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Academic Policy Committee Report - February 4, 2016

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ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 4, 2016, 2:00 – 3:15
Graduate School Conference Room (111 SSB)

Present: All members of APC were present. Also attending: Dr. Stephanie Galloway (Graduate School), Dr. Mary Albrecht (interim Dean of the Graduate School, and Dr. Jens Gregor (to present the proposal).

Minutes from the Academic Policy Committee's February 2nd, 2016 Meeting

Dr. Maria Stehle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00PM.

Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

The meeting had two agenda items:

1. policies regarding off-campus internships for doctoral students and waiving the requirement for continuous enrollment for 600 level courses. Jens Gregor joined the meeting to discuss the proposal.
2. policies regarding the need to extend the embargo period up to 36 months for dissertation work.

We discussed each item in detail:

Item 1: Waiving continuous enrollment policy of course 600 for students going on internships.

Students in engineering (most likely in other fields as well) have to do internships for 2-3 semesters before they complete/defend their dissertations. College of engineering is concerned that continuous enrollment creates a problem because students sometimes have to leave campus for their internships and so the need for readmission.

Some members pointed out the leave of absence policy. Leave of absence is a very specific problem for doctoral students. We discussed that we need to put something in graduate catalog, in parallel with leave of absence policy. Doctoral students, who wish to go on to this internship, can be exempted from leave of absence policy for up to 2 semesters.

Some members pointed out that the current policy is severely punishing international students who are here working as GRAs. They have to pay themselves, and pay out of state tuition. All students should get the opportunity to do this internship as it makes them more competitive in the job market after graduation. They do not need to sign up for any other courses.

Some members raised the question: If the course/internship is off campus, do they not have to pay all the additional fees? What does it mean for international students? And other Visa related questions.

Dr. Albrecht: suggested that we change the language from semester to term in the proposal submitted to the committee because summer is not considered to be a semester. We also discussed the implications for the course catalog language. [Note: per confirmation from the Registrar's Office, we officially have 3 semesters – spring, summer, and fall].

Policy vs procedures:

- The request needs to describe the nature of internship and the relevancy of the internship to the program or research project.

One member expressed concern that UT should not make any rules to dictate what students need to take. This should be discussed between the student and his/her mentor.

Processing the request:

- Members suggested that rigorous screening would need to take place: The request must be reviewed and signed by the students' advisor, department head should approve and Graduate School should make the decision. One member expressed his concern that it does not need to go through the Graduate School but Dr. Galloway pointed out the need for Graduate School screening to make sure that faculty and departments do not abuse the policy. Dean of Graduate School's role is to make sure that the rules have been applied consistently and prevent abuse. Dr. Galloway: there should be a diplomatic way of approving it. The rejection reason has to be discussed at any given level.

For the approval process in the Graduate School:

- On the form do not indicate "Dean of the Graduate School" as the sign-off authority but replace with "Graduate School". The consensus was that if there is an approval process, it should be easier.

Duration:

- We also discussed whether we should cap the internship for 2 semesters or not, but we agreed that it had to be specified whether this is a cap or not. At any approval you can go on an internship for 2 semester or 3 terms?
- The request should describe the nature of the internship and must include justification that the internship is integral to the program curriculum.
- We decided to propose it to the graduate council for voting in the next meeting.
- We also decided to get a proposal written up and get it circulated within the relevant units so it can be ready for the fall meeting of the graduate senate.
- If the students are not enrolled during their internships, can they access the library? When you are away, do you have the right to? Can they take use of facilities? Dr. Albrecht said: Email is not a problem... because it is all gmail now.

Jens Gregor will send the form for the proposed internship to APC.

1.) Continuous Enrollment proposal:

Internships for Doctoral Students Taking Course 600

Doctoral students who have started taking course 600 and wish to do an internship can petition to be exempted from the Continuous Enrollment requirement for up to three terms with maximum of 12 months at any time. The request should describe the nature of the internship and must include justification that the internship that is integral to the program. Approval must be granted first by the student's advisor, then the Department or the Unit followed by the Graduate School. The two semesters may be separate in time or back-to-back. Students whose petition is approved need not sign up for any course work while doing the internship except international students must always check with the Center for International Education (CIE) to ensure that they remain compliant with their specific type of visa. The time limit to the degree is not extended as a result of an internship.

Item 2: Dissertation embargo policy

Maria Stehle will change the language and circulate and present it to council members at the next Graduate Council meeting. We will have discussion and feedback for revisions.

The proposal is to revise the policy to allow special request for an additional two 12-month periods. This will allow up to a three-year embargo. The maximum embargo period should be kept at 36 months, students will have to justify why they need to extend the embargo beyond 1 year.

Rationale: This should give students time to get a contract with a publishing company and once they have the contract, they can lift the embargo but they should have up to 36 months if they need it. Concern: What happens if the student wins an award? Should people wait for 3 years to read this excellent dissertation?

The committee voted on items 1 and 2 and accepted the two revised items for circulation. APC will present the two proposals to Graduate Council for approval.

Proposers will work on the revisions and submit the revisions to Maria.

*One member raised a question regarding some inconsistency in the catalog. It is not really obvious that you are required to have a 3.00 GPA in order to get your degree. It should be listed under degree requirements as well.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30PM

Minutes presented by Dr. Mehmet Aydeniz