

Graduate Council 2014-2015 Annual Report

Prepared by: Mark Luttenton, Chair

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Graduate Council Student Members: S. Lynn, M. Plooster, M. Van Wyk

Ex-Officio Students Attending: A. Clarke, A. Hubbard,

The Graduate Council (GC) convened on September 5, 2014 and met monthly during fall and winter semesters. The GC will conclude business on April 24, 2015. Because the GC addresses policy issues and reviews graduate curriculum proposals, members of the GC also serve on either the Graduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee (GC-CC, Mark Staves, Chairperson) or the Graduate Council Policy Subcommittee (GCPSC, Mark Luttenton, Chairperson). Curriculum proposals regularly generate questions/issues related to graduate policies, consequently this continues to be a functional model. The GC-CC and GCPSC generally met twice each month in addition to regular GC meetings. The GC-CC has reviewed 87 curriculum proposals including new course proposals, course change proposals, new program proposals, and program change proposals. Additional proposals have recently been submitted and are under review. The GCPSC proposed/revised several policies and spent considerable time researching standards and soliciting comments in the process. GC discussions were conducted in the context of the GVSU Strategic Plan.

The GC received a memo from the ECS that set a general agenda for the 2014-2015 academic year. More specifically the GC was charged with a diverse array of tasks in that memo. I have outlined the efforts of the GC as they relate to each of the 11 charges.

Charge 1: Please continue to propose policy and procedural revisions to the language in the Faculty Handbook to promote high quality, uniformity, and consistency among graduate programs within the university.

The Graduate Council in total and GCPSC specifically has continued to discuss issues that lack a clear academic policy, and reviewed existing policies that influence uniformity and consistency across graduate programs. Discussion and work on several policies (either revisions or new policies) has been ongoing since spring 2014. Although additional issues continue to emerge that deserve consideration, the GC has begun spending more time reviewing/evaluating policies that have been instituted during the past 10 years. In addition, GC in collaboration with the Dean of Graduate Studies began to review program policy handbooks which contain policies and

procedures specific to individual programs. A total of six policy handbooks were reviewed during 2014-15.

Policies and issues that have been discussed and/or developed by GC during 2014-2015 include:

- 1) Committee Attendance at a Thesis and Dissertation Defense
- 2) Graduate Academic Policy on Leave of Absence
- 3) Revised Graduate Academic Policy on Continuous Enrollment
- 4) Revision of Thesis and Dissertation Formats
- 5) Discussion of Workload Policies for Faculty Engaged in Graduate Education
- 6) Graduate Degree Audit Process
- 7) Discussion of Minimum Student Effort for Project, Thesis, and Dissertation Credit
- 8) Discussion of Appropriate Culminating Experiences for Graduate Programs
- 9) Discussion and Comments Related to Grading for Study Abroad Experiences
- 10) Review of Academic Policies for Individual Programs
- 11) Approval of Graduate Faculty not in an Academic Unit
- 12) Discussion of Academic Dishonesty
- 13) Discussion of Issues Related to Intellectual Property
- 14) Discussion of Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses or Dissertations
- 15) Discussion of Risk/Liability and Continuous Enrollment

Charge 2: Continue to examine policies and propose revisions or develop policies where necessary in order to foster a graduate student community and graduate student representation on campus.

The GC continued to encourage graduate student representation and supported actions and proposals initiated by the Graduate Student Association. Graduate students are included in and central to the GC's discussions of graduate policies.

Charge 3: Continue to examine and develop graduation auditing processes for Graduate programs and share your recommendations with the Executive Committee of the Senate.

During the past few years, GC completed a number of policies addressing several issues related to implementing graduate degree audits. GC, the Graduate Dean, and the Registrar have discussed the infrastructure needed and how an auditing process would be implemented. Currently, the Registrar's office is working on evaluating what is required to complete the process.

Charge 4: In collaboration with administration and relevant schools and colleges, review the university data collection process regarding graduate education and propose policy development and revisions, if deemed appropriate. In particular, make recommendations to ensure that all units have a workload policy regarding graduate education.

Previous discussions with Institutional Analysis (IA) indicated that IA was more than willing to provide information to graduate program coordinators upon request. GC solicited input from the graduate program directors to determine if there was specific information the graduate program

directors would find useful for program assessment and planning. GC received no specific feedback from graduate program directors, thus, the GC concludes that the current data collection related to graduate programs is adequate.

GC has collected policies from peer institutions related to graduate workload policy and discussed workload policy as it relates to GV faculty. During the current academic year, GC has proposed structural changes (e.g. listing appropriate sections of thesis/dissertation with specific faculty listed to help identify faculty workload effort) that are deemed necessary prior to proposing a workload policy.

Charge 5: In collaboration with the Provost's office and FSBC, review data collection and processes for estimating costs of graduate programs across the university and propose policy development and revision, as deemed appropriate.

The Chair of GC, the Chair of FSBC, and the Dean of Graduate Studies met with K. Gulembo to review data collection and processes for estimating costs of graduate programs. The data collection and processes for estimating costs appear to be as fair and equitable as possible given the complexity of the university budget.

Charge 6: In collaboration with FSBC, examine the pros and cons of awarding stipends to selected Graduate Assistants. Please share your findings with the ECS along with any committee recommendations.

GC had only limited discussions related to this Charge

Charge 7: Continue to pursue assessment of faculty and student professional development activities.

GC had only limited discussion related to faculty professional development, realizing that most professional development is discipline specific. Assessment of student professional development centered on the resources available; resources are generally available to graduate students to sponsor professional training workshops and attend professional conferences. Additional work will be required to develop a more complete assessment

Charge 8: Report on Internationalization Task Force recommendations for graduate courses.

GC was unable to begin discussion of this Charge.

Charge 9: Work with the various colleges to encourage collaborative approaches for thesis committee membership.

GC had a limited discussion of this Charge that was related primarily to Review of Graduate Faculty not in an Academic Unit. GC feels this Charge requires additional discussion.

Charge 10: Recognizing that GC is approaching its 13th year of existence, review existing graduate policies and suggest necessary revisions.

GC asked graduate program directors to identify existing policies that impede graduate programs or fail to function as they were intended. In addition, the Office of Graduate Studies queried their database to identify the number of waivers and exemptions requested for each policy.

Based on this review, GC identified a very limited number of policy items that may need revision. The Policy on Continuous Enrollment is one example.