

Graduate Administration Council (GAC)

Koch Hall Board Room

Thursday, May 7, 2009

9:00-10:30 a.m.

Attendees: Norman Lewis, Mike Overstreet, Ted Reilly, Isao Ishibashi, Robert Wojtowicz, Sean Akah, Farhad Swenson, M. Mark M. Mona Tanner, Chris Osgood, Ali Ardalan, Lauriel Garzon

Guest: Karen Mediv

Approval of April 10, 2009 Minutes

Minutes were approved without changes.

Update on Announcements

Dr. Langlois informed GAC that the All-Union 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. Neuman Lewis informed Council that their final reviews of the University Graduate Catalog were due on May 7.

Updates from the 2008-09 SETSO Committees

a. GTAI-It is the (Executive) Evaluation of D. of D. Evaluation and Recommendation for Continued Training

Dr. Ardalan reminded Council that the purpose of the sub-committee was to provide an IBT speaking score as a substitute for the GRE and GRE Presentation Test at the GTAI for graduate students who will be responsible for 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 minimum TOEFL score of 30 and the IBT 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 24, but is higher than the scores for several of our currently successful teaching assistants. 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 selecting applicants who are teaching assistantship candidates. 4) conduct a language competence test. 5) request the department to provide student evaluation forms at the end of the semester of teaching, for the teaching assistants to the sub-committee, 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 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 judged too stringently in their presentations and that this may be an obstacle to reviewers not being familiar with knowledge 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 presentations 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 exchange 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 re-evaluate 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 know a specific 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 speaks well enough 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 language camp. However, it was noted that a score less than 24

24, then they should be required to pass the Speak Test and CIA 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 CIA, and they would immediately receive the assistantship. However, if they receive scores less than 2.0, then they must pass the on-campus Speak Test and CIA when returning as a TA in the fall semester. Dr. Langlais also noted that the communication skills of the assistants stated that there may be two consequences if assistants do not receive the financial support during the first semester may be negatively affected, thus requiring alternative sources of support. Dr. Langlais also noted that the use of this policy, departments may not be able to cover all of the 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 classes taught by graduate teaching assistants. All decisions must be made in the best interest of the students.

Council agreed that more data should be collected before making recommendations. Dr. Wojtowicz affirmed that the sub-committee will work on the schedule and considerations, and then discuss those recommendations with the 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 presented to the Provost in an effort to receive funding to edit the current version of the guidelines. Dr. Wojtowicz informed Council that there are many people in the college who have fulfilled these suggested editorial duties in the past. Dr. Wojtowicz would like to have some of these individuals undertake the required editorial work for pay. Dr. Wojtowicz 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. Axman agreed to assist as well. Dr. Wojtowicz proposed that the chair of the department be reduced, and that the 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. Council will be in the first phase. Once the information is received, Dr. Langlais will be able to provide the necessary approval and funding.

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

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.