Minutes

Ferguson moved for approval assuming a review comment be removed from the minutes, Selepak seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

TOEFL Levels

Treise spoke with Dean Villalon of the International Center, who raised the concern that due to visa restrictions, international students are only allowed to enter the US 30 days before the first day of classes. This limitation would conflict with the 10 week schedule for the remedial program, as initially proposed. The possibility of changing the admission dates for the students from fall to summer was raised. Treise noted that most students would not be finished with their undergraduate degree programs in time for a summer A or C admission. Treise will investigate the possibility of changing the admission date from fall to Summer B with the Graduate Admission Office.

The Committee felt the 10 week program could be condensed into the 6 week summer B schedule without too many problems. It was concluded that while the Committee strongly preferred changing the admission dates to summer B, if that was not possible, it was better for the students to attend a 30 day program than no program at all.

Item was tabled as the option of changing the fall admission to summer B admission is investigated.

Application Numbers for Ph.D. Programs

Treise noted that the number of Ph.D. applications for our program and other is down compared to prior years. She shared that several programs with application deadlines in December have extended those deadlines into January. Discussion concluded that several factors affected the number of applicants including improved job markets, incentives for foreign students to study in their home countries rather than in the US and the College’s lack of a strong reputation for research in recent reports.

The issue was raised if extending our application deadline would be an option. Treise will inquire of the Admission Office if this is a possibility.

MA Curriculum Task Force

Senior Management named James Babanikos, Linda Hon, Ron Rodgers, Janice Krieger, Nicki Karmipour and Debbie Treise as the Task Force to address the MA Curriculum.

The Task Force starts meeting next week and expects to move quickly in reviewing the feedback collected by the Departments from Alumni. It was noted that the Alumni response rate was rather low and it was difficult to track down previous students as the College loses contact with them after graduation.

Treise noted that she will keep the Graduate Committee abreast of the Task Force’s progress.

Graduate Assistant Raises

A new Collective Bargaining Agreement was finalized which resulted in a 3.25% raise for continuing graduate assistants as well as a minimum compensation level equivalent to $13,000 for a 9 month .50 FTE assignment plus $40 of fee relief for all graduate assistants.

Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluations

The new agreement also set for criteria to evaluation the performance of graduate assistants as far as teaching and research effectiveness. Also required by the agreement is multiple, escalating and documented interventions before an unsatisfactory performance evaluation be given.

Excerpts of the evaluation criteria from the agreement as well as proposed draft evaluations that included the suggestion of required intervention before the midpoint of the semester were shared with the Committee.

The Committee agreed that including more performance level options rather than the current satisfactory/unsatisfactory options would be facilitate in giving accurate feedback regarding performance.

After much discussion, the Committee concluded that while it understood and appreciated the reasons behind the Graduate School’s suggestion of a mid-semester intervention deadline, there were multiple situations were poor performance of an instructor of record would not come to light until after the semester midpoint or infractions may be so egregious that implementing the deadline would not be reasonable or equitable.

It was proposed that the Committee put forth guidelines and training setting out the expectations and best practices for research and teaching assistantships. Items suggested included:

* Written job duties, deadlines and deliverables agreements for non-instructor of record graduate assistants. Perhaps an adaptation of the current independent study agreements. Thus giving more responsibility for faculty to monitor progress and performance thought out the semester.
* Midpoint course evaluations by the undergraduate students to instructor performance. Perhaps use the midpoint evaluation questions from the Distance Master tracks as a starting point.
* Mid-semester teaching observations of instructors of record done by the department. It is up to the department who within the department will conduct the observations.
* Required midpoint meeting with chair and instructors when course evaluation and/or observation is conducted.
* Weekly work logs kept by teaching and research assistants to provide accountability.
* Standard policies on work requirements during semester breaks and holiday.
* Clear requirements for multiple and appropriate interventions before performance is termed unsatisfactory.
* Policy specifying what events that would be so egregious that would automatically cause unsatisfactory performance without multiple interventions.
* Training on expectations for both supervisors and new graduate assistants.

Treise will return to the Committee with a draft of the job responsibility agreement and will investigate avenues and question for the midterm course evaluation for the graduate assistant instructor of records.

The Committee approved the format of the evaluation forms as presented with minor modifications.

ATTENDING: Treise, Cleary, Ferguson, Goodman, Ostroff, Rodgers, Selepak, Schmittel, and Holloway.