Graduate Administrators Council (GAC)
Minutes for Thursday, October 24, 2013
118 Education Bldg., Dean’s Conference Room
9:00 am to 10:30 am

Attending: Brenda Neumon Lewis, Chair, Brian Payne, Ali Ardalan, David Selover, Richard Ben, Carolyn Rutlege, Gail Dickinson Lynn Ridinger, Shirshak Dhali, Isao Ishibashi, Robert Wojtowicz, Kevin DePew, Ravi Mukkamala, Craig Bayse, Bill Heffelfinger, Mary Swartz, Missy Barber

Guest: Dr. Vinod Agarwal

Discussion on Policy to Admit 3-year Baccalaureate Degree Holders – V. Agarwal

- Dr. Lewis introduced Dr. Agarwal to the Graduate Administrators Council. Dr. Lewis advised Council that Dr. Agarwal asked to meet to discuss a proposed policy change which would allow the University to admit 3-year baccalaureate degree holders from institutions outside of the United States.
- Dr. Agarwal stated that under the current admissions policy students with 3-year degrees are not admissible because they do not have the equivalent of a 4-year degree. This means students either must get a 4-year US degree or complete 1 year toward a Master’s degree in their home country. He said students normally pursue the second option.
- Dr. Agarwal proposed that 3-year baccalaureate students be admissible if they meet certain requirements. For example, completion of a certain number of credit hours, as specified by ODU, have a certain minimum GPA in courses as determined by the GPD or CDA, and satisfy all other regular graduate admission requirements, such as GRE, TESOL, or GMAT scores. The GPD would be responsible for deciding on the additional courses necessary for the students to be successful in the program.
- Dr. Ardalan said that international students admitted to graduate programs have to be degree seeking.
- Dr. Wojtowicz asked what schools currently allow admission of students with an international 3-year baccalaureate degree. Dr. Lewis said that she would get the CGS data. Dr. Payne said that he would get a list of schools that accept students with a three year degree.
- Dr. Ardalan commented that the US education system is a broad to narrow system, whereas international schools focus quickly on subject matter. He asked if we were currently losing students because of our requirements. The response was yes.
- Dr. Bayse asked about the admissions standards for other schools. He said that he would be hesitant to admit students if they are in need of language assistance. He also commented that if they do 1 year in their home country, they are participating in a structured program. He had concerns about changing the policy and suggested it be done on an case exception basis.
- Dr. Selover said that the department can identify requirements for the students to meet. He also said that historically these international students have been good students.
- Dr. DePew pointed out that the 3-year baccalaureate degree is different, not necessarily inadequate. There was some discussion of equivalent vs. inadequate.
- Council asked for a list of specific universities that allow the 3-year degree programs.
Dr. Lewis said that we need to look at what other schools are doing in Virginia and elsewhere. Once we have the data, then we can discuss the proposal further.

Dr. Ridinger commented that secondary education in other countries has higher standards, so students come to college better prepared.

Dr. DePew indicated would like to get an idea of what is offered in a 3-year curriculum at different international institutions.

Dr. Lewis reiterated that we needed to gather data to discuss fully. Bill Heffelfinger suggested inviting Steve Risch to be a part of the discussion.

Dr. Wojtowicz said that we need to keep an eye on what is best for the institution.

Dr. Ishibashi noted that if we have a student with a 3-year baccalaureate degree and a Master’s degree from a foreign institution, they are admitted directly into PhD programs.

Dr. Lewis thanked Dr. Agarwal for coming to the meeting and said that Council will continue to discuss his proposal. It was recommended that a sub-committee be charged to further explore the issue and gather pertinent data.

Approval of October 24, 2013 Minutes

Minutes were approved as submitted.

Announcements/Updates

Dr. Lewis asked Council about their preference regarding meeting location for the meetings on 11/7 and 12/12. Council agreed that 118 Education has more space for the group. Council will be notified if we are able to change the location.

Graduate Administration Workshop Evaluation Summary – The event went very well. There were 52 participants. The summary of the evaluations was provided in the packet for review. Dr. Lewis advised that there were four or five tables that were asked to discuss questions about graduate education. It was also suggested that there be a fall and spring workshop. Dr. Lewis advised that there would be a spring graduate administration workshop on creating new degree programs. That workshop is planned for the end of January/first of February.

Graduate Certificate Policy Update – Dr. Lewis said the revised certificate policy was approved by Provost’s Council and will now go to Faculty Senate for its approval.

GSO Mentoring Workshop - Dr. Lewis announced that the GSO is hosting a GSO Mentoring Workshop today at 6:00 pm in room 131, Education Bldg.

GSO CV Workshop – Dr. Lewis said volunteers are still needed to assist with the workshop. The date and time will be announced.

Courseleaf Deadlines and Refresher Training - Dr. Lewis reminded Council that Judy had sent out an email that Courseleaf is now open for catalog editing and course proposals and changes. There will be refresher training as follows:

- November 6, 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm, BAL 1013A
- November 14, 12:30 pm and 1:30 pm, BAL 1013B

Banner Carriers – Dr. Lewis asked Dr. Ardalan to choose someone from the College of Business and Public Administration to be a banner carrier for December commencement.

