

Graduate Council
Minutes
President's Conference Room, 1/2800
January 24, 2017

Attendance: Baffour, Bruey, Caswell, Christie, Hawthorne, Johnson, K., Johnson T., Kantner, Learch, Mattice, Pascale, Provost, Vose, Zoellner.

Dr. Kantner called the meeting to order at 12:15 pm by welcoming the members of the Graduate Council and began by making two announcements.

In his first announcement, Dr. Kantner reviewed the ongoing initiative over the last couple of years to execute a more cohesive and comprehensive Research Week. He stated that work has been done in the past to merge the efforts of a variety of units on campus. Largely, the Office of Undergraduate Studies had taken the lead on this and separately the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs conducted their event. More recently, The Graduate School merged its efforts with the Office of Undergraduate Studies to create a SOARS event, where students displayed posters, performed presentations and provided other submissions. This year, planning is off to even an earlier start with both the Library and the Brooks College of Health also participating. Many groups have had their own Research Week activities, but there is an attempt to co-brand them in some way and try to identify all the different activities that are taking place on campus without a huge amount of additional effort. This year, The Graduate School will once again have graduate students participate alongside undergraduates in the SOARS events on Friday (April 14). Student submitted abstracts will be reviewed and the best ones will be selected to move on to participate in the Statewide Graduate Research Symposium, which will take place at USF a week later. Dr. Kantner asked that promising graduate students be encouraged to submit their abstracts when the announcement is made in the next few weeks. He hoped to have a good turn-out and pledged to provide travel resources from The Graduate School to support those selected.

Dr. Kantner's second announcement was to inform the Council that the final allocations for graduate assistantships were distributed to the Deans/Associate Deans last week. Similar to the year before, there was an attempt to pull together packages earlier in the academic year. This would provide Colleges with the opportunity to use their allocations to recruit students for the following Fall Term, if this is the timeline the Program is following. The same amounts of resources are available as last year. Stipends were packaged to be at least \$5000 per semester for 20 hours per week of effort. If the graduate assistantships are at least \$5000 per semester and between 10-20 hours a week of effort at that particular rate, the student would qualify for tuition waiver. If it is a 20 hour per week position, 75% of their in-state tuition will be waived. In addition, there is a regulation that was implemented last year which reduces out of state tuition for students that have a graduate assistantship position of at least 10 hours per week to \$0.00 per credit

hour. This is also available to tie to the packages in order to recruit students. Dr. Kantner asked that the Council members speak with the Deans of their Colleges if they have specific questions on how this will be administered. As was the case this past year, next year (for which this money is currently being deployed) The Graduate School will complete all waiver payments. As EPAFs for hiring graduate assistants come through the system, they will be checked to confirm that hired students meet the criteria. The Graduate School will inquire in advance which graduate assistants should receive waiver and then ensure that the waiver gets credited to the students' accounts.

As the first agenda item on the schedule, Dr. Kantner requested the endorsement of October's Council Meeting Minutes. A motion was made to approve those Minutes. All Graduate Council members were in favor with none opposed.

Posthumous Graduate Degree Policy (handout provided) was the second agenda item discussed. Dr. Kantner explained that this policy came into focus last semester when an actual case occurred. Because only an official Policy existed for undergraduates, an ad hoc decision was made to resolve that situation. While researching this matter, Dr. Kantner found that there actually had been a Graduate School Policy drafted by the Graduate Council in 2011, but it was never moved forward to the next approval stages (Council of Deans –Provost-President's Office). Dr. Kantner asked the Council members if this Policy should be advanced for approval, modified or if they perhaps had other suggestion on how to proceed. He opined that it would be helpful to have a Policy that provides some reasonable threshold which pinpoints that a student proceeded far enough into the program to warrant receiving the degree posthumously. Per the 2011 draft Policy, the student has to be in good standing, must meet the residency requirement (a certain number of hours taken at UNF) and is required to have completed 75% of his/her credit hours within their Program of study. A discussion among the Council members ensued regarding the degree completion provision. It was felt that perhaps the 75% rule was too rigid for some Programs. A few different options were discussed and it was agreed to change the statement of the Policy to reflect "66% (vs. 75%) plus support of the Program", and leave the "good standing" and the "residency" provisions as is. A motion was made to approve this modification. All Graduate Council members were in favor with none opposed. Dr. Kantner stated that he would move the updated document forward through the approval process.

