Graduate Administrators Council (GAC)
Minutes for Thursday, September 1, 2011
Constant Hall, Room 2004
8:30 to 10:00 a.m.

Attending: Brenda Neumon Lewis, Chair, Missy Barber, Mona Danner, Sharon Judge, Christopher Osgood, David Selover, Osman Akan, Isao Ishibashi, Martha Walker, Ali Ardalan, Richardean Benjamin, Robert Wojtowicz, Mary Swartz

Approval of April 14, 2011 Minutes

- Minutes were approved.

Confirmation of AY 2011-2012 Meeting Time

- Dr. Lewis asked if the scheduled meeting start time of 8:30 a.m. was acceptable to everyone or if the time needed to be changed. The consensus of the Council was to keep the current schedule. Council will continue to meet every other Thursday from 8:30 to 10:00 am.

Announcements/Updates

- The 2011-2012 Graduate Catalog will be finished soon. As soon as it is completed, the Council will be notified.
- CGS Awards – Dr. Lewis passed out descriptions on the 2011 CGS awards. Everyone was encouraged to consider nominating individuals for these awards. Award recipients receive a monetary award, get support to go to the CGS conference, and get recognized at the CGS banquet. Dr. Lewis will set an internal deadline for submission along with guidelines.
- New Graduate Student Orientation – There was an outstanding turnout with 155 students attending. The evaluations were very positive. Students appreciate seeing representatives from their respective colleges, so it was suggested that there be greater participation from the associate deans and graduate program directors in the program. Concern was expressed regarding the possibility of duplication of information between New Graduate Student Orientation and International Student Orientation. Dr. Lewis said that she would check to see what is offered to students to try to minimize duplication.
- GTAII Institute – There were 138 participants and 128 evaluations. The evaluations were generally positive. A couple of comments indicated that students would like a more interactive program and that we should minimize the amount of paper that we distribute and provide information on the web.
- Dissertation Support Group – This group is being offered by the Counseling Center. Associate Deans were asked to make sure the information was distributed to all of their GPD’s in charge of doctoral programs. Dr. Lewis will check to see if they plan to offer a similar program to Master’s degree seeking students.
- Virginia Council of Graduate Schools – Planning grant awarded for increasing students of color. This will provide an opportunity for working together to develop strategies in student recruitment across the Commonwealth. Dr. Lewis said there will be a conference and she will possibly be able to bring five or six people with her. There is a meeting next week among the members of VCGS to discuss this grant.
- An issue was brought forward to the Council regarding a student that had been suspended from her program that wanted to take a graduate course. Because she was suspended from her program, she did not have the opportunity that she would have been afforded under the University continuance policy where she would have had 12 credit hours to raise her GPA. Currently, when a suspension occurs, regardless of whether it is by the degree program or the University, a student cannot register for any graduate courses. Options were discussed such as switching the student to non-degree or another degree-seeking program. It was also suggested that we revisit the continuance process. It was agreed that further discussion is needed on this topic before changes are made.

Overview of Graduate Issues 2010-2011

- Dr. Lewis shared her End of Year Summary report she submitted to the Provost to show the work of the Council that was done relating to graduate studies last year.

Issues to Address in the Coming Year

- Doctoral Mentoring Award
- RCR
- SEES
• Allocation of assistantship funds, waiver allocations. Departments are expected to pick up the waiver costs. Dr. Lewis will invite Jim Duffy to the next meeting.
• All but Thesis Exemption – Associate Deans/GPD’s expressed difficulty in hiring good master’s students because of the full-time requirement.
• Graduate Research Achievement Day. There was a lengthy discussion about how the event would be organized. It was agreed that we should maintain the same venue. Also, we need to start early, establish guidelines, and have a review panel. Colleges should market it and take ownership. The Provost wants to see a collaborative University effort. We need staff, a budget, and funding.

Reinstatement Policy Change
• Dr. Lewis met with the Graduate Appeals Committee and established steps for the new process. She will be distributing the new process to GAC via email after the meeting today. The new process will be presented to the Provost’s Council next week. Dr. Lewis asked that Council members review the proposed process and submit feedback to her by Tuesday, September 6, 2011.

Other Issues
• If forms need to be updated, who should be notified? Send information to Dr. Lewis or Missy Barber.
• It was asked if the Office of Graduate Studies could generate a calendar of due dates that would include items like catalog change submissions. This will be explored.
• There was a discussion regarding signature requirements by faculty delaying students’ ability to submit theses or dissertations by the designated deadline. It was suggested that we develop a process for situation when a faculty member was not available to sign so that delays can be avoided.
• SEES - It was suggested that Dr. Neufeldt come to one of the GAC meetings.
• Dr. Lewis would like to do a needs assessment/survey for graduate students to see what they need and what they would like to see happen. Dr. Sharon Judge and Dr. Mona Danner volunteered to assist with the development of the survey. Dr. Lewis will also ask Bill Heffelfinger to serve.
• Graduate Student Organization - It was mentioned that individual colleges have their own graduate student organizations and they didn’t necessarily want to be a part of a larger organization. To sustain a graduate organization takes infrastructure. It was also recommended that student chapters of professional societies could be established.
• Travel Money - $20,000 is available in travel money for students. It was suggested that an academic person needed to be on the review committee.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.