face of physics: A machine learning tool to generate synthetic particle collisions.

He thanked everyone for their support of the 3MT competition. It was noted that the media exposure via university announcements, news and social media, helped make the event a great success. Also noted that the live/livestream method used for this year’s competition went very well and that it experienced no technical difficulties. Over 100 attended the virtual livestream. First place winner, Jeremiah Ammons, will represent ODU at the Council of Southern Graduate Schools in February against 15 other states and about 42 other students.

- CourseLeaf Course Inventory Management (CAT) Training – Missy Barber

It was announced that Catalog training will begin and anyone responsible for updating the catalog content and would like to attend a session can register here:

<https://www.odu.edu/acadaffairs/courseleaf>.

Deadlines coming up – 12/10 for course changes or establishing new courses and getting them into workflow and 12/17 for submitting curricular change forms. Everyone was urged to use the new curricular change form for this catalog cycle and it can be found on the Academic Affairs website. She noted that it is an updated version because the initial release had some formatting issues that have now been corrected. If an old version of the form is received, it will be sent back.

Linda Bol commented that their department’s admission guidelines need to be updated to reflect that the GRE is now optional. Noting that this change doesn’t fall into either of the changes mentioned previously, she asked for clarification. Missy said that changes to the catalog that don’t require curricular change forms should be sent to the Graduate School by February 15th. Missy Barber then brought up the Graduate School Awards and pointed out that an email was sent out on 12/8, with a reminder for the upcoming meeting as well as an open call for nominations.

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Before Bryan continued with information regarding the Summer Awards program, Robert Wojtowicz asked to return to the topic of 3MT. He asked Bryan if he had mentioned the imbalance among the participants in terms of college representation. Bryan said he had not. Robert went on to state that he wanted to plant an idea among the associate dean's and the graduate program directors in getting more graduate students to participate. He noted that this was one of the strongest 3MTs the university has had in terms of preparedness of the participants and the topics they covered. He also pointed out that it was STEM heavy. While he acknowledged that with all the roadblocks students face on the way to their PhD, and their desire to finish it, he would like to see more participation across all colleges. And wondered if it was possible to begin pitching 3MT participation at each college and perhaps even creating preliminary competitions and sending finalists to compete at the big event. Bryan Porter agreed and noted that this year's event only featured 3 colleges while in previous years, 5 or 6 had participated. He also noted that HS, AL and EN did not participate despite having done so before.

- **Graduate Summer Awards Program – Bryan Porter**

Announced the program is entering its 5th year, going hand in hand with 3MT. Using funds from the partnership with the Office of Research (who also fund the 3MT), 10 to 11 \$3K awards will be given out this summer. This is for six uninterrupted weeks of research during the summer months when students are not funded by any other source. This is a student-initiated program and features the student's work, not work for a faculty member. The RFP will go out before the Christmas break, then again right after and the deadline will be somewhere in late February, before the spring break. The awards will be decided by a committee.

- **GSGA Elections in January – Bryan Porter**

The elections were launched, and the first round of officers tried to get the word out and get the group together but have unfortunately, all graduated. To remedy the situation, a second round of elections will be held in January and he notified attendees to watch for an email promoting the GSGA elections.

- **Graduate Student Health Insurance – Missy Barber**

Open Enrollment began December 1, 2021 and ends February 15, 2021. She informed everyone that an email blast to all students that are eligible went out with a link that initiates the enrollment process. Lamar Reams asked what the criteria is for students to be eligible for health insurance. The must be degree seeking, on campus (or in region). Amount of credits they are taking does not matter as long as they are enrolled. Robert Wojtowicz pointed out that assistantship students with health insurance receive a subsidy when they are at the \$5K level of stipend with \$600 for spring and \$500 for fall. Missy pointed out that if there are students who are graduating, they can continue their coverage for up to two months.

- **Advanced Degree Luncheon – Missy Barber**

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She noted that the luncheon will be held on Thursday, December 16, 2021, 11:30 am in Big Blue Room at the Constant Convocation Center. She confirmed with Robert that invitations have gone out and that there will be two speakers at the luncheon.

- Graduate and International Student Welcome Reception – Missy Barber

She confirmed that the reception would be held on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm, in the North Cafeteria at Webb Center. She confirmed that there was a great turn out in the fall and while spring doesn't usually bring out as many new students, she said she was confident it would be well attended. Robert took the opportunity to remind everyone on the call that orientation was switched to virtual due to the pandemic and it has been working well for both local, international and distance students.

- GTAI Institute – Missy Barber

She noted that it would be held on Thursday, January 6 and Friday, January 7, 2022. The registration deadline was Friday, December 3, 2021. And she noted that volunteers were still needed for the second day of evaluations and said that if anyone was interested, they could email her.

- Graduate Student Forum – Robert Wojtowicz

The forum was restarted during the pandemic to inform students working in lab or classrooms with timely COVID and protocol information regarding coming onto campus and into labs, etc. He confirmed it would be held again on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm and doesn't expect that there will be much change in COVID protocols. He noted that the testing center will not cut back come January and will operate as usual. He also said it would be a good opportunity to introduce Allen Wilson, the new University counsel.

- Brown Bag Series Event – Missy Barber

Since the rescheduling of the November 2021 Brown Bag event, the new one is scheduled for Tuesday, January 18, 2022. An invitation with an RSVP link will be emailed as soon as possible.

