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Academic Policy Committee Report - September 21, 2023

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REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, September 21, 2023
3:30 – 5:00 p.m., Zoom Meeting

Committee members present: Melissa Hines (Chair), Ahmed Bettaieb, Maria Castillo Rodriguez, Aly Fathy, Katherine Trubee (GSS President), Adam Love, David Maslar, Jennifer Patrick, Chris Pickart

Other attendees: Carl Collins, Max Mortensen (GSS representative) Dixie Thompson, Phyllis Thompson, Catherine Cox (Graduate Council Liaison), Grace Favier, Graduate School.

Agenda Items:

I. *Catalog cleanup language for the Proficiency Examination* (from the 2-3-22 APC meeting)

Melissa Hines called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

D. Thompson: the item coming forward to APC today is an informational item for catalog cleanup from a proposal that APC approved in February 2022, for the Proficiency Examination. When this proposal was approved in February 2022, we inadvertently forgot to edit two areas. See below the edit to be made for the catalog cleanup – to add the specialist in education wording as shown in red font.

Proficiency Examinations

A proficiency examination measures the level of knowledge a student has in a specific body of knowledge. By taking a proficiency examination, a student may earn course credits and apply them towards a master's degree or specialist in education degree. A maximum of one-fourth of the total credit hours in a master's degree **program or specialist in education degree program** may be earned by this method, subject to approval by the student's graduate committee.

A proficiency examination may be given in academic courses offered for graduate credit. Students should contact the Graduate School (gradschool@utk.edu) to initiate this process.

- Students should check with the department offering the course on the availability of proficiency examinations and check with their advisor to determine if their own program allows coursework completed by proficiency examination to be applied towards the master's degree, **or specialist in education**, program of study.

APC reviewed this editorial change and had no issues, concerns, or questions for this catalog clean-up. This will move forward to Graduate Council as an Informational Item.

D. Thompson

- Please ask your academic colleagues if there are any policy changes that should be brought to APC this year.
- I know there are concerns about the graduate student Leave of Absence Policy for graduate assistants. I am gathering information about what other campuses are doing in this regard. Also, I want to share that the Federal Government is in the process of putting together some new guidelines in this area, which may involve Title IX changes and guidance.
- Graduate student GTA's and GRA's want clarity on vacation policy (spring or fall breaks). Not necessarily a university policy but have clarity within the units/departments. I encourage units to write this into their student handbooks so that everyone is clear on this topic. We might think about providing best practices to the units.
- Compliance with double dipping on awarding multiple majors/certificates/minors with the same courses. I am acquiring data from our accreditation office about what we can and can't do. I will bring information about this to APC when I have more to share.

P. Thompson:

While serving on the Appeals Committee last year, a question arose about the scope of which appeals can be addressed concerning ending their study or changing a grade.

D. Thompson: I can communicate that those rationales on which a student can have an appeal come straight from Hilltopics. We cannot change the information in Hilltopics. That information comes from the Student Code of Conduct. Also, different offices have different responsibilities.

Our charge on the Appeals Committee is to look at the academic process. When other issues are involved such as, sexual harassment or bias, we cannot investigate those claims. We are not in a position to do an investigation of sexual harassment claim or a bias claim. Other offices have different responsibilities and procedures. If it is an issue on bias, that will go to the Office and Equity and Diversity. If an issue on sexual harassment, that will go to the Office of Title IX. These type of investigations involve federal regulations, which are out of our lane. If OED or Title IX find evidence that something occurred during their investigation then they have the opportunity to interface with the Office of Academic Affairs and/or the Graduate Appeals Committee to provide justification for the student.

Are there other topics to bring forward to APC today?

With no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 4:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cox
Graduate Council Liaison