The third agenda item discussed was the Satisfactory Academic Progress and Probation/Suspension Policy (handout provided). Dr. Kantner began by offering some background on this topic. He reminded everyone that about a year ago the Graduate Council approved changing this Policy, as well as the Policy on how graduate GPA is calculated, so that it focused only on the Graduate Program GPA for determining academic standing, thus excluding coursework earned from all other past graduate work completed. As a result, academic standing is now based upon maintaining a 3.0 GPA in the Program in which a student is currently enrolled. He emphasized that this needs to be distinguished from satisfactory academic progress,

which is a federal financial aid regulatory requirement and does in fact count all graduate courses taken in the past. Because financial aid is separate from academic decisions, the Graduate School Policy focuses on the Program GPA for evaluating academic standing. Dr. Kantner pointed out that the new Policy requires the Graduate School to monitor the academic standing of students separately from what the Registrar checks for financial aid eligibility. He also relayed that many of the Council members may have recently received an e-mail from him indicating students in their Programs, whose academic standings were probationary or who were eligible for suspension. This was done manually, because it has not been automated yet.

Dr. Kantner went on to say that all of the previous information on probation and suspension is really a long preamble to the actual issue on hand: Communication of probation/suspensions to students. In the past, as soon as the system identified individuals that failed to maintain academic progress, students were receiving automated emails telling them they were on probation or that they were eligible for suspension. Several months back while discussing revisions of the Policy, it was decided to eliminate the automatic emails. This was done because it often caused confusion for students and in some circumstances Program Directors were unaware of who were placed in that status. Also, it is possible that Programs maintain even stricter guidelines on when students are put in probationary status. As a result, Dr. Kantner was hoping to exchange ideas on who is responsible to communicate what to students. He reiterated that The Graduate School will continue to track which students fall into this category and inform the Program Directors of those that are eligible for probation and suspension. Dr. Kantner stressed that decisions about probation are not optional. However, placing a student on suspension or approving dismissal is entirely up to them.

In order to avert multiple individuals communicating with students and possibly sending mixed messages, Dr. Kantner hoped to attain agreement on who will inform students when they are placed on probation and who will notify them for suspensions. He committed The Graduate School Office to issue a notification to the Program Directors before each semester of who is on probation, both from a list he compiles himself and any possible recommendations given to him from the Program Directors based off of their own probation criteria. The Graduate School would also pass that list to the Registrar and communicate with the student.

Dr Kantner stated that he will also send the Program Directors a list of those students, who are eligible for suspension. Since Program Directors have the latitude to make suspensions themselves, he added that he would prefer that the respective Programs and Colleges complete their own communication steps for those students in that category.

While discussing probation/suspension communication procedures several Council members added some comments. One member recommended expanding the conversation to communication procedures for admission notifications and students

on provisional admit status. Dr Kantner promised to conduct some internal conversations and address these topics again at a later date.

Another member mentioned that Programs sometimes receive last second notifications from the undergraduate advising office to execute action on students eligible for suspension. Dr. Kantner pledged to check with the Registrar on why this is still occurring, but the plan going forward will be that all communication on suspensions and probations to the Program Directors would come from The Graduate School.

Upon request by some other Council members, Dr. Kantner also agreed to: release a draft copy of the probation notification for the students to the Program Directors; provide Associate Deans with a copy of the probation/suspension list; and send a notification to Program Directors after each semester even if there are no students eligible for probation from their Programs based on the university policy. In return, if the Programs have identified students for probation based off of their own standards, they will pass those names back to The Graduate School.

In last agenda item, Dr. Kantner provided Council members with a sample Graduate Continuous Enrollment Policy from the Northern Arizona University (NAU) (handout provided). He mentioned that at this time UNF does not have an official policy that requires students completing their thesis to be enrolled in the semester they are filing their thesis. Currently, as long as they have been active (been enrolled within the last three semesters) students can submit their thesis without being enrolled. He commented that it is somewhat unusual that students can continue to work on and file their thesis when they are not actually actively enrolled. Dr. Kantner also added that the expectation in the NAU Policy (as well as some of UNF's Programs) is that students will maintain some kind of continuous enrollment while they are finishing their thesis/dissertation. Dr. Kantner believes that it would be helpful for students to have something that is standard for the entire University. A short discussion ensued with several Council members providing various views and personal examples of situations that they have experienced with thesis completion and continuous enrollment. Dr. Kantner concluded the discussion by volunteering to draft and distribute several possible Policy models to the Council members, so they can discuss at next month's Council meeting.

There were no further issues raised by the Graduate Council members and the meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.