

**INSTRUCTION COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
May 11, 2012  
126 ITLE, Faculty Development Room**

**Present: Raj Basu, Bruce Benjamin, Celeste Campbell, Bruce Crauder, Cheryl Devuyt, Steve Edwards, Chris Ormsbee, Shiretta Ownbey, Jeremy Penn, David Porter, Chris Ross, David Thompson, Jean Van Delinder, Sheryl Tucker, Charles Bruce, Gene Halleck, Starla Clawson, David Henneberry, Brian Hook, Nikki Dunnigan, Konrad Brandemuhl, Amy Martindale, Carol Johnson, and Pamela Fry.**

**1. New Draft Definitions for Graduate Student Positions – Sheryl Tucker**

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations concerning the taxability of graduate tuition waivers provided by educational institutions recently required OSU to start withholding taxes on graduate tuition waivers exceeding \$5250 per calendar year for specific graduate student appointments. The IRS code specifically exempts the tuition waivers received by graduate teaching and research assistants/associates (GTAs and GRAs) as taxable income. However, tuition benefits provided to graduate assistants/associates (GAs) are subject to taxation and withholding. The implications of the IRS regulations for GAs and administrative units are tremendously complex and present significant challenges. Therefore, the Task Force on Graduate Student Support Issues (GSSI) crafted the draft definitions (see below) with the explicit intention of providing more inclusive and compliant definitions.

**GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (GTA):**

A Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) must be admitted to and meet the requirements of the Graduate College, be fully admitted to a graduate program, and be under the supervision of an appropriate graduate faculty member. In consultation with the supervisor, the GTA works to gain instructional skills and an increased understanding of the discipline. The GTA is provided a stipend and their primary responsibilities are to support the instructional mission of the department or program. Services provided by a GTA may include: classroom or laboratory teaching; advising and mentoring of students; proctoring examinations; grading papers, homework, and/or projects; accompanying/coaching musical or vocal performances, providing artistic instruction or assisting with preparation and management of materials and programs that are utilized in imparting knowledge or in the instructional process; or providing other general assistance in the instruction process. A GTA may be assigned primary responsibilities in an extension, outreach, or service role for which those responsibilities support the instructional mission of the department or program. GTAs may not be given duties to support faculty research or those primarily clerical in nature.

**GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT (GRA):**

A Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) must be admitted to and meet the requirements of the Graduate College, be fully admitted to a graduate degree program, and be under the supervision of an appropriate graduate faculty member. A GRA is provided a stipend and their primary responsibilities are to provide general support to the research mission of the department or program. These responsibilities may or may not relate directly to the students' thesis or dissertation. Duties of the GRA primarily involve applying and mastering research concepts, practices, or methods of scholarship. Services provided by a GRA may include: assisting faculty members in a research or creative activity; perform degree-related professional or administrative services that supports research, instruction, professional development, or outreach missions of the department or program; developing and evaluating instructional materials or curricula; or assuming responsibility for designated scholarly endeavors.

“Performing degree-related administrative or professional functions” related to academic instruction or training means work related to the academic operations and functions in a department or program rather than to administration along the lines of general business operations. Such academic administrative functions include operations directly in the field of education. Jobs relating to areas outside the students' field of study are not within the definition of academic administration.

### **STUDENT WORKER:**

The Student Worker is an employed student not meeting the above criteria and would constitute an employer-employee status within the Oklahoma State University system and requires compensation based on actual time worked as assigned. Documentation of hours worked via a time sheet and an hourly wage of at least the Federal minimum wage (\$7.25, as of 2012), are required.

A student worker may also be considered exempt versus hourly if the following conditions are met:

"Compensation of no less than \$455 per week regardless of FTE or \$1,972 per month, as of 2012, regardless of FTE and meet the Fair Labor Standards Act categories of executive professional or administrative"

Dr. Tucker noted that the IRS imposed new regulations that became effective in January 2012 that directly impacted the classifications of graduate student employees, particularly GAs. There are ~100 students classified as GAs this year, working throughout the University. The majority of currently categorized GAs will be appropriately employed in GTA or GRA positions under the new definitions. A few graduate student employees might be re-categorized as student workers if they are not "performing degree-related administrative or professional functions". Student workers are not eligible for tuition waivers. These recommended changes are going through the approval process right now. In answer to a specific question: in advertising positions, it might be best to use the statement "candidates may be eligible for financial assistance". Many institutions do not use the GA title and do not have tuition benefits associated with such positions.

