

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

January 16, 2008

Approved: February 13, 2008

Present: Tom Blume, Jacqueline Drouin, Lisa Hawley, Frances Jackson, Rob Kushler, Paul Licker, Mildred Merz, Joseph Shively, Mohamed Zohdy

Absent: Zissimos Mourelatos

Guests: Christina Grabowski, Shannon McNair

Staff: Julie Delaney, Lynette Folken

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was convened at 2:00 pm by J. Shively, Vice Chair.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

J. Shively announced that the minutes of October 10, 2007, October 24, 2007 and December 5, 2007 will be forwarded via email for approval.

III. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

J. Shively introduced a list of Graduate Council agenda items that was distributed to Council members. The list contains policy items that must be addressed by the Council in preparation for the North Central Association (NCA) visit on April 6-8, 2009 and Federal Financial Aid compliance.

IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. Graduate Assessment

C. Rammel provided an overview of graduate assessment and noted that the graduate programs are not as consistent as the undergraduate programs at building assessment into programs. In anticipation of the upcoming NCA site visit and review, C. Rammel stressed the importance of paying particular attention to graduate assessment and its processes.

C. Rammel introduced Shannon McNair, Chair of the Oakland University Assessment Committee, a sub-committee of the Oakland University Faculty Senate. S. McNair reported that although the University has exhibited forward movement in terms of plans, reports and actual assessment activities across the board, additional effort is needed at the graduate level. She acknowledged that although graduate programs are not as easily defined by goals and activities as undergraduate programs, NCA has an expectation that everyone can discuss assessment at either the undergraduate level or the graduate level.

C. Rammel reported that some graduate programs have not submitted assessment plans. A suggestion was made to convene a committee to address how Graduate Council could help bring

graduate program assessment into compliance. J. Shively stated that Graduate Council will formulate a strategy and determine which program assessments are missing. He asked S. McNair for a list of departments/programs that are not compliant.

F. Jackson asked if the current Graduate Council guidelines for new program approval require that an assessment plan be included. Graduate Study will review new degree program guidelines and graduate certificate guidelines to determine what assessment requirements are included. Graduate Council will need to review and amend guidelines, if necessary.

b. Commencement Ceremony – Doctoral Hooding

Following the December 5, 2007 Graduate Council meeting, F. Jackson was asked to submit a position statement to the Provost representing the Council's decision that doctoral students should NOT be allowed to participate in the commencement ceremony OR be hooded prior to completion of the dissertation process.

c. Spring/Summer Status

C. Rammel reported that to be compliant with federal financial aid regulations, Oakland University's current Spring/Summer sessions must be combined into one 15-week "Summer" term effective 2008.

The following document was distributed to Graduate Council members for review:

Oakland University Spring and Summer Sessions

The Provost has requested that we create and publish academic terms and calendars that provide faculty and students maximum flexibility in scheduling courses and maximum financial aid funding to students while:

1. Maintaining quality academic programs, policies and standards; and
2. Ensuring compliance with State and Federal financial aid regulations.

Definition of a Term and Academic Calendar

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, defines a standard term as:

- A discrete period of time during which all courses are scheduled to begin and end.
- The discrete period of time (term) may include or consist of a series of mini courses or courses offered sequentially.
- The discrete period of time (term) is a segment of an academic calendar with the academic calendar divided into separate segments (usually 3 terms).
- Each standard term is approximately 15 weeks of instructional time.

A standard term-based academic year is defined as:

- At least 30 weeks of instructional time and 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours
- A week of instructional time = 7 consecutive days in which at least one day of regularly scheduled instruction, examinations, or preparation for examinations occurs – 1 credit per week of instruction
- Instructional time ? periods of orientation, counseling, vacation, or other activity not related to class preparation or examination

The academic calendar ceases to be standard term-based when:

- Courses do not begin and end within the discrete period of time (term).
- Courses extend beyond the discrete period of time (term).
- Courses overlap from one discrete period of time (defined term) into another defined term.

Background

A change to the O.U. academic calendar from three semesters (Fall, Winter, and Spring) to two semesters (Fall and Winter) and two sessions (Spring and Summer) was approved by the Oakland University Senate in April, 1968 and implemented at OU during the following year. In current practice, the only defined difference between the semesters and the sessions is in the length of the term. All official activities that take place in the Fall and Winter also take place in each of the Spring and Summer sessions, including admission, census date counts, grading and the awarding of degrees at the end of the session.

Current Spring and Summer Session Model

Oakland University offers courses during a Spring session and a Summer session. The duration for each session is 7 ½ weeks in length. Within each individual session several mini “parts of term” may be created to accommodate courses which meet less than a full 7 ½ week duration.

Issues

- The OU academic calendar defines standard terms as two semesters (Fall and Winter) and two sessions (Spring and Summer)
- A “combined part of term” (Spring and Summer sessions OR Fall and Winter semesters) extends beyond the defined standard term AND overlaps one defined standard term with another defined standard term.
- Based on the standard terms defined by the OU academic calendar, State and Federal financial aid regulations do not permit awarding aid to courses offered in a “combined part of term.”

