Graduate Administrators’ Council Minutes
January 25, 2018
Koch Hall Board Room

Attendees: Robert Wojtowicz, Chair, Dale Miller, Michael Moore, Wie Yusuf, David Chapman, Bill Heffelfinger, Gail Dickinson, Jane Dane, Khan Iftekharuddin, Holly Gaff, Wayne Hynes, Pilar Pazos-Lago, Karen Eck, Steve Bell, Bryan Porter, Chris Osgood, David Cook, Debbie Major, Nate Apatov, and Missy Barber

Approval of Minutes from November 30, 2018

- Approval of the minutes delayed until next meeting.

Announcements and Updates

- Dr. Wojtowicz mentioned the possibility of going to a once a month Graduate Administrators’ Council meeting schedule in the coming year. He mentioned that the Council was very active the year before in revising policies for the catalog, so it was important to meet frequently. However, we may want to look at what is needed and set the agenda accordingly.

Upcoming Brown Bag Series Events

- Tuesday, January 30, 2018 – Enrollment Planning, Virginia Beach/Portsmouth Room, Webb Center, 12:30 pm to 1:20 pm.
- Thursday, February 15, 2018 – Capturing Tuition Waivers from ODURF Sponsored Grants, Potomac/York Room, Webb Center, 12:30 pm to 1:20 pm
- If you are interested in attending either of these events, please RSVP online. There is an issue with the RSVP link producing an error message, but registrations are still going through.
- Addition to description of 2nd brown bag, Robert talked about waivers included in grants not being used.

Capturing Tuition Waivers

- Dr. Wojtowicz reinforced the need to attend the Brown Bag event on capturing tuition waivers. The EPAS process with Research Foundation has been modified to help with coding and reconciliation of tuition waivers. It is important to spend waiver money in grants on tuition waivers rather than redirecting funds to other things. There is no way we can request an increase in E&G funding of waivers when we aren’t spending what is already allocated. A report has been created that will give Associate Deans an opportunity to see how funds are being spent. We have to do a better job at working with the Office of Finance to recoup E&G money. Jim will look into reimbursing E&G funds if transferred to RF waivers.
- Concern was expressed about departments possibly losing E&G waivers if they do not use them.
- PDF reports can be a stumbling block. A report in a spreadsheet format would be much easier to use.
GTAI Institute Recap and Evaluations

- Council was provided the evaluation summary for the GTAI Institute. Due to inclement weather, the presentation portion of the GTAI Institute was cancelled. Graduate Program Directors were encouraged to monitor/mentor students to be sure they were performing adequately and meeting expectations. We were able to have the SPEAK retest prior to the GTAI Institute. There were 22 students that participated in the retest. Only twelve passed. We encourage students to take the SPEAK test as soon as possible rather than right before the GTAI Institute. We offer extra opportunities to take the retest throughout the year, so make your students aware that additional opportunities are available.

Graduate Research Achievement Day

- The RFP went out to all graduate students. Associate Deans and Graduate Program Directors were notified as well. We have received 25 proposals so far. We are only doing poster presentations this year. In the past, oral presentations were not well attended. Distance students will be allowed to present possibly via WebEx and rotate throughout the 2 hour poster presentation period. Education has offered to print posters and display them for distance students who cannot attend in person. If students need assistance in preparing a poster presentation, they can contact our office for guidance. We would like students from all disciplines to participate.

Course Numbering Policy

- A relatively simple change was made to the Course Numbering Policy. Some revisions to this policy were already approved a couple of years ago. At the suggestion of Dr. Payne, we removed language that refers to a separate syllabus for 700/800 level courses. If Council approves, then the suggested change will go to Provost’s Council for approval with a notification to Faculty Senate. Motion was made to approve and passed.

Normal Course Load

- The policy was modified so that it only refers to the normal course load requirement for students. References to the registration requirement for Graduate Assistants is included in the Financial Awards policy section in the catalog. The third paragraph of the policy is key to explaining normal course load. It describes full-time, ¾ time, and part-time students. There was some confusion in the interpretation of full-time for graduate assistants. Essentially, for reporting purposes, if they are only registered for 6 hours, they cannot be considered full-time. We looked at policy yesterday and realized that the policy is passively written. Having cross reference at the bottom separates the two issues.
- For international students they have to do the RCL form regardless.
- Issues with deferment only comes into play when a student is less than half time, which is 4 credit hours or less.
- Research Foundation needs to revise their language that refers to all GAs as full-time.
- Before approving the changes to this policy, Dr. Wojtowicz said that he would like to submit to Kasie Reyes in the ViSA Office for her review. He will bring back to GAC for approval.
Continuance Process for Graduate Assistants

- Dr. Wojtowicz relayed to Council the importance of completing the G9 forms for Graduate Assistants. It took him more than a week to find out where a student was working. Our office did not have the G9 form.
- Dr. Wojtowicz realized that our current continuance process only captures graduate assistants who are paid by ODU. We are not catching students being paid through ODURF who have fallen into probationary status. Until this situation can be resolved, we ask that if you have a student that is on a grant and on probation, please work with that student to get him/her back into good academic standing quickly.

