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Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes

Graduate Council

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Graduate Associate Deans' Group Minutes - April 14, 2016

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Meeting of the Graduate Associate Deans

Haslam Business Building, Room 334

April 14, 2016

2:00 PM to 3:30 PM

Members Present

Dixie Thompson, John Stier, Sherry Cummings, Stephanie Galloway, Mary Gunther, Stephen Kania, Gale Fulton, Sandra Leach, Bruce Behn, Joan Rentsch, Jeffrey Fairbrother, Masood Parang, Alex Long

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Dixie Thompson at 2:00 p.m.

1. Graduate School Updates - Dr. Dixie Thompson

- a. Please encourage students, faculty and staff to complete the Graduate School survey. A team will be assembled to examine the results. There have been approximately 200 responses so far.
- b. There are over 2000 applications that need action by the departments in Admit. Please ask departments to accept or deny applicants in a timely manner. We are approaching the April 15th deadline for acceptance of fellowship/assistantship offers, which should allow departments to move quickly. May 15th is the deadline for completing the admissions applications for International students.
- c. Graduate School Fellowships were announced April 8. We are waiting on acceptance from awardees of Graduate School Fellowships. Please see website for awardees.
- d. Encourage students to RSVP for graduation Hooding ceremony and encourage faculty participation. An honorary degree will be awarded to Thom Mason, Director of ORNL.
- e. The Graduate School website construction is moving forward. Graduate Council materials have been moved to Trace for easy access and better storage options. Sean Hendricks is creating our new website and launch is expected in late May.
- f. Vol Vision 2020 has been approved by the Board of Trustees. Within the next few weeks an implementation team will be formed and will be responsible for setting some high level metrics. Colleges and departments will set their specific indicators of excellence in graduate education.
- g. A degree audit system (uAchieve) will be implemented for graduate students. Mary Albrecht will be the campus coordinator. Stephanie Galloway will be the point person for implementation with the Graduate School staff. This will be a multi-year project.
- h. Beginning at the end of the 2016 spring term, Dr. Stephanie Galloway will run a report to identify all students with a below 3.0 GPA. This report will also run at the end of summer

and fall terms. A handout was provided and discussion was held regarding the specifics of the notification process. (Attachment 1) Scenarios and points for discussion are as follows:

- Process for initial probation
- Process when student moves from probation to good standing
- Process for when students are on probation for multiple semesters

Discussion revolved around who should be notified in each case and what options were related to continued enrollment. Based on these discussions, the following process was drafted.

Initial Probation

For any graduate student who has completed at least 9 credit hours, if the cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0, the student will be notified by the Graduate School that she/he has been placed on probation. This notification will be via email with cc's to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head. The letter will instruct the student to meet with an advisor to determine a course of action to increase the GPA.

Move Back to Good Standing

For any graduate student on probation, if the cumulative GPA rises to 3.0 or higher, the student will be notified by the Graduate School that she/he is now in good standing. This notification will be via email with cc's to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head. Students will be encouraged to continue to work closely with an advisor to make progress toward graduation.

Probation in Multiple Semesters

For any graduate student on probation, if the cumulative GPA remains below 3.0 in subsequent semesters, the department (DGS and/or Department Head) will be contacted by the Graduate School to determine the preferred course of action. If the student's semester GPA was below 3.0, policy dictates that dismissal will follow, unless the department makes an appeal. Typically, if the student's semester GPA was 3.0 or higher, the student can remain on probation even if the cumulative GPA was not above 3.0. Following consultation with the department, the student will be notified by the Graduate School whether he/she remains on probation or is dismissed. The DGS and Department Head will be copied on this communication.

2. Graduate Council Updates – Dr. Stephen Kania

- a. The Academic Policy Committee is discussing researching whether or not a graduate student should be allowed to retake a course if they fail. Discussion revolved around possible pros and cons of such a proposal. More information will be gathered about the policies to peer and aspirational peer institutions.
- b. The Credentials Committee is working to improve the notification process.

3. New Business/Announcements

- a. There will be no meeting in May. June 9th and July 14th are the scheduled summer meeting dates.

Dr. Dixie Thompson adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Attachment 1

Students on Probation – Process of Identification and Notification

(Discussion points for Associate Deans – April 2016)

Beginning at the end of spring term 2016, the Graduate School will run GPAs at the end of each semester. All students below 3.0 GPA will be identified. Dr. Stephanie Galloway will run this report at the end of spring term, summer term, and fall term.

It is important that we have a discussion about the notification process. Below are some scenarios and points for discussion.

- Who should be notified when GPA < 3.0?
 - Student
 - DGS
 - Dept. Head
- For students on probation, who should be notified when GPA goes above 3.0?
 - Student
 - DGS
 - Dept. Head
- What happens when GPA remains below 3.0 on subsequent semesters?
 - What if semester average is above 3.0? Action taken? Who is notified?
 - What if semester average is below 3.0? Action taken? Who is notified?
- Will there be exceptions to the process?
- How do we ensure consistency and transparency?

Ideas? Suggestions?

Relevant Graduate Catalog Sections

Academic Standards and Academic Standing

Graduate education requires continuous evaluation of the student. This includes not only periodic objective evaluation, such as the cumulative grade point average, performance on comprehensive examinations, and acceptance of the thesis or dissertation, but also judgments by the faculty of the student's progress and potential. Continuation in a program is determined by consideration of all these elements by the faculty and the head of the academic unit.

The academic records of all graduate students are reviewed at the end of each semester, including the summer term, to determine academic standing. For good standing, graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on all graduate courses taken for a letter grade of A-F. Grades of S/NC, P/NP, and I, which have no numerical equivalent, are excluded from this computation.

Departments and programs may have requirements for continuation or graduation in addition to the minimum requirements set forth in this catalog for all graduate programs. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the special requirements of the department or program.

There are three types of academic standing set at the end of every term of enrollment: good standing, academic probation, and academic dismissal.

See Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal for information on these types of academic standing.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Upon completion of 9 hours of graduate course work, a graduate student will be placed on academic probation when his/her cumulative GPA falls below 3.0. A student will be allowed to continue graduate study in subsequent semesters if each semester's grade point average is 3.0 or greater. Upon achieving a cumulative GPA of 3.0, the student will be removed from probationary status.

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

If a student is on academic probation, the degree or non-degree status will be terminated by the Dean of the Graduate School if the student's semester GPA falls below 3.0 in a subsequent semester. When the particular circumstances are deemed to justify continuation, and upon recommendation of the appropriate academic unit and approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, a student on probation whose semester GPA is below 3.0 may be allowed to continue on a semester-by-semester basis.

Dismissal of a graduate student by a department or program is accomplished by written notice to the student, with a copy to the Graduate School. In those cases where the department's requirements for continuation are more stringent than university requirements for graduate programs, the Dean of the Graduate School will evaluate the student's record to determine whether the student is eligible to apply for a change of status and register in another area of study. Registration for courses in a department from which a student has been dismissed will not be permitted, except by written authorization from that department.