Resolutions

- Combine the Spring and Summer sessions to create a new standard term (Summer)

- Define the OU academic calendar as three standard semesters (Fall, Winter and Summer)

Scheduling Qualifiers

- All courses are scheduled to begin and end within the term
- A week of instructional time = 7 consecutive days in which at least one day of regularly scheduled instruction, examinations, or preparation for examinations occurs – 1 credit per week of instruction
- Standard terms cannot overlap each other
- No financial aid for 1 week courses

F. Jackson questioned whether AAUP approved the language in this handout, Oakland University Spring and Summer Sessions. C. Rammel confirmed that AAUP was consulted and it was her understanding that there was discussion and agreement on issues identified by the AAUP.

C. Rammel reported that the proposed summer term will be presented to the Senate on January 17, 2007 as an informational item.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Transcript Requirement for Graduate Admissions

C. Rammel distributed the proposed policy with modifications recommended at the last Graduate Council meeting. It was agreed that all references relating to “admission” requirements would be removed and be incorporated into a separate admission document. In addition, the following changes were made:

Changed from:

Official transcripts are required from ANY post-secondary educational institutions from which the applicant either earned a degree.....

Changed to:

“to require all official transcripts from post secondary institutions beginning with the first baccalaureate degree.

The requirement for associate degree transcripts was discussed. F. Jackson supported the need for ADN (Associate Degree in Nursing) transcripts for admission purposes. Though not a baccalaureate degree, it is a degree and is not addressed in this proposal. It was recommended to adjust the last paragraph to accommodate the requirement. C.Rammel indicated this policy represented “Minimum” Transcript Requirements for Graduate Admissions. Programs may always impose stricter requirements.

Graduate Council questioned the urgency of moving forward and approving the document at this meeting. C. Rammel indicated Graduate Admissions would like to implement the policy as quickly as possible. It was recommended that additional modifications be made and submitted to members for approval via email or at the next meeting.

b. Doctoral Capstone Research Project – DNP and DScPT

J. Drouin asked that the discussion be tabled until the next meeting to allow for additional editorial changes.

c. Dissertation Grading

C. Rammel distributed the proposed dissertation grading policy as an information item. Federal financial aid regulation will require modifications to this document.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering program proposal

M. Zohdy, Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering, informed Council members that this degree currently falls under the Ph.D. in Systems Engineering degree, but the department believes it should be separated out.

F. Jackson inquired whether there are differences between this degree and the new Ph.D. in Computer Science and Informatics degree. M. Zohdy explained that computer science is a discipline that concerns itself with software (programming and computer languages). This proposal focuses on electrical and electronics which is the hardware (wireless, automated digital light ray and digital image processing.)

F. Jackson inquired if there are letters of support from computer companies. It was confirmed that there is one letter of support from Denzo. On page 4 of the document, there was reference to community outreach, yet it was not addressed any further. On page 19, there is no information or criteria for the students that are allowed to go from the bachelors to the Ph.D. M. Zohdy said this can be discarded since most engineers complete a master's degree before going into a Ph.D. program. J. Delaney supported the need and importance of specific language because it's how other doctoral programs are formatted. Admissions are imposing the current criteria that a master's degree must be completed prior to admission into a doctoral program and noted that the department would be contradicting itself. She recommended that the department should review this issue.

F. Jackson inquired about specific criteria that would allow a baccalaureate student to be admitted into the Ph.D. program. C. Rammel indicated the current PhD in Systems Engineering degree requires 56 credits beyond the bachelor's degree (exclusive of dissertation). The graduate catalog states that normally a master's degree from an accredited institution is required for admissions; however students with outstanding undergraduate records may apply directly for admissions to engineering doctoral programs. Given this statement, should a doctoral applicant,

currently completing their master's degree, be processed as a conditional admit pending the awarding of their master's degree? There may be instances where the applicant doesn't complete the master's degree as expected. This situation creates a financial aid issue for students since "conditional" admits are not aid eligible. J. Delaney stated that the admission criteria must be defined and recommended further review.

R. Kushler asked if the 7-year time limit applies with or without a prior master's degree. C. Rammel said good question. Should the time to degree be the same for both post-baccalaureate and post-master's doctoral programs? M. Zohdy said it is a function of the PhD program and agreed to look at it.

J. Delaney pointed out that on page 20, the proposal states that credit will not be granted for a course that has a grade below a 3.00. Though this appears to be a departmental policy, the School of Engineering policy states that two courses with grades between a 2.5 and 2.9 may count toward degree requirements and the student must have an overall GPA of 3.0. It was recommended that the department review this issue. M. Zohdy reported that the Associate Dean notifies students who earn a grade below a 3.00 in a class. Those students are sent a warning letter and informed that the second grade below a 3.00 will be cause for dismissal from the program. M. Zohdy reported that the Department requires a 3.5 GPA to be admitted into the Ph.D. program.

After further discussion it was recommended that suggestions, questions and remarks be forwarded to Claire Rammel. The comments should be referenced by page number, consolidated into one master document and distributed to graduate council members.

VII. GOOD AND WELFARE

L. Hawley expressed some confusion over what policies are proposed or approved on the Graduate Council Web site. C. Rammel explained that the new Web site is still under construction and is experiencing some issues in the conversion process.

J. Shively asked members if they are aware of any items that will be coming to Graduate Council from their units. L. Hawley reported that SEHS will be bringing forward an Ed Specialist program.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2008 at 2:00 pm in 100 Kresge Library.