

## **Graduate Council 2013-2014 Annual Report**

Prepared by: Mark Luttenton, Chair

**Graduate Council Faculty and Administrative Members:** R. Adams (PCE, winter semester), C. Bajema (ex-officio), J. Barry (KCN), A. Bostrom (KCN), D. Cannon (SCB), S. Choudhuri (PCE), B. Cole (ex-officio), N. Diarrassouba (COE), J. Engelsma (PCE, fall semester), D. Epple (CCPS), I. Fountain (administrative), M. Harris (COE), L. Huang (CCPS), T. James-Heer (ex-officio), C. Leiras-Laubach (CHP), E. Lioubimtseva (BCOIS), S. Lipnicki (ex-officio), V. Long (UL, fall semester), A. Lowen (SCB), M. Luttenton (CLAS, Graduate Council Chair, Chair of Grand Council Policy Subcommittee), E. Martin (UL), L. Masselink (UL, winter semester), J. Palm (administrative), J. Peck (CHP), J. Potteiger (ex-officio), P. Ratliff-Miller (fall semester), M. Shell-Weiss (BCOIS), S. Soman (ex-officio), P. Sopariwala (SCB, winter semester), M. Staves (CLAS, Chair of Graduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee), J. Stevenson (ex-officio),

**Graduate Council Student Members:** N. Bair, P. Jabaay, H. Powsner

**Ex-Officio Students Attending:** J. Blossfeld, S. Kabalyan, S. Senkowski

The Graduate Council (GC) convened on September 6, 2013 and met monthly during fall and winter semesters. The GC will conclude business on April 25, 2014. Because the GC addresses policy issues and reviews graduate curriculum proposals, members of the GC also serve on either the Graduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee (GC-CC, Mark Staves, Chairperson) or the Graduate Council Policy Subcommittee (GCPSC, Mark Luttenton, Chairperson). Curriculum proposals regularly generate questions/issues related to graduate policies, consequently this continues to be a functional model. The GC-CC and GCPSC generally met twice each month in addition to regular GC meetings. The GC-CC reviewed over 100 curriculum proposals including new course proposals, course change proposals, new certificate programs, new program proposals, and program change proposals. The GCPSC proposed/revised several policies and spent considerable time researching standards and soliciting comments in the process. All discussions were conducted in the context of the GVSU Strategic Plan.

To facilitate work by the GC, the GC adopted a new membership structure and increased the number of voting members. The new membership structure allows two seats for each college. We believe that this new membership model has facilitated the work of the GC.

The GC received a memo from the ECS that set a general agenda for the 2013-2014 academic year. More specifically the GC was charged with a diverse array tasks in that memo. I have outlined the efforts of the GC as they relate to each of the 11 charges.

**Charge 1:** Please propose policy and procedural revisions to the language in the Faculty Handbook to promote high quality, uniformity, and consistency among graduate programs within the university.

The Graduate Council in total and GCPSC specifically has continued to discuss issues that lack policy, and review existing policies that influence uniformity and consistency across graduate programs. The GC is acutely aware of the need for clear policies governing graduate education, particularly as graduate offerings have expanded. Discussion and work on several policies (either revisions or new policies) has been ongoing since spring 2013. Although additional

issues continue to emerge that deserve consideration, the GC has begun spending more time reviewing/evaluating policies that have been instituted during the past 10 years.

Policies and issues that have been discussed and/or developed by GC during 2013-2014 include:

- 1) Graduate Academic Policy on Late Withdrawal
- 2) Graduate Academic Policy on the Incomplete Grade
- 3) Statement on Graduate Students as Principal Investigators for Research
- 4) Graduate Advising Policy
- 5) Responsibilities and Workload for Faculty Engaged in Graduate Education
- 6) University Graduate Admissions Requirements
- 7) Copyright Information for Graduate Students
- 8) Graduate Student Leave of Absence
- 9) Statement on the Responsibilities of APSC and GC
- 10) Modifications of academic policies of individual programs
- 11) International Graduate Admissions Requirements
- 12) Complete Program Withdrawal
- 13) Information related Grades Below a "C"

**Charge 2:** Examine policies and propose revisions or develop policies where necessary in order to foster a graduate student community and graduate student representation on campus.

