

Graduate Administration Services (GAS)

Koch Hall Board Room

Thursday, May 7, 2009

9:00-10:50 a.m.

Atte... [REDACTED] Englund, Chan, Brenda Neuman Lewis, Mike Overstreet, Ted Remley, Isao Ishibashi, Robert Wozniak, Sean Arah, Linda Svennson, Marjorie [REDACTED], Mona Turner, Thrice Osgood, Ali Ardalan, Laurel Garzon

Guest: Karen Medina

## Approval of Alairu, 2009 Minutes

Minutes were approved without changes.

#### Updates/Announcements

Dr. Langlais informed GAG that the All Reception for graduating graduate students was a success. He stated that no other speaker to most of the students in attendance and that they appeared satisfied with their graduate experience. He reminded them that their final scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2009. Dr. Neuman Lewis reminded Council that their final reviews of the University Graduate Catalog were due on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Updates from the 2008-09 State Goetz Institutes**

a. **GTAI Initiatives (Cross-functional Initiatives of DSD to enable and support the organization for Continued Training)**

Dr. Ardalan reminded Council that the purpose of the sub-committee was to provide an iBT speaking workshop for students as a substitute for the Speech and Student Presentation Test at the GATI for graduate students who will be responsible for teaching a course or leading a lab. He presented the sub-committee with data and indicated that there was not enough data available to make a recommendation.

Dr. Ardalan informed Council of the [REDACTED] committee's recommendation to continue using the TOEFL scores of Canadian EFL speakers as the minimum score 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 25, but is higher than the scores for several of our currently successful teaching assistants. Continue screening international students' communication skills through break tests and presentations at the GTAI. Students can be assigned teaching responsibilities only if they earn a satisfactory score on the break test and pass the GTAI presentation. Each program may establish a higher speaking score for both admission decisions and assigning graduate teaching assistantships to students; 2) conduct

interviews that include both audio and video for screening applicants who are teaching assistantship candidates; candidates for college competition, including their Speak Test scores; 4) request departments to provide student evaluation results for each semester of teaching; 5) form teaching assessment and evaluation committee; 6) collect 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 components for international students who communicate from them. There was a lengthy discussion on the topic. Dr. Christopher Akah indicated that many members of the ODU community are concerned GTAL students are being judged based too stringently in their presentations and that this may be attributable to reviewers not being familiar with knowledge about the subject matter the 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 discipline 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 GTAL and to perhaps become reviewers.

Dr. Wojtowicz suggested that Council provide students in their charge opportunities for attending the same GTAL presentation sessions.

Dr. Brenda Stevenson-Martin suggested it become mandatory for deans to provide student evaluation results after the first semester of teaching, for the teaching assistants; in addition to gathering valid data and to evaluate the assistants' teaching abilities." Dr. Akah indicated making it mandatory was not feasible.

Dr. Neuman Lewis asked what the minimum iBT score was that other universities consider acceptable. Karen Medina informed Council that there is no general agreement of consensus on this issue. But, according to the Cornell site visited this year, it was determined an iBT score of between 17 and 22 indicated sufficient speaking ability but that it may be weaker for non-native speakers.

Dr. Langlais suggested that the two issues relating to admissions and assistantships be separated. Council agreed that the ad hoc committee's original task was to comment only on the assistantship issue, and that a mention of the admissions process should be removed from the current discussion.

Dr. Ishibashi suggested that if a student received a score of 21 or higher on the iBT Speaking test, then that student should not have to do certain tasks, and so he or she would not be required to take the iBT test again. This was in response to a question regarding a possible pass/fail

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

Dr. Langlais suggested that if a student's final grade and scores for night classes on the iBT, then they do not have to pay the Special Test fee and test results will immediately receive the assistance from the University. However, if the student does not pass the on-campus Speak Test and is withheld from serving as a TA in the first semester while they possibly strengthen their communication skills. Dr. Langlais also stated that there may be two consequences in this case: homecoming and financial support during the first semester may be negatively affected thus requiring alternative sources of support. During the firstutes of implementation of this policy, departments may have to though it is difficult to cover all of their 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 night classes or graduate teaching assistants; all decisions must keep students' best interest in mind.

Czajkowsky agreed that more data should be collected before finalizing the recommendations. Dr. Weronowicz affirmed that it is the chairman's responsibility to take these factors into consideration, and the discussion was adjourned with a motion to adjourn the meeting and open the chairs. The subcommittee will have a revised set of recommendations prepared for the next GAC meeting.

**b. Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines**

Dr. Wojtowicz recommended that the guide be presented to the provost in an effort to receive funding to edit the current version of the guidelines. Dr. Wojtowicz informed Council that there were people in the college who have been fulfilling these suggested editorial duties in the past. Dr. Wojtowicz volunteered one of these individuals to continue the required editorial work for pay. Dr. Givetsky 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 to the person doing the editorial work. Dr. Akai agreed to assist as well. Dr. Wojtowicz proposed that the length of the document be reduced, standard guidelines be maintained, and that the title be distributed to departments for pay possible changes after the editorial work has been completed. Dr. Langlais requested that the sub-committee present a revised and detailed description of the prioritized areas of fate or time line and consequences of this phase. Once it has received this information, Dr. Langlais will begin to propose for approval a revised outline.

Schedule of meetings will be set by the Board of Directors at their next GAC meeting.

Meeting agenda will be announced.