

Graduate Deans' Group
Thursday, August 22, 2013, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Multipurpose Room, Black Cultural Center

Attending:

Mary Albrecht, Ernest Brothers, Catherine Cox, Joy DeSensi (Chair), George Dodds, Denise Gardner, Mary Gunther, Donald Hodges, Carolyn Hodges, Yvonne Kilpatrick, Tom Ladd, Sandy Leach, Catherine Luther, Mike McEntee, Taimi Olsen, Stefanie Ohnesorg, Masood Parang, Carol Parker, Cynthia Rocha, John Stier, Dixie Thompson, and Greg Tipps

The Graduate Deans' Group meeting was called to order by Joy DeSensi, on Thursday, August 22, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room, Black Cultural Center.

1. Joy DeSensi welcomed the members and introductions were made.
2. The Graduate Deans' Group Mission was reviewed with the members of the committee.

The Graduate Deans' Group serves two specific roles or functions. First, the Group provides advice and counsel from an administrative perspective to the Graduate Council and its committees through the Associate Dean of the Graduate School on issues and policies related to graduate education and operations of the Graduate School. Second, members of the Group function to insure that information accruing from actions of the Graduate Council flows back to the individual academic units for implementation.

3. The minutes of the Graduate Deans' Group meeting from March 21, 2013 were approved.

4. SACS

Mary Albrecht, Associate Vice President for Accreditation (SACS), reported the following:

- Dates to Remember:
 - April 15, 2014 – 2nd Monitoring Report Due to SACS
 - September 10, 2014 – Compliance Report Due to SACS
 - March 31 – April 2, 2015 – Site Visit
- First Monitoring Report: Findings
“Many graduate programs at UTK continue to rely on proxy and/or indirect measures of student learning. Several assessment reports do not yet describe use of results.”
- Second Monitoring Report: Required Response
“Provide evidence of completed assessments of undergraduate programs in the humanities and all graduate programs on the UTK campus. All program assessments should include direct measures of student learning and evidence of using the results for program improvement.”
- Implementing the Learning Enhancement Cycle
 - Outcomes: What will your graduates learn and achieve?

- Curriculum: Where in the curriculum will they learn and achieve what you want them to?
- Assessment: How and when will students show their learning and achievements? What assessment do you use?
- Analysis of Results: What is your analysis and your conclusions about the results of evaluations?
- Program Enhancement: How will you use these results to make changes in the curriculum to enhance your program?
- Communication:
 - University – Chancellor/Provost and Deans/Academic Affairs
 - College – College Leadership Team and Faculty Senate
 - Department – Program Heads and Assessment “Coordinators”
 - Faculty – Consultations and Workshops
- Training:
Mandatory training for program heads and/or those responsible for conducting assessment activities in their academic program will include the following:
 - Planning for results: How to create a structure that supports ongoing assessment of your program.
 - Identify who will collect data, analyze data, use the data, how and when share with program faculty and what actions will be taken.
 - Use past results to improve assessment
 - Discuss the most effective ways to identify evidence-based, results-driven actions to enhance programs.
 - Units based on current level of understanding of assessment will be divided into advanced, intermediate and beginners
- Collaboration Among Units:
 - Program Faculty will plan assessments, reporting, and action for each undergraduate and graduate major and graduate certificate.
 - Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center will conduct assessment training and consulting.
 - Office of Institutional Research and Development will assist with survey, data, and consulting.
 - SACS Liaison will report on institutional effectiveness reporting and compliance, serve as a central point for submitting reports, and consult.
- Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
 - QEP Task Force members appointed with Matthew Theriot as chair.
 - Fall Semester: Gather input from faculty, students and staff on potential topics
 - Spring Semester: Develop plan with learner outcomes, assessment plan and budget.
 - Embed the QEP Enhancement Plan within the institution’s ongoing integrated, institution-wide plan and evaluation process.
 - Describes a carefully designed and focused plan of action with well-defined topic or issue from assessment, enhances student learning or provide a student learning environment, is consistent with the institution’s strategic plan, and developed by faculty, staff, student and other constituents.

5. Three Minute Thesis Competition

Carolyn Hodges, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, reported the following:

- The Graduate school plans to organize for later in the fall a campus-wide doctoral student competition and is seeking assistance from among the graduate associate deans to organize it. The competition, referred to as the “Three-Minute Thesis,” or 3MT, is a research competition developed by The University of Queensland which challenges students to present a compelling presentation of their dissertation research and its significance in just three minutes and with one slide in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience. There will probably be three to four prizes offered by the Graduate School for various categories, and the overall campus winner will receive support from the Graduate School to go to a regional competition in San Antonio in February to be held at the annual meeting of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools. Dean Hodges will appoint a committee to begin work on the initiative.
- The orientation for new graduate students was held on August 13 in the University Center. The Graduate Student who worked with staff in the Graduate School included members of the Graduate Student Senate and graduate research assistants in the Graduate School. The students are to be commended for their hard work and success in organizing and launching the program, which was attended by nearly 600 students. We are in the process of analyzing the online survey (also designed by the students) to assess the impact and use as a basis for future orientations.

6. First Year of ADMIT: Reflections

Yvonne Kilpatrick, Director of Graduate Admissions, reported it was this time last year that Office of Graduate Admissions was anticipating launching the ADMIT program to process applications for Fall 2013. Overall, good feedback has been received from the academic programs about the functionality that is available to them. Office of Graduate Admissions staff engaged in the following activities that provided feedback, giving us direction in our efforts to continuously improve the process:

- Applicant survey—examples of recurring responses were that applicants would like to submit all materials in one location, and applicants were confused by inconsistencies in application instructions on the program website pages as compared to the Graduate Admissions website. As Office of Graduate Admissions staff approaches the next application cycle, we are very close to full participation by programs in adding their supplemental materials to the on-line application. We are also making efforts to work with departments to correct inconsistencies in application instructions.
- Feedback sessions with program faculty and staff—on June 4 Office of Graduate Admissions staff hosted four feedback sessions in which faculty and staff were able to share their impressions of the new system from their perspective. Colleagues from CollegeNet spent the day listening to the feedback. Some issues were resolved immediately by providing additional information to faculty and staff. Other issues were resolved by CollegeNet developers or within Graduate Admission staff working groups.
- A self-study was conducted by the Office of Graduate Admissions. Working groups met throughout the summer to modify practices that may not contribute to the efficiency of the process.

7. New Applicant Service Features for Fall 2014

Greg Tipps, Associate Director of Graduate Admissions, reported that two new applicant services will be available for applicants applying for Fall 2014. These services are as follows: 1) The applicant checklist will be available to the applicant through the application portal. Currently, applicants must enter a different portal to check their status. The checklist will have the capability of listing both the Graduate School material requirements and the department material requirements. 2) Decision letters will also be available within the secure portal and will no longer be sent to the applicants by way of e-mail.

8. Other

Sandra Leach, Associate Dean and Professor, Library, announced the Library will host an Open House for graduate students on August 23, at 1:00 on first floor of Hodges Library. Meeting librarians, learning about library express, and door prizes are some things that will be featured.

The Graduate Deans' Group SharePoint site will display the agenda, minutes, members and other information.

The next Graduate Deans' Group meeting will be on Thursday, October 10, 2013, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room, Black Cultural Center.

Meeting Dates: January 9, 2014
 February 13, 2014
 March 27, 2014

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gay Henegar
Secretary to Graduate Deans' Group