Graduate Council
May 20, 2016
Agenda

Voting members present: Sourabh Apte, Stephanie Bernell, Jim Coakley, Ryan Contreras, Theresa Filtz, David Finch, Kok-Mun X, Lisa Ganio, Andreas Schmittner
Voting members absent:
Guests: Prasad Tadepalli, David Porter, Dorthe Wildenschild

College of Engineering Request - Prasad Tadepalli
Request to allow graduate students as GTAs in 400/500 courses. Please see the attached email "GTA Policy.docx" for more information.

Policy – GTAs can't be the teacher of record to avoid conflicts of interest related to grading.

Classes up to 70 students in EECS and other classes of about 32 students. Current rule requires GTAs to have already passed prelims. There are some TAs who could be Currently policy does not address the true conflicts of interest. Missing a chance to educate students of conflicts of interest. After he began process, he learned that CBEE and MIME ha

Proposed policy is to sign a conflict of interest form that declares those with whom the student has a conflict of interest; the instructor can then detetrmien how to handle the conflict. The TA would also receive education re: conflict of interest.

Steph, in large courses with class size of 70 is not as compelling since other programs have more than 70 students. Is the reason mainly for grading? Would TAs be used for all but grading?
TAs would be for Office hour and help sessions. In his school they get a half TA for every 35 students. In Electrical Engineering, they have lab work, and TA is there to assist with software.

How is their situation different? One with 60 graduate students has no TA for assistance.

TAs - Lecturing, teaching, advising on research. Provides feedback.

From COE perspective, the responses are right or wrong. If TAs are asked if they have a conflict, shouldn't students be asked if they have a problem with the TA? PT – it's up to the TA to indicate whether they have a conflict.

In another college, courses were reorganized and had to determine what GTAs could do to assist with classes to comply with the policy.

Getting those who were no longer taking classes – arbitrary rule – once they're not taking courses anymore they are allowed to be a GTA.

Does COE have any constraints to be a GTA? No, first-year student is a GTA. In theory, Masters could be grading Masters courses. Instructor is responsible for grades, even if TA is grading.

Sourabh - If restricted to students only past the prelim, it's difficult to find students to be a TA because most would be working on research.

Kokmun – may be HR issues since there are not enough to split them among courses. If the only reason is conflict of interest, it has repercussions – it's a policy change, not an exception.

GTAs may assist in grading projects – due to typical teaching load, instructors need those GTAs.

If it's a matter of grading, could you take the student list and the faculty assigns a number to each student and the GTA doesn't know whose exam they are grading – blind grading.

The TAs maintain office hours.

How does one know whether TAs are reporting correctly? Impossible to know.

History - Unit underwent program review who used graduate students to teach graduate students. Complaint was that PhD students came to school to be taught by faculty, not by other PhD students. The policy was that graduate students could not teach other graduate students. The focus turned to students in the same co-hort grading other students and could result in FERPA issues.

Dorthe – because all GTAs are CGE employees, unsure whether the contract states that an employee can be put in a position of evaluating peers - need to check with HR.

GC Discussion:
One was not convinced by the class size issue – it may be a human resource issue and management issues.

Another felt that graduate students come with expectations of who will be grading their courses. Another felt that some graduate students do come with grading expectations and come to be mentored, taught and evaluated by faculty.

Just because a student took a course doesn't mean that one is qualified to evaluate coursework. Another felt that students should be able to grade.

What level of grading are GTAs doing – final grading?

Perspective not voiced – One TA shared they were uncomfortable to be grading other students.

The Graduate School Dean was receiving complaints from the students being graded that their peers were the ones grading their coursework.

Whether GTAs grade their peers varies by college.

Once they pass prelims, they focus on research. Units could require passage of the prelim earlier in the program.

Echoed concern that students should have the opportunity to indicate whether the student has a conflict with the TA.

TA would be the person managing the conflict of interest for new students joining the class – one felt it should be the faculty member reviewing all identified conflicts of interest, not the TA.

Stephanie - should the GC determine whether they are supportive of making an exception? If the exception is approved, why have the policy? Feels like the GC may approve the exception because it's difficult for the unit to manage.

The COE proposal does not include 600-level classes – only 400 and 500-level.

One had a problem with 500-level students grading 500-level students.

COE staffing issue is getting huge.

Is there any point in drafting language for an exception to consider? Would like COE to think harder about ways to manage it themselves?

One suggesting to include in the evaluation form if they have a specific issue of being graded by graduate students.

Is there a way to let them run it for awhile and report results to the GC? Could blind grade.