GSO – Updates - Dr. Lewis shared with Council that the GSO had put in a bid to host the NAGPS regional conference and were approved. The regional conference will be at the end of March. Members of the GSO will be attending the NAGPS national
conference the first week of November in Michigan. The GSO did a presentation to the SGA and received the funding to attend.

**Discussion on Graduate Admission Procedures/Changes - Bill Heffelfinger**

- Bill Heffelfinger gave an overview on the graduate admissions process.
- There was concern expressed regarding the admission’s process being too cumbersome for students. Heffelfinger explained that it is cumbersome because of the data gathered on the application, which is required by University policy. However, he said that he was open to suggestions to improve the process. It was suggested that the initial application should just ask if a student is on-campus or distance learning, then more specific information about the student be gathered after admission. Heffelfinger expressed concern about supplemental applications, as there is no way to track them and the Admissions Office has limited staff and resources. Mary Swartz said that it might be time to examine the process, especially since distance learning is abandoning their satellite program. It may be more important to know the technology required for the student to get access to courses. There are many different ways to format classes.
- It was also asked if there was an enrollment committee. Council expressed the importance of making the process easier for students to apply. Barriers to enrollment need to be eliminated.
- Bill Heffelfinger said that he would bring it up with Jane Dane.
- Council was advised that there are new academic program codes for programs that are solely online programs. This is a deviation from policy because normally a program has a program code and “online” is a delivery mode.
- Heffelfinger indicated that Graduate Admissions has participated in 20 events already this fall. They currently have a job posted for a Graduate Admissions Counselor and hope to have someone hired in January.
- Heffelfinger advised that provisional admission can be tracked; however, the specific provisions cannot be tracked. It is the GPD’s responsibility to notify the Registrar’s Office using the change of program form from provisional to regular. Also, there is no flag or notification when a student reaches 18 hours for the GPD to do a follow-up. Heffelfinger said what they can do is prepare a list of provisional students to send to GPDs every semester.
- Heffelfinger also reported that Insight reports are currently being revised. He asked if there are suggestions on admissions reporting to let him know and he will see what can be done. Heffelfinger said they will determine which reports are the most useful and add them to the dashboard. Steve Risch will be conducting Insight training for the GPDs. Heffelfinger also said that he would check with the vendor to see if they have an instruction booklet. Insight can be used for continuous enrollment.
- Heffelfinger said there is a proposal to only require an unofficial transcript with the admission application. If the student is later admitted, an official transcript would be required. Many schools don’t require official transcripts at the beginning, and it helps expedite the admissions process. Council expressed concern about the likelihood of cheating, especially for students admitted for assistantships. Heffelfinger said that it is unlikely. There is typically one incident every 5 years domestically and an issue about once a year for international students. Heffelfinger said it decreases application costs, decreases mail volume, and most students when they apply don’t have a complete transcript anyway, so they end up sending two official transcripts.
Changing the requirement would save students money. Heffelfinger said he would do a draft of the policy change and bring it to GAC for review.

**Graduate Enrollment Update – Brian Payne**

- Dr. Payne advised Council that he would be requesting enrollment projections from each program. He indicated that he would be sending the number of applications, the number of admissions, and the number of enrollments for the past 5 years to the GPDs and then he would be requesting the number of expected applications, admissions, and enrollments for the next year. He would like projections across the board.
- Dr. Payne reiterated that he is just asking for estimates. The data will be used to look at trends and opportunities for growth.
- Heffelfinger offered his assistance as well to help solicit students for programs.
- Dr. Payne said that the Provost has identified funds in the AA budget to market and advertise graduate programs. She asked for 1 to 2 programs to be identified for marketing and then they will rotate them. It was noted that college advertisement is not as effective as individual program advertisement. Dr. Wojtowicz commented that advertising and marketing normally fall below more urgent issues in the college budget process. Concern was also expressed about the danger of increasing attention to programs and needing additional resources to accommodate increases in volume.
- Dr. Payne advised that the goal is to make all of the programs strong. He said that files should be distributed this week.

**Discussion on Colleges Follow-up to GTAI Institute**

- Dr. Lewis indicated she had talked with a teaching assistant that said she was not being mentored or supervised. Dr. Lewis reminded Council this should not be the case. She expressed the Provost’s expectation that there be follow-up with the GTAI Institute through more training and mentoring at the college level.

**Report from Sub-Committee on Graduate Policies – Dr. Robert Wojtowicz**

- Dr. Wojtowicz indicated he had no report, but asked sub-committee members to remain after the GAC meeting for a brief meeting.

**Continuous Enrollment Report – Dr. Ali Ardalan**

- Dr. Ardalan did not have an update for this meeting.

**Additional Topics for GAC Review**

- Dr. Lewis said that GAC should make the Teaching Instructor a higher priority, especially with Dr. Agarwal’s proposal. It was not funded through this budget cycle, so it needs to be put back on the agenda.