- Off Agenda: Enrollment Numbers and Commencement – Robert Wojtowicz

Jane Danè reported that graduate enrollment for the spring up 3.6% and graduate credit hours or FTE up 3.64%. Overall enrollment up 8% and the FTE up 4.8%. Jane also pointed out a decrease in online courses and an increase in face-to-face. David Cook asked how ODU's enrollment trends compared to national ones. Jane confirmed that the trend showed a big surge during the pandemic for both ODU and national numbers. As far as the Spring 2022 Pipeline for new graduate enrollment, she showed that graduate applicants were behind 6%, admits down 16% and registrations down 16%. Robert then urged GPDs and any admissions committee members to take into consideration student impatience when applying for graduate programs. Bill Heffelfinger then pointed out that after the holiday break, there would only be one week before classes start and that if there were any decisions still to be made for the spring admissions that they be loaded into the system before the break.

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Wie Yusuf asked the attendees if admit decisions were being hampered by constraints on faculty resources. She noted that her department's ongoing reduced faculty size (doctoral seminars of 28-30 students) reduces the number of admissions.

David Cook said his program admits students despite a concern of whether they have the faculty capacity. He brought up factors like faculty teach load issues and overloads, how to pay for them, etc. Wie Yusuf then stated that her department has a cap of 2 adjuncts per program to teach classes. This led to general discussion and Robert Wojtowicz then asked Wie Yusuf if that cap was a restriction from Nina's Office of Academic Affairs. Wie Yusuf said she didn't know. David Cook said his guidance has come down from the administrator's council at the college level. Linda Bol said she didn't think that rule was enforced. Robert Wojtowicz said he would take the matter up to the dean's group to discuss capping of adjunct scale. Dale Miller commented through the chat that AL doesn't adhere to the policy either and Lamar Reams said he hadn't heard of any adjunct caps.

Robert Wojtowicz then brought up commencement. After going over the order of presentation of the colleges, he reminded everyone that there is no advanced degree ceremony in fall so the masters, education specialists and doctorates are all with their colleges and there is one student walking for Biomedical. He also pointed out that hooding will take place as usual and for all those in attendance to remind their GPDs and advisors that they must be there with their students. And to be on the safe side, he suggested everyone practice the hooding procedure.

New Business

- **Grade Appeal Policy – Bryan Porter & Missy Barber**

BP - The only change to the policy is record keeping. For the record, it was noted that it is one of the policies shared by both undergrad and grad because it is a university-wide policy regarding how grade appeals are handled.

Before Missy took over, Robert Wojtowicz pointed out that undergrad had already sent this to the Faculty Senate before allowing grad to provide any feedback. Wie Yusuf confirmed that it was, indeed, already before the Senate.

MB – Confirmed that according to the Library of Virginia, grade appeal records must be kept for ten (10) years after graduation or withdrawal. She said she still needed to confirm via records of hearings but was unsure where the present language of one-year came from. Regardless, she confirmed that according to the records retention schedule, it must be kept for the ten years. Robert Wojtowicz then asked Missy to pull the correct language from records management and it will be forwarded to Judy Bowman, Austin Agho and Brian Payne. The discussion was tabled.

- **Autonomy of Concentrations – Bryan Porter & Robert Wojtowicz**

RW – Emphasized concern regarding the umbrella degrees and the explosion of concentrations under those degrees. He expressed regret that Sandeep Kumar was not in attendance. He listed the Ph.D. for BA, psychology, engineering, as well as the D Eng, MS in engineering and the ME

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degree, all of which harbor many concentrations. He noted that for those students wishing to have a second degree, the double concentration policy was created. He stated that the issue brought up before the attendees is how to handle concentrations, under umbrella degrees, attempting to make changes in admissions or other processes. The question posed was do other concentrations have to degrade?

BP – To be clear, he noted that the issue on the table was not for voting, just for open discussion. The most recent issue used as an example – an education concentration seeking to admit students post bacc as opposed to post masters. Another example - students having to know which concentration they're applying for to know if the GRE had been waived. The point of the discussion centered around the fact that some concentrations are attempting to make independently of the degree. He asked those in attendance if there was any concern or suggestions regarding this issue. The discussion was then opened.

Linda Bol brought up a recent case of a student out of Michigan State that could not be recruited because she couldn't get her master's degree before she got the Ph.D. Linda Bol noted that ODU could be more competitive and selective if recruiting graduate students if that option was available.

Lamar Reams agreed that the potential was there and that by creating this additional pathway, ODU could increase and improve competitiveness. He stressed a concern that by doing so with concentrations that are so small, the change would be dramatic over the course of a few years and possibly adversely affect a SCHEV review.

Robert Wojtowicz pointed out that by allowing the breakout of a separate degree, the issue of additional funding comes to the forefront. This led to general discussion from Linda Bol and David Cook regarding resources when more students are in the program. Wie Yusuf joined the discussion saying that the MPA program tends to not allow the concentrations to be autonomous and should be able to make their own decisions.

Robert Wojtowicz also highlighted the issue that the problem is minimal when the degree is directly in a department and is managing concentrations specific to that discipline. He stressed that the problem arises when the degree is not tied to any department. He attempted to come to a consensus that concentrations should be monitored more closely if some of the changes could potentially affect other areas of the degree. It was agreed that concentrations are new to programs and must be tracked to see how they will be performing.

Robert Wojtowicz summed it up by bringing up the graduate curriculum handbook and suggesting a thorough update. Megan Corbett then agreed with that review and will be reviewing SCHEV policies regarding concentrations and their alignment to their programs.

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- Forms & Policies Committee – Bryan Porter
 - D1 Form – The only change is the title that now separates the document for advisory committee from the examination committee in order to establish who is determining the student's pass or fail of the candidacy exam. And it will be sent to the Registrar's Office for record keeping. The catalog will also be updated and reviewed in the next meeting.
 - T1 Form - Urged everyone to remind their GPDs to send out their T1s for spring. The section that covered the time frame for instruction had been inadvertently omitted and has now been reinserted into the document.