

INSTRUCTION COUNCIL MINUTES

December 7, 2012
204 WH
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Present: Raj Basu, Celeste Campbell, Cynda Clary, Bruce Crauder, Bob Davis, Cheryl Devuyst, Bavette Miller, Chris Ormsbee, Shiretta Ownbey, Jeremy Penn, Chris Ross, David Thompson, Mark Weiser, Susan Mathews, Ron Van Den Bussche, Christie Hawkins, Steve Rogers, and Pamela Fry.

1. Graduate Student Support Issues Task Force Report – Ron Van Den Bussche

Oklahoma State University (OSU) faculty, students, staff and administrators have identified the lack of competitiveness of our graduate student financial support packages as the most pressing graduate education issue. There are numerous issues that arise when it takes students longer to complete degrees, such as the lack of degree completion and the potential loss of human capital. One issue that has rightfully received significant attention recently is student debt. In the graduate student population, this problem was exacerbated by the loss of government-subsidized loans in July 2012 – interest now accrues during graduate study. Two obvious contributors to OSU graduate student debt and time to degree concerns are lack of competitive tuition waivers and stipends. For example, many OSU units/departments have graduate student stipends below the 25th percentile compared to national data or select “peer institutions.” Moreover, OSU’s graduate student tuition waiver program does not cover a full course load (9 credit hours) even with a full-time assistantship (0.5 FTE). Even though our current discount rate for graduate tuition (nonresident and resident) continues to increase, — 74% in FY12; up from 51% just ten years ago — we are not offering competitive financial packages for graduate students. To begin to address these issues, the Graduate Student Support Issues Task Force (GSSI; membership below) was formed with representative membership across OSU. Working with the full support of central administration, the Task Force started its work last spring, shortly after the Internal Revenue Service issue concerning graduate assistants employment definitions came to light. For several months, GSSI Task Force members spent considerable time and effort looking at peer data, national best practices, and crafting a set of solutions to address Oklahoma State University’s (OSU’s) ability to attract outstanding talent within our fiscal realities, which are a significant limiting factor. The focus was on four broad categories, employment definitions, stipends, waivers and appointments, that are not independent from one another. Given the complexity of our graduate student financial support structures, these recommendations cannot be implemented immediately, but will require a thoughtful Implementation Plan be developed, as noted below.

Graduate Student Employment Definitions

New graduate student employment definitions that were designed to be more inclusive and compliant with federal regulations were endorsed at all levels (Graduate, Faculty, Instruction and Deans’ Councils) and were implemented in fall 2012. They are Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate (GTA), Graduate Research Assistant/Associate (GRA), and Student Worker, and the use of “assistant” for master’s-level and “associate” for doctoral-level GTA and GRA appointments. The more general Graduate Assistant (GA) title was retired.

Stipend Recommendations

- For GTA offers being made during Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, for admission during FY 2015, all OSU units/departments/colleges pay stipends no less than the average rate determined based on selected “peer institutions.” A plan is being finalized to invest ~\$1.8M in GTA stipends from general university.
 - Note: \$500,000 of this total has already been secured from general university. Pending the availability of the funds, the additional \$1,300,000 in reoccurring funds will be available for distribution to current GTAs in fall 2013 (FY 2014).
 - Note: Because of the nature of GRAs, no general university funding is committed.
- Differential pay for more experienced GTAs and GRAs should be adopted by all units or continued where it is already employed. This differential pay within a unit should be at least 15% higher for students who have master’s degree in the academic discipline or who are post-candidacy in the OSU PhD program.

- GRAs in good standing, whether funded internally or via external sources, should be paid no less than an equivalent-level GTA (differential pay and/or other unit-level criteria apply).
 - Note: Current research grants would be grandfathered until expiration.
- The University-wide minimum level of GTA/GRA support will be set to match the unit whose stipend based on selected “peer institutions” is the lowest across all OSU units/departments. This minimum will be updated by the Graduate College on an annual basis.
- The Dean of the Graduate College in collaboration with the Associate Deans for Research (ADRs) and Administration and Finance will provide the oversight to ensure graduate student stipends remain competitive. At least once a year, the Dean of the Graduate College will discuss graduate student stipends with the ADRs and representatives from other relevant units, such as the Director of IRIM. Prior to this meeting, the ADRs should perform an internal audit of all units/departments within their colleges to evaluate the actual stipend being paid to all GTAs and GRAs. During this meeting, trends in OSU GTA stipends versus selected “peer institutions” will be examined to ensure that we continue to offer competitive stipends.