Members Endorsed.

## **2. Textbook Policy – Charles Bruce and Starla Clawson**

This agenda item was suggested by Dr. David Thompson (CEAT) who wrote:

"New editions of core subject textbooks come out every two or three years and the publisher quit supplying the prior edition. Generally the only change in the books is a few new homework problems. We assign very few homework problems (and could go to zero) from the textbook because if the problem is published, the answer is available online. There are ample prior edition books available for the students to purchase from national suppliers and at a greatly reduced cost. For some courses we are happy to specify any of two or three earlier editions, but the Bookstore says we cannot because they can only obtain the newest edition. I am sure they do not want to post a notice about buying earlier editions. In several courses the syllabi list alternate earlier edition texts, but the students do not see this until the first day of class. The other "problem" is that some students with financial aid can use the aid money only for texts purchased through the Bookstore. The potential impact on the Bookstore and the services they provide also needs to be considered. Is there some fair and acceptable way to reduce the textbook cost to students?

Early attempts at providing e-books were not financially attractive to students. We now have one and I assume that there will be more publishers willing to reduce the book cost to approximately 1/3 of the off-the-shelf price if a permanent electronic version is purchased by the student directly from the publisher. This would be a credit card purchase. We did ask about an e-book purchased from the Bookstore for those with financial aid. The publisher hasn't completely rejected the idea, but says other schools are not doing this and clearly they prefer not to do so with us. The questions and issues are similar to those for prior editions."

Dr. Bruce commented that the statement referring to financial aid spending allowance limited to only purchasing textbooks through the Bookstore, is not accurate.

Starla Clawson noted that there are policies and procedures in regards to textbook orders. Starla noted that she attends national meetings with publishers and retailers, and all agree that the ebooks are not selling. 95% of textbook sales are paper copies and the best avenue to purchase books is on our campus. The OSU Bookstore works with seven wholesale companies. Starla asked that colleges and faculty research the packages that they are offered; does the package include all access codes to buy and sell and are the packages in compliance with Oklahoma Law on Textbook Sales from 1997. It was noted that publishers will sell textbook bundles for less than the price of used books. Starla noted that, for instance, during book buyback if we have a package with an access code such as an Homework Manager which cost \$25 and the package new price is \$100 we would typically give

\$50 for the textbook but if we need to put an access code with it to make a package the buyback price would be \$25. Starla went on to say the Spring/Summer textbook orders due dates were changed to February 15<sup>th</sup> because of Federal regulations. Before the Federal regulations, the due dates were April 1<sup>st</sup>. Typically the Bookstore has a request for 800 textbooks for Summer and 3300 textbooks for Fall and Spring and they have received 2800 orders to date. Starting in January 2013, The Government will start asking for records to verify that institutions are in compliance with the new regulations. If institutions are not in compliance, it could affect an institutions Federal funding. OSU needs to write all these changes into the Textbook Policies and Procedures.

### **3. Outreach Student Survey of Instruction – David Henneberry, Byron Hook, Konrad Brandemuhl, and Nikki Dunnigan.**

A subcommittee of the Outreach Credit Course Committee revised the instructional survey for outreach courses in summer 2011. The revision based the outreach course survey on the face-to-face course surveys, with some alterations specifically addressing outreach course concerns. The subcommittee sought input from outreach offices in each of the academic colleges, Outreach Credit Course Committee, Outreach Council, and Instruction Council. All requested revisions were made and the revised survey was approved by Instruction Council in August 2011. It has been in use since. In order to distribute the surveys to outreach course students and to collect the results, Konrad noted that Information Technology (IT) creates course shells for each outreach course and populates them with those students and the survey. The shell courses have start and end dates near the end of the actual course so that students can complete the survey at the appropriate time and faculty cannot review the results until after grades are posted. At the end of each course period, Konrad emails Nikkie a list of all the course surveys that are being opened and she forwards them to outreach staff in each academic college as a notification. Nikkie commented that like Instruction Council, the outreach staff in the colleges also have expressed a concern about the survey response rate and that outreach staff in each academic college and the faculty member should be prompting students to complete the survey. Dr. Ownbey noted that with the current system, there are too many different individuals to depend on to get the survey information out to students and to get the results back to individuals at the Dean's level, who need the information for Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure process. It was suggested that instead of students having to log in to D2L to complete the course survey, there could be a link to follow on an email sent to the students that takes them directly to the survey. Dr. Henneberry noted that in his experience, the students are using email and do respond to email prompts. The whole process is manually intensive and Tina Meier from IT is looking at Qualtrics as a survey tool to replace this system. IT is trying to get a sight license to the Qualtrics program as they are investigating ways to ease the online survey process. Dr. Penn suggested not using Qualtrics but investigate some other vendors that would offer more features that we need. Dr. Ormsbee suggested waiting until we received the recommendations from the Evaluation of Teaching Task Force. Dr. Ormsbee noted that it doesn't make sense to have two different systems going at one time. Hopefully we'll be able to implement an all-inclusive program by Fall 2013. Outreach agrees and would be like to be included in a shared survey system for traditional and outreach courses and asks to be informed of new system decisions so they can make sure the information they need will be collected too. Outreach will continue using the current system until a new inclusive system is in place but will try to help colleges better access and utilize survey results.