The GC continued to encourage graduate student representation and supported actions and proposals initiated by the Graduate Student Association. Graduate students are included in and central to the GC's discussions of graduate policies.

**Charge 3:** Examine and develop graduation auditing processes for Graduate programs and share your recommendations with the Executive Committee of the Senate.

GCPSC determined that policies addressing several related topics needed to be completed before degree audits could be addressed. GC, the Graduate Dean, and the Registrar did initiate discussions related to the available infrastructure and how it could support an auditing process. GC will continue to work on the issue.

**Charge 4:** In collaboration with administration and relevant schools and colleges, review the university data collection process regarding graduate education and propose policy development revisions, if deemed appropriate.

This charge was initially discussed during 2012-2013. During 2013-2014, representatives from GCPSC met with Philip Batty, solicited input from graduate program directors, and reviewed information available through Institutional Analysis.

GC recommends that during 2014-2015, graduate program directors identify additional information that would be useful, and that information be included in and available through the institutional database. GC also recommends that graduate program directors be provided regular reports with information relevant to their program.

**Charge 5:** In collaboration with the Provost's office and FSBC, review data collection and processes for estimating costs of graduate programs across the university and propose policy development and revision, as deemed appropriate.

This charge was initially discussed during 2012-2013. During 2013-2014, representatives from GC met with FSBC and representatives from the Provost's office.

Our general recommendation is to ask for more costs and revenues data to be shared with program directors and department chairs. The rationale is that more information may contribute to decisions that take net revenue into account.

More specifically, some or all of the following information might be useful for Chairs/Directors to have as part of their decision making process.

1. Costs and revenues by department/school and by specific major.
2. Net revenue (tuition minus university funded financial aid)
  - By courses offered by unit
  - By majors offered by unit
3. General fund expenditures per student credit hour by department (for last 3 years)
4. Balance of direct revenues and costs
  - By courses offered by unit
  - By majors offered by unit

**Charge 6:** In collaboration with the FPPC and the FSBC, examine faculty workload demands on those who actively participate in graduate education, e.g. teaching graduate courses, graduate thesis advising, directing graduate research etc.. Please share your findings with the Executive Committee of the Senate along with any committee recommendations for action.

A draft policy titled Responsibilities and Workload for Faculty Engaged in Graduate Education was developed by the GC and reviewed by FPPC and FSBC. GC submitted the proposed policy to ECS during fall semester. ECS asked GC to discuss the policy further with the Provost's office. Ultimately, GC elected to withdraw the proposed policy and recommends that the university continues to operate under existing policy language.

**Charge 7:** In collaboration with FSBC, examine the pros and cons of awarding stipends to selected Graduate Assistants. Please share your findings with ECS along with committee recommendations.

GC was unable to begin work on this charge. We recommend that this be included as a charge for 2014-2015.

**Charge 8:** In collaboration with APSC, review policies regarding grades of "I" in graduate course work, and make suggestions for best practices.

GC collected information related to the use of the "I" grade from the Registrar's office, graduate program directors, and peer institutions. GC shared their version of a revised policy with APSC, in March 2013 and again in fall 2013. The Chair of GC and Assoc. Dean John Stevenson attended an APSC meeting to discuss the two different versions being prepared by each committee. GC submitted a proposed policy for use of the "I" grade at the graduate level.

**Charge 9:** Collaborate with APSC to delineate between the work of GC's Policy Subcommittee and APSC as related to new policies regarding graduate programs.

GC developed a draft document that proposes how work/responsibilities could be delineated between the GC and APSC. GC has provided a copy of the draft to APSC. The draft is attached below.

**Charge 10:** Recognizing that GC is approaching its 12<sup>th</sup> year of existence, review existing graduate policies and suggest necessary revisions.

GC asked graduate program directors to identify existing policies that impede graduate programs or fail to function as they were intended. In addition, the Office of Graduate Studies queried their database to identify the number of waivers and exemptions requested for each policy.

Based on this review, GC identified a very limited number of policy items that may need revision.