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Graduate Student Tuition Waivers

- As noted above, OSU’s tuition waiver program does not support decreased student debt and time-to-degree. Moreover, the structure of OSU’s graduate student tuition waiver program is overly complex, a struggle to articulate accurately in graduate student offer letters, and a challenge to manage by units and colleges. It does not provide competitive waivers for graduate students, even though our current discount rate for graduate tuition (nonresident and resident) continues to increase – 74% in FY12. Note, by State rule (Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, OSRHE, *Policy and Procedures Manual* 4.18.6), fees are not eligible for discount, and tuition waivers refer to the applicable resident and/or nonresident graduate tuition.

Tuition Waiver Recommendations

- Graduate students who are admitted to and enrolled in any OSU graduate degree granting program may be awarded a qualifying GTA or GRA that may have resident and/or nonresident tuition waiver benefits associated with the appointment.
 - Current Policy: Tuition waiver eligibility applies to all OSU master’s and doctoral degree programs.
 - Current Policy: Students in graduate certificates, non-degree seeking students (aka special students), etc. are not eligible for GTA or GRA positions or associated tuition waiver benefits.

- Current Policy Clarification: Courses eligible for tuition waivers are defined as those graduate courses directly relevant to the student's degree program (i.e., Plan of Study, POS, or proposed POS).
- Recommendation: Once enrolled, good academic standing (i.e., not on academic probation; beyond probationary admission) is a requirement for OSU tuition waiver eligibility.
- Recommendation: OSU graduate tuition waivers would apply to 0.50 FTE GTA/GRA positions, with academic programs being able to apply for an exception for their program with compelling justification.
 - GTA/GRA positions with less than a combined total 0.50 FTE would no longer qualify for tuition waiver benefits, only graduate student health insurance.
 - As mentioned above, OSU does not have the financial resources to continue the 0.25 FTE tuition waivers and address mission-critical stipends and needed tuition waiver program changes that support degree completion in a timely manner.
 - At least one academic program made a compelling case during the Forums and discussions that made it clear to the Task Force that there is a need for program exceptions. During the Implementation Phase, the procedure for program exception requests will be developed.
 - Given our existing commitments, the Implementation Phase will include a thoughtful transition plan.
- Recommendation: OSU tuition waivers are limited to the number of hours in the degree program.
 - Note: This eliminates the current semester 6/6/3 credit-hour restrictions.
 - Note: There is no intention of leaving graduate students without access to tuition waivers. The Implementation Phase will need to address current students and academic policies that create a buildup of credit hours beyond their degree programs.
 - Any Graduate Faculty advisor with a graduate student with specific issues still may request special consideration under the new policy.
- Recommendation: OSU tuition waivers are based on the length of qualifying appointment.
- Recommendation: At a minimum, a qualifying appointment is defined by the academic calendar terms and sessions.
 - For example, the definition of a fall or spring semester is 16/17 weeks (classwork begins to classwork ends or when finals week ends).
- Recommendation: OSU tuition waivers are prorated when a student does not complete the assignment/term/session/etc.
 - Note: Currently, the entire waiver is rescinded.
- Current Policy: Full-time enrollment is required for a graduate student with a qualifying assistantship to be eligible for a tuition waiver.
- Recommendation: For those graduate students with an assistantship, full time is defined as minimum enrollment in 6 credit hours in the fall or spring semester and 2 credit hours in a summer term.
 - Note: This would be a reduction of 1 credit hour in the summer (3 to 2), to better align with the summer enrollment requirements for the student FICA exemption.
- Current Policy: Current eligibility with respect to OSU graduate student health insurance coverage is retained.
 - Note: Analogous to Recommendation 9a above, a qualifying appointment would be dependent on the length of the appointment, not number of hours worked.
 - Note: Graduate student insurance would continue to be available to those on a qualifying appointment of least 0.25 FTE.
- Current Policy: Current OSU policy that prohibits concurrent use of Faculty/Staff Tuition Waiver and GTA/GRA tuition waiver is retained.
- Current Policy: Current OSU policy with respect to Graduate Student Spouse Tuition Waiver is retained.

Graduate Student Appointments

The aforementioned changes require an alignment of the policies concerning graduate student appointments. Moreover, over the past year there have been several issues that have come up with respect to appointments that require clarification. For example, there have been several instances where graduate students are employed more than 100%, including a case exceeding 140%. In addition, OSU Human Resources has noted that some appointment combinations are not appropriate with respect to Federal regulations. Therefore, the Task Force

examined graduate student appointments keeping these issues in mind, as well as the aforementioned goal of supporting and attracting outstanding talent.

