Graduate Administrators Council (GAC)
Minutes for Thursday, October 11, 2012
Koch Hall Board Room
9:00 am to 10:30 am

Attending: Brenda Neumon Lewis, Chair, Missy Barber, Chris Osgood, Robert Wojtowicz, Bonnie Van Lunen, Isao Ishibashi, Sharon Judge, Lynn Ridinger, Richardean Benjamin, Joanne Scheibman, and Osman Akan

Guests: Dr. Chandra de Silva and Mr. Jim Duffy

Approval of September 27, 2012 Minutes
• Minutes were approved as submitted.

Announcements/Updates
• Graduate Administration Workshop – Dr. Lewis indicated comments and evaluation scores were very good. There was good participation and a lot of positive energy in the room, especially during the panel discussion.
• The GSO CV Writing Workshop is to be held on Friday, October 19, 2012.
• SCHEV Workshop is to be held on Thursday, November 8 and Friday, November 9, 2012. It will be conducted by Dr. Monica Osei from SCHEV.
• Dr. Lewis advised Council that there were handouts from the Graduate Administration Workshop available.
• The latest edition of the Graduate News newsletter has been sent to all graduate students. OGS will send it electronically to the Graduate Administrators Council.

Provost’s Retreat – Dr. de Silva
• Dr. Lewis informed Council regarding the focus of the Provost’s Retreat this year, which was graduate education, graduate programs, and the issues around them. Dr. Lewis asked Dr. de Silva to speak to Council to provide information regarding what was discussed.
• Dr. de Silva advised Council that the focus on graduate students and education is not a one-time issue. He stated the Provost wants to focus on graduate education.
• Dr. de Silva is planning to conduct a department chair workshop on November 13th on recruitment and retention of graduate students. Council recommended that graduate program directors be included in the workshop. Dr. de Silva is also interested in having Deans to look at the situation as well.
• Dr. de Silva mentioned Council's suggestion that the International English instructor be expanded to serve the students in the University not just the College of Sciences. He recommended that the committee contact the Executive Director for International Programs and work with him when developing the proposal.
• Dr. de Silva identified areas of strength in graduate programs.
  o Faculty
  o Good Internship Opportunities
  o Caliber of Students
  o Ranking of Programs
  o Raising of Standards
  o Faculty involvement
- Growth of Doctoral Programs Online
  - He also identified areas where we could do things better.
    - Funding packages for graduate students are not competitive.
    - Health Insurance for Graduate Students
    - Advertising for the University as a whole.
    - Decline of International Students
    - Graduate Housing
    - Tracking of where graduate students go when they graduate

- Dr. de Silva reported the following recommendations
  - Look at programs where students do not decide on their dissertations until their third year. Is that delaying their graduation?
  - Investigate areas of potential collaboration across colleges
  - Future growth area in certificates, but they may be more attractive if they were across colleges
  - Development of more hybrid or online courses and degree programs
  - Promotion of accelerated BA/MA programs
  - Experiential Learning Opportunities
  - Extramural Funding
  - Better use of technology in accelerating graduation, i.e., use of Skype to have exam. (This is already being done in some colleges.)

- Dr. Lewis shared that during the open discussion at the Graduate Administration Workshop some of the issues Dr. de Silva mentioned were also mentioned by GPD’s such as health insurance, funding, rankings, advertising, and lack of effective marketing. Also, it was mentioned that we needed a stronger website presence. A suggestion was made to increase the promotion of faculty and students for awards. This would bring us national attention.

- Dr. de Silva said that this is the year of opportunities for graduate programs.
- Dr. de Silva advised programs that do not go through the normal accreditation process are subject to review. The plan is to have six to eight reviews per year and for there to be a five-year cycle for review. Reports are being developed so that reviews are uniform and results can be comparable.
- There was some discussion on tracking program graduates. Dr. de Silva advised that the Alumni Relations Office can assist with tracking program graduates, however, Council responded by saying that what the Alumni Office has is currently inadequate. It was suggested that the exit survey be revised to request contact information for after graduation. Some schools hire a third party to help with tracking students.
- Dr. de Silva advised that the Provost is concerned about current graduation and retention rates. The objective will be to look at the data and isolate major problems and try to resolve them.
- Dr. Lewis stated that this conversation needed to continue and she asked how could the Graduate Administrators’ Council help. Dr. de Silva advised Council to bring forth proposals for consideration. He is willing to lend his support.
- Dr. de Silva also advised Council that action has been taken on the suggested amendment for Master’s students that have completed 18 credit hours in an area to be allowed to teach with supervision. The proposal has already gone to Committee G and will be going to the full senate on 10/23/2012.
Follow-up to Discussion on ABT Policy Recommendation – Jim Duffy

- Council presented the idea of allowing Master’s students in their final semester to take one credit hour and be considered full-time to Jim Duffy. It was pointed out that students need to continue as GA/TA’s as full-time students when they may not need to take a full load of courses. This costs the student additional money, it costs the University money, and there is also the issue of the integrity of the transcript of the student.
- Jim Duffy was in favor of the proposal; however, he wanted to know how many people per semester would be affected so he could get an ideal of the actual numbers.
- The next steps would be to gather the requested data and expand proposal and prepare electronically in order to move forward to Provost’s Council.

Doctoral Mentoring Award

- Dr. Ardalan has made the changes as suggested. Dr. Lewis made a motion to adopt the new policy and the motion passed. The call for nominations will go out to the colleges.

Update on VCGS/VAGEP Grant – Chris Osgood

- Dr. Lewis and Dr. Osgood attended the VCGS AGEP planning meeting in Charlottesville. Dr. Osgood provided the following highlights of the meeting.
- The state association, VCGS, secured a grant to develop a network of Commonwealth institutions, with the thrust of the program being to improve minority representation in the STEM areas.
- Focus Areas:
  - Tracking and guiding students through the system, community colleges through institutions of higher education
  - Mentoring and retention of underrepresented minorities (URM’s), grad school through faculty appointments
  - Post-baccalaureate programs to improve changes for students to gain admission to PhD programs
  - Understanding where URM’s are lost
  - Funding sources beyond NSF
    - Trio
    - Chancellors Fellows
  - Best Practices statewide
- What can we do at ODU?
  - Structure needed. A discussion probably needs to happen to incorporate it as part of the Strategic Plan for the University.
- Goal of the group is to develop a network statewide. There is a desire to work more collaboratively.