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Academic Policy Committee Report - September 15, 2016

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**ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2016, 2:00 P.M.
111 STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING**

Present: Mehmet Aydeniz, Eric Boder, Shandra Forrest-Bank, Maria Stehle (Chair), Shalini Yerukala (Graduate Student Senate)

Other attendees: Marian Roman (Graduate Council Chair), Dixie Thompson (Dean of the Graduate School), Catherine Cox (Graduate Council Liaison)

The meeting was called to order by Maria Stehle, Chair, at 2:15 p.m.

Maria welcomed the group and asked for introduction of each member.

Committee note:

- Dr. Stehle reported she will be absent at the next Graduate Council meeting and asked for a volunteer to submit our report to Council. Dr. Aydeniz volunteered to give the report.
- Dr. Stehle also announced that she will be on development leave in the spring and unable to serve as Chair for APC. She asked for a volunteer to serve as Chair in the spring semester during her absence.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF PREVIOUS BUSINESS:

- 1) Graduate Grader Policy (graduate students grading papers of other graduate students).

Current policy:

IV. Graduate Teaching Associate

Graduate Teaching Associates are advanced graduate students who have been given primary responsibility for teaching undergraduate courses, including the assignment of final grades. No other category of graduate assistant may be so charged. Associates may not be assigned primary responsibilities for teaching and student assessment in courses approved for graduate credit. Associates must have met the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) 18-hour requirement.

- Graduate students should not be the instructor of record for graduate classes nor should they be entering grades for other graduate students.
- There can be positive and negative bias when graduate students are grading their peers.
- It's bad practice to allow graduate students to grade papers of other graduate students.
- There may be special circumstances that can be petitioned to the Dean of the Graduate School.

APC is not endorsing any change in the current policy or interpretation.

- 2) Proposal from last year: requesting graduate students be allowed to retake courses for the purpose of raising the grade.

Proposal: No graduate student may repeat a course for the purpose of raising a *PASSING* grade already received.

Current policy: No graduate student may repeat a course for the purpose of raising a grade already received.

- Why aren't students who are struggling in a course being advised to withdraw from the course? Good advising would suggest the student withdraw.
- How much of a problem is this? How many students?
- Are there benchmarks on this?

APC is requesting more information before a vote can be taken.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Proposal to revise definition and catalog text for Graduate Certificates (from Mary Albrecht and Dixie Thompson)

Proposal:

Graduate Certificate Program

Graduate certificate programs provide a means for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to respond to emerging needs. Graduate certificate programs provide focused areas of student for students 1) pursuing other academic programs at the Master or doctoral levels, 2) who have already earned a Master or doctorate, or 3) who are post-baccalaureate and enrolled solely in graduate certificate programs.

Graduate certificate programs are for-credit programs, based entirely on credit courses, and appear on the academic transcript. Graduate certificate programs are required to have student learning outcomes and an assessment plan reported annually through the University's adopted process.

Non-credit certificate programs may be established by any academic unit. The non-credit certificate is issued by the unit to those completing the program. These may be for professional development and continuing education of working professionals to maintain licensure. These may be offered online or non-traditional formats. They are not placed on an official university transcript. These are often offered through UT Conferences and Non-Credit Programs.

Administration of Graduate Certificate Programs

Graduate certificate programs require a minimum of 12 semester credit hours. Graduate certificate programs require the same curricular approval process as majors and minors. Only those that appear in the Graduate Catalog will be posed to the student's official transcript. Graduate certificate programs are comprised of approved graduate courses. For any graduate certificate programs, the student must earn all semester credit hours from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

No more than nine semester credit hours earned toward completion of a single certificate, or more than one certificate, may be applied toward a graduate degree.

Since graduate certificates are university credentials, a student must apply through Graduate Admissions to the graduate certificate program and be accepted by the program to participate in the certificate program prior to enrolling in any courses. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0

grade point average once in the program and complete the requirements of the certificate program as stated in the Graduate Catalog to be awarded the graduate certificate.

For those students who are concurrently enrolled in a Master or doctorate program, the graduate certificate will be awarded the same semester as the degree. Certificates will be awarded at the normal times when degrees are awarded.

For independent, stand-alone graduate certificates (those when a student is not concurrently enrolled in a Master or doctorate program), the certificate is awarded upon completion of required courses and submission of application for graduation.

The Office of the University Registrar will issue all graduate certificates.

Current catalog text:

A graduate certificate may be earned by successful completion of a series of specific courses. A candidate for a graduate certificate program must be a fully admitted graduate student who has satisfactorily completed (minimum 3.0 grade point average) the minimum requirements for a certificate as described in the Graduate Catalog. The minimum requirements for the certificate programs are listed under the academic department offering the certificate. A candidate must be a graduate student in good standing and comply with all other applicable policies. Graduate certificate programs require a minimum of 12 semester credit hours taken at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Use of credits to fulfill requirements for a graduate degree will be at the discretion of the academic department.

To receive the certificate, students must submit a Completion of Certificate Program Form endorsed by the academic department to the Graduate School. Only those certificate programs that are officially approved by the Graduate Council will be posted on student transcripts. To receive a graduate certificate, students must be admitted to a certificate program or a degree program (see Admission for Graduate Certificate Students).

Rationale for changes:

As a result of the federal audit of financial aid at the University of Tennessee, we must institute a more standardized and clear process for enrolling students in graduate certificate programs to be compliant. The proposed change is intended to clearly define the difference between for-credit/transcribed graduate certificate programs and non-credit/professional development certificate programs that may be offered by academic and non-academic units.

- We currently have no way of tracking graduate certificate students.
- Currently, students are not allowed federal financial aid when earning a graduate certificate – this is due to our lack of tracking of students in certificate programs.
- Current text does not address non-credit certificates.
- In most cases, students earn the certificate while in a degree program, but there are also cases where students are enrolled only in a certificate program.
- We will use Admit for application for admission to a graduate certificate. This will give us a record of students who are working toward a certificate. This information will be pushed to Banner.
- If currently in a degree program, students will still apply through Admit, but will not be charged the application fee. Students working toward a certificate, but not a degree, will be charged the regular application fee.
- With the new uAchieve (automated graduate degree audit system), we will be able to track both the degree requirements for a major as well as the requirements for the certificate.

- We still need to work on some issues related to the timeline for applying for the certificate program and the timeline for applying to receive the certificate (the latter may not be needed with uAchieve).

APC recommendation:

Let's take this proposal to Graduate Council as a discussion item and get feedback and then come back to APC for final discussion, revisions, and vote.

2) Organization of policies in the Graduate Catalog.

Mary Albrecht is working on a reconfiguration of how the policies are listed in the catalog. Currently, policies are listed in alpha order and this may not be ideal. If any APC member would like to work with Mary on this, please notify her.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox
Graduate Council Liaison