### **4. Instructional Technology Projects: SMART Boards and Lecture Capture Pilots – Christine Ormsbee**

Dr. Ormsbee wanted to discuss two future pilots:

OSU Stillwater is partnering with OSU OKC to implement a pilot project using Tegrity, a Lecture Capture software tool. Lecture Capture is an umbrella term describing any technology that allow instructors to record what happens in their classrooms and make it available digitally. OSU OKC is giving OSU Stillwater 1,000 hours of lecture capture time, which translates to 12 courses that can be engaged in the project. Dr. Ormsbee met with Executive Committee of Faculty Council to present the pilot idea to obtain their support. Dr. Ormsbee would like to work with each college to identify 2 courses with two faculty to pilot lecture capture Fall 2012. The faculty members should be technologically confident and will have some mobility limitations in their teaching, but ITLE will work with them to try to accommodate individual teaching approaches and styles. Dr. Ormsbee asked members how to go about getting that information. Members indicated that they, the Associate Deans, should be the contact for this pilot. Dr. Ormsbee will be contacting the Associate Deans. Dr. Ormsbee is also serving on the Long Range Planning group who is working on copyright policies.

5. **NSSE Interpretation of “Peer” Institutions – Jeremy Penn**

Dr. Penn noted that 584 institutions participate in the NSSE program and wanted member to decide who they wanted to be compared with. Dr. Penn will send the list to members and the item will be discussed in the **next IC meeting.**

6. **Use of OSU Email Accounts by Currently Enrolled Students – Celeste Campbell**

Dr. Campbell noted that this was an information item. The Registrar’s Office decided to collect data to determine the number of OSU students who check their OSU email, which included Orange, Cowboy, and Outlook mail. The challenge was getting student feedback. 71% of undergraduate students logged in, this did not go to the student’s phones. University Assessment and Testing of 350 students and they experienced the same problems with students getting confused about Orange mail and Gmail. Dr. Johnson commented that she will do more checking to find out more specifics. It was noted that this was good information and that it needs to be addressed.

7. **ITA Exam Policy Changes – Jeremy Penn and Gene Halleck**

Dr. Penn noted that the iBT test has improved in quality and clears the pathway to the ITA exam. With these changes, it prompted a need to revise the “Requirements for Appointment of Non-Native English Speaking Graduate Students to Instructional Roles in Classroom or Laboratory Settings.” Faculty Council has approved of these changes. Definition section fifth bullet: Members suggested changing “primary” to “secondary”. Please send any other suggested changes to Dr. Penn.

8. **Advising Task Force – Amy Martindale**

Dr. Martindale noted she is chairing the Advising Task Force and members include representation from each of the colleges and Faculty Council. There is a big push to do an evaluation of advisers. What are the common expectations of advising? Should there be a core process standard in each college? The Task Force is looking at the differences between graduate and undergraduate advising and the advisor workloads. The group is looking at advisor salary structures and discussing next steps.

9. **Other**

Dr. Ormsbee is working with the Clicker Group on student response systems and would like to survey some large classes willing to allow the use of Smartphones in class. There’s been a shift to clicker software to allow use of both the clicker and Smartphones in the classroom. The group is still meeting to finalize the process. Members noted that not all students have Smartphones. Dr. Ormsbee comment that her area is trying to look at options to defray costs and clickers cost about \$30 ea.

**Adjourn: 10:30 a.m.**