**Charge 11:** Review assessment requirements for graduate programs.

Graduate Council created a working group to collect information related to this charge and to summarize their findings.

All GVSU graduate programs assess student learning outcomes as part of our ongoing strategic planning. This requires a program review or self-study every three years. Many graduate programs are also accredited by external professional organizations, which have additional assessment requirements coupled with the GVSU assessment cycle. These additional requirements are very rigorous and time- and effort- intensive.

The subcommittee consulted with Dean of Graduate Studies, Jeffrey Potteiger and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Assessment, Accreditation, and Planning, Julie Guevara, to discuss graduate program assessment. Additional information related to program review was collected from a broad range of peer institutions.

GC considered adding assessment requirements that increase transparency and allow for consistent and fair comparison of programs across the University. The subcommittee considered a number of recommendations. The two most intriguing were 1) to develop a standardized set of measures of financial viability and 2) to gather additional data on faculty and student professional development activities.

Vice President Guevara indicated that she would not support adding additional assessments or reporting requirements on these programs as part of the UAC assessment process, particularly those concerning financial viability. She was favorable about proposals intended to increase transparency and allow for consistent and fair comparison of programs across the University, particularly proposals encouraging more reporting on extracurricular and professional development opportunities for both graduate students and faculty teaching in graduate programs.

The subcommittee recommends 1) that Graduate Council pursue assessment of faculty and student professional development activities and 2) graduate program directors should be provided with additional information (e.g. financial) related to the operation of the program and that assessing program viability take into account all costs and benefits generated by programs, including financial, community relationships, and student outcomes.

**Charge 12:** Report on Internationalization Task Force recommendations for graduate courses.

Although there was some general discussion related to this charge, GC feels there needs to be additional information gathered. GC recommends this be a charge during 2014-2015.

**Draft – Delineation between the work of APSC and GC;** Prepared by Mark Luttenton, Chair of GC

In a memo from ECS, the Graduate Council (Policy Subcommittee) and Academic Policies and Standards Committee were jointly charged to delineate the work of each respective committee. The charge was:

*Collaborate with APSC to delineate between the work of GCs Policy Subcommittee and APSC as related to new policies regarding graduate programs.*

To this end, the responsibilities of each committee as established by ECS/UAS and stated in the Faculty Handbook are:

*Specific responsibilities of the following committees:*

**Academic Policies & Standards Committee (APSC) -**

*To study, review, and make pertinent recommendations on academic policies and procedures including admission, retention and dismissal, repeat grades, withdrawal, academic calendar, and suspension of library privileges. The scope of study and review of the Academic Policies and Standards Committee is limited by the published “purposes” of other standing committees of the University Academic Senate.*

**Graduate Council (GC) -**

*The GC is responsible for matters related to graduate education at Grand Valley, to include (but not limited to: a) To review and recommend actions upon new courses proposed for graduate programs and/or revisions to current graduate courses; b) To review and recommend actions upon and, as needed, initiate policies and standards related to graduate education that ensure consistency, equity, and fairness, while not impinging upon the disciplinary expertise and responsibility of the program faculty. This shall include matters related to admission, program progress, and completion for post-baccalaureate students in non-degree, certificate, and degree program statuses; c) To review and recommend actions upon requests for exceptions to university minimum standards or policies; d) To review and recommend actions related to new graduate degree and certificate programs and to review and recommend actions related to existing graduate programs at the time of assessment and/or program review and/or accreditation.*

Based on the Handbook, it appears that the responsibilities of each standing committee have been articulated; *The GC is responsible for matters related to graduate education at Grand Valley*, and the responsibilities of APSC are defined by the statement “*the scope of study and review of the Academic Policies and Standards Committee is limited by the published “purposes” of other standing committees*”. In the case that a policy will apply to undergraduate and graduate students, the two standing committees shall work collaboratively in order to develop policy that will accommodate both undergraduate and graduate student needs and standards, such as the “Incomplete” grade policy. The recommendation here is that the two committees should work jointly to better serve the needs of undergraduate and graduate programs at university. We recommend that each committee share policy and standards proposals as a courtesy and each policy submitted to ECS should clearly identify that a particular policy is undergraduate, graduate, or university-wide.