

Graduate Council Minutes
February 5, 2010 HAB 802

Present: Laurel Garrick Duhaney (Dean), Elizabeth Hester, Ying Lin, Gweneth M. Lloyd, Jan McLaurin, Rosemary Millham, Bernadette Morris, Andrea Noel, Fiona Paton, Emily Puthoff, Jonathan Raskin (Presiding Officer), Narcyz Roztock, Spencer Salend (guest) Vika Shock (guest).

Excused absence: Rose Rudnitski

I. Approval of Minutes

Approved with one abstention

II. Announcements

- a. Laurel announced the upcoming Graduate School Open House on February 18, 5-7pm and asked that we encourage colleagues and students to attend. Enrollment in the Graduate School is significantly lower this year. We must all participate in student recruitment. Online graduate courses were discussed as a possible way to attract students. We discussed the problem of initial press misinformation regarding the suspension of several graduate programs. Some students mistakenly believe that all MAT programs have been suspended.
- b. Bernadette announced that New Paltz undergraduates applying to our Graduate School will no longer need to resubmit all transcripts. Transcripts that were already scanned when the student first entered New Paltz can simply be viewed and checked online. Bernadette and Laurel will finalize the policy and logistical details of this decision. Also, Bernadette is working to enable students to access their free transcript online rather than getting it from Records and Registration.

III. Old Business

- a. We returned to the previously tabled discussion with Spencer Salend on the Alternative Admissions Policy for Special Education, which requests that a maximum of two students with a GPA below the required 3.0 may be admitted per academic year. The Council discussed existing admissions practices, the possibility of a midterm review (as with undergraduates), the possibility of other departments also requesting an alternative admissions policy, and the risk of legal repercussions. Laurel responded that currently a student who is refused admission may appeal to the department, but that there is no existing procedure to deal with those appeals. We need to establish such a procedure. She explained that any department is welcome to submit a similar proposal, as this issue has been circulating for several years. Laurel also felt that legal repercussions would not occur so long as written guidelines were in place and applied consistently. A motion was made to approve the Special Education proposal and duly seconded. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention.
- b. Update on the Graduate Admissions Review: Vika reported significant setbacks with the transition to online Graduate School applications. The person in charge of scanning and machine maintenance left his position and has not yet been replaced. She is working

with Joel Mumper and Tim Roberson on the final sequence of the work flow program. Meanwhile, Joan Connolly will not be able to focus on the admissions work flow until later this month (rather than in December as originally hoped). However, Vika has worked successfully with the Art Graduate Council to develop a group review work flow and invites other departments to schedule a meeting with her if they want to follow the Art department's model. Vika stated that some applications are available online independent of work flow and these can be accessed with some advance preparation, such as entering the user login ID of the reviewer into the system. She is available to do this and to offer instruction on how to do a query independent of the work flow. Emily asked for more information on this since approximately 50% of Art applications have been submitted online.

- c. Review of Frequently Asked Questions document: Emily and Fiona submitted suggestions/corrections to Laurel for the revision of this online document.
- d. Transfer Credits: we revisited the complex issue of transfer credits, tuition differentials, and GPAs (see Council minutes for November 6, 2009). In the past, Laurel has been asked why NP students have to pay a tuition differential when they transfer an undergraduate course to their graduate program (students from outside do not have to pay this differential). Both Vika and Laurel have been investigating this policy. It appears to be a campus practice rather than a SUNY-wide regulation. After talking with Vika, Niza Cardona spoke to David Eaton who asks for further research into what other schools do. Other issues emerged from this matter. For instance, when New Paltz students transfer one of their undergraduate courses to their graduate program, it is removed from their undergraduate transcript. This removal retroactively creates legal issues relating to TAP awards and Federal loans, since both number of credits and GPA can then change on the undergraduate transcript. Investigations revealed that Provost Lavallee made a change to the transfer credit system in 2002, so that the grade as well as the credit is now carried over to the graduate transcript (if above a B). The general feeling of the Council seems to be that the process would be clearer and more manageable if only the credit was transferred rather than the grade. We also discussed how many transfer credits we should accept from a student. If the number is too low, will students find another program that accepts more? And with reduced enrollment already a problem, don't we need to take as many students as possible? Rosemary suggested changing the system from a maximum of 6-9 transfer credits to a minimum of 21 credits completed at New Paltz. Laurel was skeptical about the manageability of this approach. Jon stated that we need more bridge programs to build on students' existing qualifications. Further discussion of these issues is to be expected.
- e. Leave of Absence policy: Can we institute a policy that allows us to assess whether or not a student is ready to return after a leave of absence? Laurel noted that, after incidents such as the Virginia Tech shooting, this question is of pressing urgency. If a student has taken a leave of absence for mental health issues, how do we know that the student is ready to return to the pressures of graduate school? Rosemary noted that HIPAA regulations prohibit asking specific questions about medical conditions. Gweneth

explained the current procedures for undergraduates returning after a leave of absence. They must go through the Counseling Center and have the block lifted on their accounts before they can register. Although the Graduate School also places a block on a graduate student's account during a leave of absence, the student is not currently required to be evaluated by the Counseling Center before returning. The student does have to re-register through the Graduate School, but we currently have no forms or required documentation that would allow us to judge the student's readiness to return. We must prioritize this issue in case a future student becomes a danger to him/herself or others.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.35pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Fiona Paton