The policy wasn't set up for first-year graduate students to teach other first-year graduate students.

One was in favor of individual assignments being graded by TAs.

Theresa suggested forwarding the discussion to COE and ask them to develop an alternate proposal where students are protected, and an alternative for students who feel there was a conflict of interest.

Botany Plant Pathology Three-year Report Follow-up
The email report from Mike Lerner is attached. *(see BPP 3yr Rev.docx)*
Action: David moved to accept three-year review; motion passed and approved with no dissenting votes.

Minutes to Review
April 29, 2016 *(see min 160429 web.docx)*
Send edits to Theresa.

Faculty Senate Update
On May 12 the Faculty Senate voted to approve the removal of "transfer credits" from the nine-year time limit for PhD programs. The GC had agreed to look at language to advise thesis committees on consideration of transfer credits - below is a suggested paragraph.

> For transfer of courses onto a program of study, the thesis committee and student are advised that all transfer credits must be approved by the student's thesis committee. In approving transfer credits, the committee should consider whether the courses are relevant to the degree and area of specialty. Further, the committee should pay attention to the currency of the information in the transfer course, particularly in regards to courses that were completed several years prior to matriculation. It may be appropriate to ask a student to repeat a course if information in the field is expected to have advanced in the time since the course to be transferred was completed. Although there is no time limit on how old a course may be transferred, the university seeks to assure that student training is as up-to-date as possible for the benefit of the student and responsibility for this lays with the thesis committee in regards to transfer courses.

Kate Halischak felt that the Faculty Senate is asking the Graduate Council to review the entire policy and does not include transfer coursework. Perhaps add verbiage of intention – not intended to kick out graduate faculty.

Suggested replacing 'thesis committee' with 'program committee'.

Dorthe will ask Rosemary how she handles transfer courses.

Action: GC will review the above proposed policy and vote on it at the next meeting.

Epigeum Mentoring Modules
A proposal to be considered to require Epigeum mentoring modules of all faculty requesting approval for level 4 or 5 (direct Masters or doctoral theses) participation as a graduate faculty member.

Implementation Proposal:

- the Epigeum mentoring modules (i.e., the online training resource) shall be required for all faculty that are being nominated to level 4 (direct master's theses) and/or level 5 (direct doctoral theses) as of Fall term 2016.
- a graduate faculty nominee would receive conditional approval (for level 4/5) for 3 terms, by which time the modules would need to be completed or the conditional approval would be revoked
- participation in the mentoring Learning Community would be voluntary, but strongly encouraged for new faculty

- experienced faculty already approved at level 4/5 for one or more programs, but being nominated to serve at level 4 and/or 5 in additional programs would need to complete 2 modules of their own choosing within 2 terms (?) - thoughts?

The first bullet needs to include "that are initially being appointed".

Suggested adding a bullet to indicate that all faculty and all advisors are encouraged to complete the modules.

Action: Theresa will send an email request to the GC asking them to vote on the first three bullets.

There are no more ADRAC meetings scheduled this AY, so DW proposes to take this to Provost's Council (following GC recommendation) to get feedback from the deans.

The Graduate School (DW) will:
- work with IT on making the modules searchable

- take the lead on a pre/post self-assessment for users to get some information about how useful the modules appear to faculty
- explore possibilities for adding some content about effective mentoring of distance students
- same for international students in particular with respect to professional and career advice

One concern is that, for those serving on non-thesis committees, no training is required. May need to change policy to include "Research in lieu of thesis".

If one is appointed and has taken the training, should faculty asked to serve on a committee in another unit, should they be required to again take the modules. Perhaps if they have taken the modules, they shouldn't be required to again take the modules.

To be continued...

Faculty Senate Refusal to Change Graduate Council Standing Rules
The implications of the Faculty Senate refusal to approve a change to the Graduate Council Standing Rules to review graduate faculty on any requirements.
Faculty were concerned about 'what the Council was up to."

Old Business — As Time Allows

a. **IDPs**

b. **Policy Consideration**
Continued discussion around a policy to impose a time limit for submission of programs of study and methods of enforcement. Please see the April 29 meeting minutes for notes on the start of Council's discussion.

Review of Minutes

Additionally, the minutes for April 15, 2016 *(see min 160415.docx)* and January 15, 2016 *(see min 160115.docx)* need to be reviewed; please send any edits to Theresa. She is working through the remaining meeting minutes from winter term and will send those along. The intent is to get everything reviewed before the June 3 meeting.

Minutes recorded by Vickie Nunnemaker, Faculty Senate staff