

Graduate Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
Monday, March 3, 2008
Education Room 203
11:45am-1:00pm

MINUTES

Attendees: Dr. Bret Hendricks, Chair, Dr. Jerry Parr, Dr. Tara Stevens, Dr. Reese Todd, Dr. Eva Midobuche, Dr. Joe Claudet, Ms. Yen To

Absent: Dr. Zenaida Aguirre-Munoz

Today's Agenda:

- Status update on Graduate School Meeting regarding GAAC procedures
- Status update on Department Chairs' Meeting regarding GAAC procedures
- No new courses to review
- Next meeting date

Motion to accept February 20, 2008, Minutes with amendment by Dr. Parr.

Seconded by Dr. Stevens.

Motion to approve February 2008 Minutes passed (all in favor).

Dr. Hendricks began the meeting with a report from his February 27th meeting with Dr. Cliff Fedler, Graduate School Associate Academic Dean. As of February 26, 2008, there are new guidelines for submitting course approvals but they are not published yet (last posted policy is from OP 36.01 dated 8/25/2006). The syllabus is to be sent with each completed form. Weekly activities are to be included without dates, especially if there are to be different instructors. The purpose is to show the course has rigor at a graduate level. There was an issue of terminology between the College of Education faculty and the Graduate School Council members as to template and syllabi. We can send the template but the syllabus has to be included. Course duplication across campus is an issue to be addressed by the Graduate School Council. Dr. Hendricks stated Dr. Fedler validated the EDUC does very well with the course submission process.

Regarding seminar courses, there is no policy as to the amount of times a unique seminar can be offered. When requesting to change the seminar to a course name and number, include the data of how often it was offered, how many students were enrolled each time, what the composition of the students attending the course and the expected continued enrollment for the course. The Graduate School Council is looking for numbers justification. Detail in the comment/justification section of the form that the course under consideration is the same as the seminar course and what this means for graduate level course rigor. The College of Education cannot set a policy that a seminar special topic course that is taught a minimum of two times would then be turned into a formal course. There is no OP at the Graduate School level addressing this situation.

Dr. Hendricks continued his update addressing the course justification requirement on the form. If a course cannot be repeated for credit, then fill in the box asking that question. Do not leave boxes blank or incomplete.

Regarding the resource justification requirement on the form, one issue to address is which faculty members will be available to teach the course. Will it be current faculty without hiring adjuncts or instructors? Look at the college's course inventory. Unless the new course is an accreditation issue – which should be documented, the impact a new course might have on other offerings should be addressed. Unless new faculty members are to be hired to teach a course, there should be an elimination of another, comparable course. This is to prevent dollars from being encumbered. It needs to be articulated within the form that there are enough students in the “pipeline” to fill a course and if adjuncts will teach it. A second issue is to document with data (numbers) who has taught the seminar course previously, how many students per section, how many students in the course, how many times per academic year it will be offered. If an accrediting body requires the course, include the Minutes of the meeting when that suggestion was made to add the course within the form. We need numbers to back up new course offerings: number of students taking the course, number of students in the “pipeline”, faculty course loads. The Graduate School Council wants an estimate that at least 10 students will enroll; therefore we need fifteen students to justify offering the course. Letters of intent from prospective students can be included to justify and generate the credit hours.

A third issue is the Graduate School Council's form itself: Is it easily accessible online on their web site and should we include it on the College of Education's website? If so, where? Do we include additional information on how to complete the form and why it is to be completed a certain way?

GAAC committee members discussed the information provided by Dr. Hendricks. A consensus to update the EDUC website with the Graduate School Council's forms as active links was reached. The disadvantage is how to stay current with new mandates and who will update the information. A narrative summary will be created by Esther Lucey for Dr. Hendricks approval and added to the EDUC faculty web page. These issues create more work for the GAAC which led to a consensus by the current members to request the author of a course under review to present the course at the GAAC review meeting.

Committee members continued their discussion about the EDUC process of new course submissions. Does the author contact the program coordinator who then contacts the department chair? Do the department chairs regularly meet to provide information about course duplication? When do the program faculty members review and vote on a course submission? Dr. Claudet said it is a tiered level of review which occurs among the department chairs when they have a yearly conversation about updates to the campus student catalog.

Dr. Parr questioned if, during the recent department chairs' meeting, a policy/procedure was created as requested at the last GAAC meeting. It is demoralizing and causes the author to withdraw the submission if we don't have policies to follow per the issues addressed by Dr. Duemer at the February GAAC meeting. As GAAC members, we represent our respective departments and programs. That is our job when we review course submissions. We each know

our specific program area but not the other's as to duplication issues or what is being offered. Having the author attend and present the course is a positive solution to addressing some the issues we need to review. The onus is on the author to research course inventory, speak with program faculty, to check first and provide data and documentation on the form and within the syllabus. Historically, the purpose of the GAAC was the opportunity of cross-department representatives to meet and review new course applications.

Committee members also agreed to have these issues presented to the Leadership Council as an eAgenda item; the purpose being to create a forum to address the course process. Every program coordinator is a member of the Leadership Council. They could address the duplication and justification issues. There is a confounding factor on course duplication with the Hill Country. This will be a future issue. Some ITV courses originate here and this information with corresponding student data, location, section numbers, etc... need to be included on the application forms. There is a possibility that there will need to be course numbers on inventory at other locations. There are distance delivery courses with a different number but with the same curriculum.

Dr. Todd questioned if seminar courses are required to go through the GAAC process before they are offered? This is an issue that has not been discussed yet, per Dr. Hendricks. Dr. Parr mentioned that the department chairs were asked to create the policy/procedures for this at their meeting, but first we need the methods. Discussion continued about seminar courses as being something for faculty to try innovative things that are not ready for program analysis yet but have students wanting to take the seminar. What is a seminar course for? If a faculty member wants to offer something new, is it as a seminar or as a new added course? Topical issues are dependent on the programs and the use of the course by students and other faculty members. One suggestion raised was to have a general location (bulletin board, web site) for all proposed courses to be posted so authors could check on duplication, if they make, student data, etc.... Another issue discussed was does the new seminar course take students away from required courses within a program. Authors need to look at how the new course will affect other enrollments. Are accepted courses suffering in enrollment at the expense of new seminar topic courses that are duplications just with fancy titles? Why is there a need for a new course? Let's make it more public as to the needs of the students and what courses in EDUC programs are being taught. Department chairs need to establish a procedure that seminar special topic courses are built upon and at an additional level. Historically, seminars were used by faculty to get exposure to doctoral students and get to know them.

Dr. Claudet mentioned there is a broader issue to consider: how to conceptualize curriculum design as to duplication, general methods course issues, content specific or area of inquiry. A specific seminar topic can be over and above required course offerings and build on the other courses. This institution has not had these conversations. This is another forum for faculty to think about and then talk about.

Dr. Hendricks offered to take these issues to the department chairs to find ways to encourage innovation but not hurt the bottom line by duplication.

The next and final meeting for this semester will be on **Monday, April 14, in room 152, at 11:45am.**

Meeting adjourned at 12:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Esther Lucey, Recorder