

Oakland University

GRADUATE COUNCIL MINUTES

Wednesday, February 6, 2013 – Meeting #9

Location: 100 KL

Meeting Time: 2:00-4:00 pm

Approved: 03/13/2013

Present: Gary Barber, Roman Dembinski, Tamara Hew-Butler, Shawn Lombardo (*Ex Officio*), Robert Noiva, Linda Pavonetti, Cheryl Riley-Doucet, Darlene Schott-Baer (Chair), David Schall, Carol Swift

Absent: Donna Free (excused), and Claire Rammel (*Ex Officio*) (excused), Meir Shillor (excused)

Staff: Julie Delaney, Lynette Folken (Secretary), Tina Muncy

Guest: Cindy Hermsen, Director of Financial Aid

The meeting was convened by Darlene Schott-Baer, Chair, at 2:05 PM.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Roman Dembinski made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2013, Graduate Committee Meeting as written. Linda Pavonetti seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

II. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

No report

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

No Information Items

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Cindy Hermsen, Director of Financial Aid

Ms. Schott-Baer introduced Cindy Hermsen, Director of Financial Aid. The graduate Council had requested her visit to explain and assist with understanding some financial aid policies.

Ms. Hermsen began by explaining that financial aid is a very complicated system that works with a lot of government regulations and computer software issues.

P-grades (Progress). To address the topic of P-grades, Ms. Hermsen began by saying that it is defined in the catalog as a temporary grade for a student. At some time in the future, the P-grade is meant to be changed to a numeric grade. The problem with a P-grade in regard to financial aid is that a P-grade is treated as an Incomplete, resulting in the student's financial aid for the following semester to be held back. The federal government requires, before financial aid is paid to a student for an additional

semester, that the student's academic record must be evaluated at the end of the previous semester. This evaluation cannot be done with an Incomplete or P-Grade. As a result, the student is placed on a warning semester so that they can still receive the financial aid; but, if that grade is not made up during the warning semester, they cannot get financial aid the following semester. This also includes graduate assistants and their assistantships.

Ms. Schott-Baer explained that the P-grade is given in courses such as thesis that is going to take multiple semesters to complete. Upon completion, the P is changed to an S. Ms. Schott-Baer asked Ms. Hermsen if a SP, Satisfactory Progression, would solve the financial aid problem with the P-grade. Ms. Hermsen said that financial aid could work with the SP but, overall, it is all temporary grades that are problematic. At the doctoral level SP, satisfactory progression, and NP, unsatisfactory progress, are now used until the final grade of S or U are given upon completion. Ms. Hermsen said the "SP"/"NP" grading system, now used in the doctoral program, has corrected many financial aid issues for those students.

The Committee discussed that the "SP" and "NP" grading options are now available at the master's level, but most units chose not to use that option for the master's level. At one time an email was sent to the units to answer how they wanted to grade at the master's level and most chose not to use the "SP" and "NP" option.

150% financial aid in relation to repeating courses. Ms. Hermsen explained that students can receive financial aid up to 150% of the credits required for their degree program. For example, if a student is in a thirty credit graduate program, that student can receive financial aid for up to forty-five credits while in that degree program. This begins all over again with each new program. This makes it important that a student completes one degree program before beginning another so that a new transcript is begun with the new program. It was asked if a student leaves a degree program before finishing and begins another, is the student notified about the 150% policy? Ms. Hermsen stated that every time a student receives any kind of financial aid, they are sent a notification and the notification includes that policy. Also, at the end of each semester when the Financial Aid Office evaluates, the students are sent notification that they can go into the self-server and see what their status is. Another question asked was if a student is required to take prerequisites, are those prerequisite courses included in the 150%? Ms. Hermsen explained that if a student applies for the graduate program, but may still need some undergraduate courses as part of the prerequisite for their program, they are admitted into Oakland University as a graduate preparatory coursework student. The student can receive financial aid during that time for those undergraduate courses for up to one calendar year, with no credit limitation. If the student begins taking graduate courses during the preparatory admission period, financial aid will only pay for the undergraduate preparatory coursework.

In some cases a graduate student may be taking an undergraduate course that is accepted as part of their graduate degree program. Financial aid will pay for the undergraduate course if it is shown in the catalog as acceptable in the degree program or if communication with the Graduate Office proves them to have on file that the undergraduate course is acceptable. Ms. Hermsen said that if a graduate program is going to routinely accept an undergraduate course toward a graduate degree program, it is important to be sure that it is listed as so in the catalog. This makes it very clear in regard to financial aid and helps prevent any hold up for the students. Tuition differs between undergraduate and graduate students, therefore, if a graduate student is taking an undergraduate course, that student will be charged at the graduate tuition level.