Awards

- Dr. Wojtowicz mentioned that the call for nominations for the International Educator Award administered by International Programs went out in November.
- A description and time line for each of the three awards administered by the Graduate School are included in the packets. Dr. Wojtowicz encouraged participation from all colleges, especially for the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards. These awards not only look good on the student’s CV, but they financially benefit as well. The descriptions and time lines for each award will be sent out electronically and will be posted on the Graduate School’s website.
- A question was raised about the requirement of student evaluations for the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award since student evaluations are no longer available. It was decided to strike the evaluation requirement. The document will be updated prior to distribution.

Graduate Recruitment Funding Requests

- Dr. Porter reported that the Graduate School received 26 graduate recruiting program proposals. Proposals will be reviewed today. Departments will be notified of their allocations as soon as possible. In addition to the funds provided by the Graduate School, the Office of Graduate Admissions will also be making a contribution.

Graduate Summer Grant Awards

- Dr. Porter reported that 44 applications for the graduate summer grant awards was received. Because the volume of applications is so high, he is trying to figure out a fair evaluation process. Each college will provide a person to sit on the review committee. Also, we are seeking to increase the number of awards we can give. The Graduate School has committed $10,000 and Dr. Morris Foster in the Office of Research has agreed to provide another $10,000. We are very excited at the response.
- Dr. Miller wanted to know more about the process and time commitment before recommending someone from Arts & Letters. Dr. Porter advised that the recruitment proposal deadline and the summer grant deadline were at the same time. He said he is sensitive to the workload demand.
Graduate Enrollment Task Force

- Dr. Wojtowicz would like to bring the Graduate Enrollment Task Force back together. The Task Force did a lot of good work. He does not want us to become complacent.

Graduate Enrollment Planning

- Bill Heffelfinger previewed what was going to be discussed at Tuesday’s Brown Bag presentation – Timelines and best practices for recruitment and admissions, GPDs information available. It is important to look not just new applicants, but also at graduations and students finishing dissertations. He will identify what services Graduate Admissions can offer to departments. Also, he will go over looking at information over time to determine program goals. Bill will also discuss capacities of graduate programs and what might be helpful to determine that information. Program capacity can be tough to determine. It is more of an art than a science. Be careful to avoid the business as usual approach.
- The Graduate Enrollment Task Force was very beneficial. Think about marketing with the CRM, what’s happening in distance learning.
- Most know that Dr. Wojtowicz is working on a massive revision for Biomedical Sciences. It is going to involve health sciences, bioelectrics from biological sciences, chemistry, biochemistry, math and computer science. Deans are not uniformly happy about it. However, when you look at the enrollment figures for this critical high demand field, the trend is stunning. Enrollment figures we went from 29 down to 15 in the program. Over time, the faculty were content admitting one less student, then the new normal down to 6 then down to 4. There is a point where the department would have been put on notice by SCHEV to eliminate the program. No department wants to face that type of decision. If the only message that gets out is “pay attention” that would be good. Some programs have had dramatic changes.
- We need to have a laser sharp focus on what we can do at the graduate level to increase enrollment. If every program enrolled one more student this fall than they did last fall, it would be 10% growth. We aren’t asking every program to do that. We do not have to look for huge numbers.
- Across the country, there are less 18 to 22 year olds, so we have to grow at the graduate level. Funding at the PhD level will not be increasing, so we need to look at the master’s level to increase enrollment. We have to show enrollment growth before asking for more money.
- Think about becoming ambassadors for graduate education on campus. If you encounter a student who is interested in graduate study, help them search out new opportunities even outside your program. Dr. Wojtowicz attended Japanese panel presentation on Sunday co-sponsored by International Programs. One of the panelists ran a ESL school and is actively looking for people to hire. Dr. Wojtowicz followed up with Applied Linguistics to see if we can get students interested in TESOL certificate.

Other Topics for Discussion

- Dr. Yusuf gave a quick update on the Graduate School Strategic plan. Committee C has given the recommendation to approve. We are on schedule.

Motion to adjourn.