Graduate Council Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 12, 2010, 1:00-2:30 PM, HAB 802

In attendance: Fiona Paton, Rose Rudnitski, Rosemary Millham, Narcyz Roztocki, Ying Lin, Andrea Noel, Jonathan Raskin (presiding officer), Elizabeth Hester, Vika Shock (guest), Gweneth M. Lloyd, Laurel Garrison Duhaney (chair), Bernadette Morris, Jan McLaurin, Emily Puthoff

1. **Approval of Minutes**
   Unanimously approved as amended:
   III) Add: Bernadette Morris and Laurel Garrison Duhaney will discuss finalization of this policy.
   IV a) Should read Special Education, instead of Secondary Education

2. **Announcements**

   There is a push to offer more graduate online courses to better meet students’ needs and enrollment targets. An ad hoc group, assembled by Laurel, has met to discuss this issue.

   Concerns:
   The increase in online course enrollment has given rise to the need for colleges to implement policies and procedures to verify that students who register for online courses are the ones who actually complete the courses and earn the grades. An ad hoc group has been discussing how New Paltz might address this issue. Some of the ideas that have been examined range from biometrics to login/password. The group also discussed the need to reexamine our academic integrity policy and our processes for dealing with fraud, etc. Laurel mentioned that she has discussed this matter with the presiding officer and asked her to consider whether this topic should also be discussed by members of the Executive Committee and the Academic Affairs committee.

3. **Old Business**

   a. **Transfer Credits – (New Paltz vs. Non-New Paltz transfer credits)**
   The Graduate Council members continued their discussion of the Graduate School’s transfer credit policy. One question that was raised is whether the policy is comprehensive enough. Several Council members raised questions and offered suggestions for strengthening and making the policy more coherent. For example: Rose suggested adding ‘credit that was not counted toward undergraduate degree’. Gwen asked: Does it matter whether the student was matriculated or non-matriculated at the time? Laurel answered no; we do not address status, only the level of the credit taken. Both the course credit and the grade will be transferred for these courses? Laurel: No. We cannot transfer the grade from an undergraduate transcript as it may impact such things as Financial aid, Dean’s list, GPA, etc.

   Jon: Suggested that the form should read 6-9, not 6 or 9 credits. He also asked whether the number of credits accepted in transfer should be proportional to the degree (i.e., 30 credit program and a 60 credit program would have a different number of credits that
could be transferred). Jon stated that we could be losing a few students (to 60 credits programs) who are not permitted to transfer more than 6-9 credits to a program. Laurel responded that we do not have any evidence to support this. Jon said that we could ask the gatekeepers of the programs for data. Someone else suggested that we could survey students who decided not to attend New Paltz to find out why they decided not to come.

Rose and Rosemary: Suggested that the phrase 'was not needed toward graduate degree,' should read- did not count toward graduation for that degree. Laurel pointed out that this information was provided elsewhere on the Transfer Credit Form and the response was that this information needs to be stated in the list of 1-4 on the form, even at the risk of being redundant.

Someone suggested that the Council needs data on transfer credit policies from other colleges. Narcyz asked what are our competitors are doing and stated that we need to compare transfer credit policy forms.

A Council member shifted the discussion momentarily with this comment. Private colleges (Marist, Adelphi) are matching our tuition for off-campus courses and reducing the number of credits needed for degree. Rosemary mentioned that the MAT in Biology is 51 credits at New Paltz, while competitors’ MAT Biology program is 40-41 credits.

Gwen asked if students submit transcripts electronically. Bernadette offered that New Paltz students will be able to do so in about two years.

b. Leave of Absence

The following discussion took place after we projected the Graduate School's Leave of Absence Form:
Rose asked what the length of a leave of absence was.
Laurel stated that a student may be permitted a leave of absence for up to a year (e.g., fall/spring, spring only, fall only). After that time, the student is required to reapply for readmission to the graduate program.

The undergraduate Leave of Absence policy was also projected and discussed as follows.
Jon: What if a student is accepted for fall and registers in January?
Do we block them from registering? Do we send them a letter? Do they have a leave of absence after a year automatically?
Gwen: Someone has to send the form to the student when they do not come before registration ends.

The discussion segued to a related issue---Laurel noted that a small number of international students requested and were granted permission to transfer to another college because they felt isolated. Laurel said that although she is not aware that this is a widespread problem, we should examine our practices with an objective to provide all students a sense of belonging/community.
Vika mentioned that when graduate students are accepted, they are directed to a welcome brochure on my.newpaltz that was developed by the Grad School.
Laurel stated that each spring and fall she participates in an orientation for international graduate students that the International Programs office hosts. Emily suggested that we could set-up a graduate student assistantship for students to act as mentors to incoming grads-model at ASU. Fiona noted that the online push is also isolating- also need the human connection.

Back to Leave of Absence:
Gwen stated that psychopathological related issues are increasing at the undergraduate level and appearing in the grad level as well. Laurel will collaborate with Gwen to formulate a policy (and perhaps judicial process) that will enable her to readmit students to their programs of study, following an absence that was granted for mental or other psycho-emotional reasons.
If the student took a leave of absence, what procedure is in place to allow Laurel to readmit the student?
Rose: What if a student is exhibiting behaviors that are detrimental to others and not seeking help?
    Call the Counseling center, seek consultation.
Rose: Whether or not student is a grad or undergrad, matriculated or non-matriculated, all students are under the same university policies. Laurel and Gwen will pursue this further and report back to Counsel.
Rosemary: Suggested downloading HIPA documents to use as a template.

There was a suggestion to make the link to the Research and Creative Projects award easier to find on grad school website.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:35 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Emily Puthoff