Difference to a deficiency vs. preparation. As far as financial aid is concerned there is no difference whether a student is taking an undergraduate course due to a deficiency or as a preparatory course. It is all looked at as preparatory work.

The Council members had some discussion about how familiar the deans and department heads are with the financial aid rules. The less familiar they are with the policies, the less informed the faculty and students are. Ms. Hermsen said that she does try to meet with the deans each year and feels that they are knowledgeable of the policies. The Council members discussed the need to spread the communication to the faculty advisors. It was also suggested strongly urging advisors to always keep in mind to check with financial aid as situations arise.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Minimum Enrollment for Master's Students

Ms. Schott-Baer explained that there are two different issues that need to be considered. The proposed minimum enrollment policy that is currently on the table and then the issue of the inactive student status policy that is already in place. The inactive student policy requires students who are inactive for two years to reapply. The current policy creates a discrepancy with the proposed policy in that it takes an additional year before a student is made inactive, whereas the proposed policy would only take one. Ms. Schott-Baer asked for a subgroup of two or three people to look at these two policies, stating that Donna Free has already volunteered. The inactive student status readmission/reapplication is an admissions policy. The minimum enrollment for master's students is a policy that is intended for students already ongoing in the program; a policy that applies to active students. Ms. Schott-Baer would like for a group to look at these two policies and return to the committee with a proposed format that can be discussed again in approximately a month. She asked the group to consider the proposed minimum enrollment policy as a retention policy or a policy that will encourage students to continue; a solution to the problem of master's students who drop out. Carol Swift and Linda Pavonetti volunteered to work with Donna Free.

B. Master of Education in Special Education with a concentration in Emotional Impairment (modifications)

Motion: To recommend approval of modifications to the Master of Education in Special Education with a concentration in Emotional Impairment

Second Reading: Debatable, amendable, and eligible for final vote at this meeting.

C. Master of Education in Special Education with a concentration in Specific Learning Disability (modifications)

Motion: To recommend approval of modifications to the Master of Education in Special Education with a concentration in Specific Learning Disability.

Second Reading: Debatable, amendable, and eligible for final vote at this meeting.

D. Master of Education in Special Education with concentrations in Specific Learning Disability and Emotional Impairment (modifications)

Motion: To recommend approval of modifications to the Master of Education in Special Education with concentrations in Specific Learning Disability and Emotional Impairment.

Second Reading: Debatable, amendable, and eligible for final vote at this meeting.

Ms. Lombardo and Ms. Hew-Butler presented the proposed modifications of the Master of Education in Special Education with a concentration in Emotional Impairment, the Master of Education in Special Education with a concentration in Specific Learning Disability, and the Master of Education in Special Education with a concentration in Specific Learning Disability and Emotional Impairment as a group. The primary purpose for the modifications is to reduce the number of credits while increasing the actual content. For each of the concentrations the foundation requirement is being eliminated, for which most students have the content from the teacher prep programs. Modification also eliminates exit options from the requirements. It was agreed that some rewording of the document, in regard to the

preparatory work, would provide better clarification. The reworded proposal will be brought back to the next Graduate Council meeting for final consideration.

E. Central Office Certification Program (new graduate certificate program)

Motion: To recommend approval of new Central Office Certification Program

Second Reading: Debatable, amendable, and eligible for final vote at this meeting

Roman Dembinski and Gary Barber presented the proposed Central Office Certification Program. They each had a few questions about the proposed certification program as follows:

1. The program appears to be sixteen months in length, but document refers to twenty months in length.
2. Inquired about the grading system for the special internships and how many will be "S"/"U" graded.
3. Inquired about who will be teaching the new courses and why existing courses cannot be used.
4. Suggested defining in the document who a central office leader is.
5. Inquired about what will be the number of students per cohort.
6. Inquired as to whether or not the program could be justified other than mandatory certification.
7. Document states that Oakland University's program is distinctly unique. It was suggested that the uniqueness be spelled out, making an argument as to why Oakland University's program would be unique in comparison to the similar programs offered at other schools.

Ms. Schott-Baer said that she would forward the inquiries to Robert Maxfield and invite him to the next Graduate Council Meeting to address them.

VI. GOOD AND WELFARE

No good and welfare

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 PM.