

Graduate Administrators Council (GAC)
Minutes for Thursday, November 21, 2013
Dean's Conference Room, Education Building
9:00 am to 10:30 am

Attending: Brenda Neumon Lewis, Chair, Robert Wojtowicz, Bill Heffelfinger, David Selover, Richardean Benjamin, Mary Swartz, Ali Ardalan, Lynn Ridinger, Gail Dickinson, Craig Bayse, Isao Ishibashi, Missy Barber

Guests: Steve Risch, Michael Moore, Raleta Summers

**Continued Discussion on Policy to Admit 3 year baccalaureate degree holders -
Steve Risch**

- Dr. Lewis introduced Steve Risch from International Admissions. Risch was asked to address questions and concerns regarding admission of international students with 3 year baccalaureate degrees.
- Risch has 19 years of credential evaluation experience and said that the 3 year baccalaureate degree has always been a hot topic, and has been discussed on several occasions since he has been at ODU. He indicated that given the changes in Europe as a result of the Bologna process (which created a universal common structure with a focus on access to higher education and criteria for professional jobs and industries)) that now may be a good time to revisit the issue. He also said that faculty and administrators should be included in the process.
- Risch described credential evaluation as more of an art than a science. There are no set standards. It requires a lot of interpretation and analysis. Some institutions hire third parties to help with the evaluation process of international degrees.
- Risch also specifically discussed credentials from institutions in India. He explained that these baccalaureate degrees can range from 3 to 5 or 5 ½ years. There have been some shifts in India and they have considered changing the degree structure to address access for students to other countries. However, at the present time, what is missing from their degrees are the general education requirements. This means that important elements in their curriculum such as writing and speaking are likely to be missing.
- Risch discussed the impact of accepting students with 3 year baccalaureate degrees to the school ranking. He said that it does play into the ranking now, but it is changing. He said that some Ivy League and flagship institutions accept them, but they only accept students whose grades are above 85 on a 0 – 100 scale. He stated further that we have made exceptions at ODU and admitted students with the 3 year baccalaureate degree, but it is rare and only for stellar students.
- Dr. Wojtowicz asked if there had been enough change toward degree parity to be able to endorse validity. Risch said that measures can be set up such as a writing sample as part of the admission piece or there could be a special cohort of provisional students who would have to meet certain standards prior to being fully admitted.
- Dr. Ardalan pointed out that students completing a 4 year program would still have issues with English because the 4 year degree is mostly technical.
- Dr. Bayse said that more information is needed before he could support the proposal to change our policy. He asked what the admission requirements were for schools that accept 3 year degrees.

- Dr. Ardalan asked if our rankings would be affected. Risch said it would positively impact world rankings. He said 5 years ago 55% of schools did not recognize 3 year degrees, now approximately 45% do not. He attributes the decrease in the percentage of institutions that do not recognize 3 year degrees because most institutions are interested in attracting international students.
- Dr. Lewis indicated she would establish a subcommittee consisting of Steve Risch, Dr. Agarwal, and a GAC representative to further research and present proposal so that a recommendation can be made by Council.

Approval of November 7, 2013 Minutes

- Minutes were approved as submitted.

Announcements/Updates

- Deadline for Course Changes through Courseleaf – November 22, 2013.
- Deadline for Curricular Changes through Courseleaf – December 4, 2013. Dr. Lewis reminded Council that faculty need to be advised about the use of the new curricular change form. It has to be submitted through Academic Affairs.
- Workshop on Process for Development of New Degrees/Certificates – January 30, 2014. Dr. Lewis and Dr. Marty Sharpe will conduct the workshop and address issues and concerns relating to the development of new degree programs and certificates and preparing documents for SCHEV and SACS.

Graduate Student Organization – Raleta Summers

- Dr. Lewis introduced Raleta Summers, Vice President of the Graduate Student Organization. She also announced that ODU had been chosen as the host for the 2014 NAGPS Regional Conference.
- Summers mentioned that the Graduate Student Organization was chosen as the best student organization for the University. She said that they would like to maintain their standing. She asked Council to encourage students to be active and join GSO. There are about 200 members with about 25 to 30 students that regularly participate.
- The GSO joined the NAGPS last year and sent 4 members to the conference. Three GSO members accepted positions with the national organization.
- The GSO recently conducted the CV Writing Workshop. Summers said more than 40 students attended. The College of Sciences was well represented.
- Summers said that the GSO would like to get more independent graduate organizations involved with the GSO. So if there are discipline specific groups, please let them know the GSO is interested in working with them.
- Summers said the GSO will need volunteers for the upcoming regional conference, both students and faculty. She said that they will need people to screen proposals prior to the conference as well. She requested Council's assistance in helping to recruit volunteers.

Final Review of Leave Policy – Robert Wojtowicz

- Dr. Wojtowicz said that there was consensus about not having a leave of absence policy for the master's students since there is no continuous enrollment requirement for them, so the subcommittee focused on the leave of absence policy for doctoral students. Recommendations were incorporated and a reference to military mobilization policy was

added. The policy applies to summer, however, the language is such that if the policy regarding continuous enrollment changes, the policy will still work. Council approved the changes and they will be implemented for the next catalog.

Degree Works – Michael Moore

- Dr. Dickinson expressed concern regarding the notes feature in DegreeWorks for approving students for graduation. She thought that using the notes section was a bit informal.
- Dr. Selover expressed concern about the fact that they were not using the graduation certification forms anymore. He said that he had five candidates that he would have certified but four had not graduated.
- Mr. Moore pointed out that when inconsistencies in DegreeWorks are noticed, and if it does not match the catalog, then notify DegreeWorks@odu.edu about what needs to be updated and it will be done. Moore also said that you can call him directly or email him at mpmoore@odu.edu.
- Moore also mentioned that the graduation application process and commencement were being revised to connect the two events and to help students with the process.
- Council asked when the degree will be posted to the transcript. Swartz replied that the timeline was 4 to 6 weeks after graduation. If a student's record is not updated by the end of January, then the Registrar's Office should be contacted.

Marketing of Graduate Programs – Brian Payne

- Dr. Payne reported that some programs are already doing their own marketing of their programs and there are a lot of variations. The Provost would like to gather and share information. Dr. Payne asked the associate deans to ask what help is needed.
- Payne said that we need to market our graduate programs to our own students.
- Payne also said that one of the brown bag events planned for the spring will focus on marketing graduate programs. The events will allow programs to share their success stories and issues they have encountered.
- Council expressed concern that graduate programs are not being included in ODU career fairs. Invitations went out late last year and they did not get a pre-notification of the event.
- Council mentioned that we need marketing and branding specifically focused on graduate students.