

Graduate Administration Council (GAC)

Koch Hall Board Room

Thursday, May 7, 2009

9:00-10:30 a.m.

Attendees: Neumon Louis, Mike Overstreet, Ted Reilly, Isao Ishibashi, Robert Wojtowicz, Susan Akah, Barbara Swenson, Marlene Mena-Danner, Chris Osgood, Ali Ardalan, Lauriel Garzon

Guest: Karen Mediv

Approval of April 2009 Minutes

Minutes were approved without changes.

Update on Announcements

Dr. Langlois informed GAC that the All Reception for graduating graduate students was a success. He stated that he had spoken to most of the students in attendance and that they appeared satisfied with the event. A graduate ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2009. Dr. Neumon Louis reminded Council that their final reviews of the University Graduate Catalog were due on May 7.

Updates from the 2008-09 Student Committees

a. GTAI Initiatives (Evaluation of D. of D. Credential and Review Mechanism for Continued Training)

Dr. Ardalan reminded Council that the purpose of the sub-committee was to provide an IST speaking score as a substitute for the GRE and GRE Presentation Test at the GTAI for graduate students who are teaching a course or leading a lab. He presented the sub-committee's findings and indicated that there was not enough data available to make a valid recommendation.

Dr. Ardalan informed Council of the sub-committee's recommendations: 1) continue using the current TOEFL score of 30 and the IST speaking score of 22 for admission decisions. Use speaking score of 22 as the minimum score for offering teaching assistantship. This score is smaller than the current required score of 26, but is higher than the scores for several of our currently successful teaching assistantships. Continue screening international students' communication skills through pre-test and presentations at the GTAI. Students can be assigned teaching responsibilities only if they earn a satisfactory score on the pre-test and pass the GTAI presentation. Each program must establish a minimum speaking score for both admission decisions and assigning graduate teaching assistantship to students; 2) conduct

interviews that include both audio and video for self-learning applicants who are teaching assistantship candidates. 4) request the department to provide student evaluation scores, for the first semester of teaching, for the teaching assistants to the sub-committee, to determine retention and graduation rates for all students; to determine the validity of IBT scores for admission decisions; and, 6) extend "orientation" programs to include additional language/culture camp components for international students who may benefit from them. There was a lengthy discussion on the topic. Dr. [Name] stated that some members of the ODU community are concerned that students are being judged too stringently in their application process, and that this may be due to the reviewers not being familiar with the knowledge base about the subject matter and student presented. In response to this concern, Dr. Robert Wojtowicz indicated he did not believe this to be the case and not being familiar with the subject matter does not hinder evaluating if the student is able to communicate effectively to freshmen students. He also urged Council members to become more involved in GTAI, and to perhaps become reviewers.

Dr. Wojtowicz suggested that Council prevent students in the in the program from attending the same GTAI presentation session.

Dr. Brenda Stevenson-Martin suggested that it become mandatory for deans to provide student evaluation results after the first semester of teaching, for the teaching assistants, in order to gather valid anecdotal data, and to evaluate the assistants' teaching abilities. Dr. Akan indicated making it mandatory was not realistic.

Dr. Neumon Lewis asked what the minimum IBT score was that other universities consider acceptable. Karen Martin informed that she did not have a current amount of consensus on this issue. But, according to the Cornell study on this topic, it was determined an IBT score of between 17 and 22 indicated student success, but that it may be weak for some programs.

Dr. Langlais suggested that the two issues relating to admissions and assistantships be separated. Council agreed that the sub-committee's original task was centered only on the assistantship issue, and that a revision of the charge was necessary to be removed from the current discussion.

Dr. Ishibashi suggested that if a student received a score of 24 or higher on the IBT Speaking test, then that student should not be required to attend a session and should not be required to attend the life skills test. To the contrary, it was suggested that a score of 24 or higher should be required for the life skills test. To the contrary, it was suggested that a score of 24 or higher should be required for the life skills test.

24, then they should be required to pass the Speak Test and CIAI before they are awarded an assistantship.

Dr. Langlais suggested that if assistants do not receive scores of 2.0 or higher on the IBT, then they do not have to pass the Speak Test and they would immediately receive the assistantship. However, if they do receive scores less than 2.0, then they must pass the on-campus Speak Test and have their first semester as a TA in the first semester while they hopefully strengthen their communication skills. Dr. Dugan also stated that there may be two consequences if this were to become mandatory: first, financial support during the first semester may be negatively affected, thus requiring alternative sources of support; second, the misuse of financial aid in violation of this policy, departments may not be allowed to cover an offer of other courses offered in the fall semester. Dr. Langlais suggested that the sub-committee meet and discuss with department chairs the issues related to this topic. Council was concerned about the fair treatment of undergraduate students who attend courses taught by graduate teaching assistants; all decisions must keep students' best interests in mind.

Council agreed that more data should be collected before making recommendations. Dr. Wojtowicz affirmed that it is not the committee's job to make recommendations for consideration, and then discuss those recommendations with department chairs. The sub-committee should have a revised set of recommendations prepared for the next GAC meeting.

b. Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines

Dr. Wojtowicz recommended that the guidelines be presented to the faculty in an effort to receive funding to edit the current version of the guidelines. Dr. Wojtowicz informed Council that there are people in the college who have been assigned these suggested editorial duties in the past. Dr. Wojtowicz would not want any of those individuals to do the required editorial work for pay. Dr. Dugan suggested that there be a faculty supervisor who has reviewed theses and dissertations to work closely with the editor during the creation of the draft. Dr. Wojtowicz volunteered to serve in the capacity of supervisor and the person doing the editorial work. Dr. Dugan agreed to assist as well. Dr. Wojtowicz proposed that the chair of the department be reduced, and that guidelines be revised, and that the chair be responsible to departments for any possible changes after the editorial work has been completed. Dr. Langlais requested that the sub-committee prepare a written and detailed description of the project including a timeline and cost information for the first phase. Once he has received that information, Dr. Langlais will submit it to the Provost for approval and funding.

Schedule items that were not discussed will be added to the agenda for the next CAC meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.