

Graduate Administrators' Council (GAC)
Minutes for Thursday, December 11, 2014
College of Education – Dean's Conference Room, Room 118
9:00 am to 10:30 am

Attendees: Robert Wojtowicz, Chair, Kevin Depew, Brian Payne, Gail Dickinson, Bill Heffelfinger, Ali Ardalan, Richardean Benjamin, David Earnest, David Selover, Andres Sousa-Poza

Guests: Morris Foster, Vice President for Research
Chandra de Silva, Vice Provost for Faculty and Program Development

Tuition Waivers – Morris Foster

- Dr. Wojtowicz introduced Morris Foster, Vice President for Research, to the Graduate Administrators' Council and opened the discussion on tuition waivers and grant budgets.
- Dr. Foster advised Council that after March, 2015, principle investigators will be required to include tuition waivers in the budgets submitted for grant proposals. He shared his experience with his prior institution, explaining their implementation process and said within three to four years, they had an increase in students. More importantly, they were able to attract students of a higher caliber.
- He also explained the state budget is not looking good for next year, so any augmentation is a good idea. He also suggested adding in the health insurance subsidy as a fringe item.
- Dr. Foster advised that almost all universities were including tuition and fringe benefits costs in their grant budgets, so it will not create a disadvantage for ODU to be competitive in requesting grants.
- A question was raised as to whether or not to budget the instate or out of state rate. Dr. Foster said some schools, like VCU and George Mason, budget the instate rate, however, since we do not have the budget to make up the difference, the out of state rate should be used.
- Dr. Sousa-Poza expressed concern with the impact to smaller projects, stating that it could cause an additional 30% increase in overhead expenses.
- Council asked if different budget models were considered.
- Dr. Morris suggested the possibility of a tuition pool; however, there are issues with federal accounting requirements. Funds from one grant cannot be used to supplement another.
- Dr. Dickinson said that grants within the College of Education require a 1 to 1 cost match, so this would require \$50,000 be added in for each student. They do not have the additional resources to cover that expense. She also asked about start-up packages. Dr. Morris said that the Office of Research will continue to subsidize those expenses. Dr. Dickinson said that historically, the bulk of the waivers are given in Sciences and Engineering so students are not expecting to get a waiver as an option.
- Dr. Morris said there are options with tuition waivers that are not used for grants. He said that RAs can be reduced to six hours. He advised that some grants will only pay for six hours.
- With regard to start-up packages and doctoral students' funding, Dr. Morris said that they need to determine what to invest for next year. They are looking cautiously at non-equipment start-up money and are concerned about creating a deficit.

- Dr. Morris asked about alternatives for small grants and cost matching and how to handle them under the current policy.
- Dr. Sousa-Poza said we may not be a viable financial model for research. We are not provided the simplest resources and there is no space. Dr. Morris replied, saying that more funding will make things easier, while making it harder at the same time. They need to look at how the infrastructure will function. He stated the research side of the university was developed late, so ODU is behind the curve and in transition. The strategic plan will help ODU to move forward. He also stated that it is a bad budget year and that does not help.
- Dr. Sousa-Poza expressed concern regarding availability of funding. When there are issues, departments are advised there is no budget or to fix it themselves. He said the lack of support is holding the University back.
- Given the time constraints, it was decided to continue the discussion at the next Graduate Administrators' Council meeting in January.

Update on the Policy for Master's Students in their final semester

- Dr. Wojtowicz advised Council that he met with Jeanie Kline, Jane Dane, Vera Riddick, Debra May, and Missy Barber to determine what the process should be for Master's students in their final semester. It was determined to keep the policy the same with the addition of a warning to students who drop below half time advising they are no longer in deferment and their financial aid can be reduced or eliminated. Also, wording will be added for the requirements for international students. This ensures that students are not taking credits they do not need.

Faculty Graduate Certification Status – Chandra de Silva

- Dr. de Silva advised Council about the history of the faculty certification process. When some of the graduate studies' processes were decentralized, the colleges were responsible for managing the process and recordkeeping. There is now a University policy which requires Provost's approval for exceptional certifications. The Provost's Council has approved a form for Academic Affairs for exceptional certification. This form must be completed and approved before the faculty member can teach.
- Dr. Wojtowicz also advised there will be two other additional forms relating to faculty certification; 1. Appointment Form for GTA as Instructor of Record and 2. Universal Certification of Faculty Instruction form.
- Council suggested the forms be numbered.
- There was some discussion about levels of faculty instruction. There needs to be a consistent structure, as this data will be maintained in Digital Measures. Dr. Wojtowicz suggested a subcommittee be established to review this issue. Language needs to be consistent for level 1, 2, and 3. Forms will be revised as suggested and the issue will be revisited in January.

Approval of November 13, 2014 Minutes

- Minutes were approved as submitted

Announcements

- The upcoming deadlines for the Outstanding GTA Awards and the Doctoral Mentoring Award were discussed. Revised Calls for Nominations were included with the listing of deadlines.
- 4+1 Accelerated Program Update – Dr. Wojtowicz advised Council that there are concerns with the administration of the 4+1 program and how credits are counted. He is looking at SACS and SCHEV requirements for degree completion. When a resolution is reached, Council will be updated.
- Dr. Sousa-Poza raised a question about umbrella degrees and creating new programs. He asked if we could just go to SCHEV and blanketly correct the situation. Dr. Payne advised that the appropriate course of action would be to look at successful programs that would work well as stand-alone programs and focus on setting them up as separate programs first. It is expected that the process will take a few years. If it will help with the process, Brian and Robert are willing to meet to meet with the college to discuss it.

In addition, Bill Heffelfinger mentioned there was a meeting between ITS, Registrar, and Graduate Admissions. It is important to be aware that as programs are being renamed, there is the potential to lose historical data. The data is not truly lost, but will need to be manipulated.

Colleges should be working toward compliance.

Electronic Theses and Dissertations Committee

- Dr. Wojtowicz said that Virginia Tech has an all-electronic process they will share with ODU. If we are able to use their process, it will enable us to streamline the whole document management process.

Program Review Committee

- Dr. Wojtowicz shared that other CGS schools do not follow a 5 year program review cycle; it is most common for schools to have a 7 or 10 year cycle. Schools with the 10 year cycle have a mid-cycle review.
- Students admitted directly to PhD program – it was suggested to modify the admission process so that the student's record is accurate. Secondary screens will be used in Banner. This will help avoid additional paperwork and confusion in the future. The only issue may be with VISA. This recommendation will need to be reviewed by their office.