Appointment Recommendations

- Current Policy: GTAs/GRAs need to be admitted to and enrolled full time in a graduate degree program in order to be eligible for a tuition waiver and benefits.
 - Recommendation: For those graduate students with an assistantship, full time is defined as minimum enrollment in 6 credit hours in the fall or spring semester and 2 credit hours in a summer term.
 - Note: This would be a reduction of 1 credit hour, from 3 to 2, to better align with the summer enrollment requirements for the student FICA exemption.
- Current Policy: GTA/GRA appointments are a minimum of 0.25 FTE and a maximum of 0.50 FTE during the spring and fall semesters. During the summer, GTA/GRA appointments are allowable up to 0.75 FTE. Stacking of appointments (GTA/GRA) is allowed up to those limits.
 - Recommendation: GTA/GRA appointments are made in 0.25 FTE increments.
 - Current Policy Clarification: Irrespective of the FTE or combined FTE, graduate student assistantships are not benefit-eligible positions with respect to OSU's standard employee benefits package. Graduate students are provided graduate-student health insurance options with certain qualifying appointments. Note that provisions in the Affordable Care Act may require additional clarifications.
- Current Policy Clarification: Due to Federal employment regulations, stacking of "hourly" and "exempt" positions is not generally permitted, unless the two positions are *significantly* different. All GTA and GRA positions are considered exempt positions. (We were able to address the vast majority of these issues this fall in a manner that was mutually satisfactory for all.)
- Current Policy: The expected work load for a 0.25 FTE position is generally 10 hours per week on average and 20 hours a week on average for a 0.50 FTE appointment.
 - Note: Hours exceeding these averages or FTEs not aligning with the workload is a common complaint and very serious concern.
- Current Policy Clarification: Any exceptions to GTA/GRA appointments, such as appointments exceeding the maximums allowed, need the prior approval of the Dean of the Graduate College before any offer of appointment is made.

These recommendations have been reviewed by many groups. There were four charges addressed in this initiative; Graduate Student Employment Definitions, time to graduation, stipends/waivers, restricting graduate student fte to .50%. The difficult part is how to handle transitional students and the Graduate Student Support Issues Task Force (GSSI) will be addressing this. Any graduate student appointments over .50% fte would have to be made to Dr. Tucker. It was noted that this could typically affect tutoring offices, etc., and Dr. Van Den Bussche emphasized that Dr. Tucker will consider exceptions. Members Endorsed.

2. Faculty Teaching Fellows Proposals – Christine Ormsbee

The Institute of Teaching and Learning Excellence (ITLE) is developing a new program called the "Faculty Teaching Fellows" and plans to conduct the preparation in Spring 2013, and implementation will begin in Fall 2013. The intent is to start to embed teaching support in the colleges to serve discipline and field issues as well as delivery large vs. small class sections. Would like the colleges to identify two highly qualified teachers in each college; Arts and Science would identify four individuals. These individuals would receive a stipend and provide teaching support on site to colleagues in their college. This would be a coaching process, not an evaluative process. ITLE would provide training in the Summer. Members noted that this was a good idea. ITLE intends to create conversations and support on teaching. If your college offers a large amount of online courses, maybe one of those teachers identified would have a great deal of experience with online offerings. Members asked what would be the time commitment and stipend? Minimum expectations: 3 day coaching training in the summer, Fall monthly ITLE meetings, one workshop on teaching in their college per semester and provide support for three faculty members. This is a pilot and the program could grow to include more teachers. Stipend would probably be \$4,000 - \$5,000. Agriculture would be willing to share a stipend to add

additional faculty for this purpose. Absolutely, that is the direction that ITLE was hoping to go in the future, building partnerships. Stipends will be spread out into three payments. All this will have to be figured out with overload issues, etc. What about putting those earnings in a Professional Development account? Dr. Ormsbee would like to but questions if it would fly if audited. By putting the funds in a Professional Development account might be perceived as avoiding taxes. How would the request be announced through the Dean's Office? ITLE would send out a request to the colleges, and the colleges would make the decision on who would be appropriate. Dr. Ormsbee requests that the faculty are tenured. Members asked that this include tenured and/or clinical faculty. Members would like to see included in the responsibilities that those faculty will be working in partnership with the Associate Dean of Instruction on implementation, subject matter, etc. Members requested more specifics on expectations and stipends and they should include the statement, "Each college will identify an individual by May 1". Also the date for summer training needs to be added. Dr. Ormsbee will make the changes and send out to members to review.
Members Approved.

3. Internal Audit of Undergraduate Degree Sheets – Celeste Campbell

Dr. Campbell noted that the Registrar's Office has completed evaluation of the degree sheets. The Registrar's Office is confident that the policies were contained within the college degree sheets. Keep these in mind as you develop new degree sheets. Members thought it was a good exercise to go through as a reminder, etc.

4. Oklahoma State University's Academic Services Fees 2013-14 - Pamela Fry

Dr. Fry noted that Spears School of Business fee is not increasing, the new revenue is attributed to increased numbers of students, not increases in cost per student. The international student insurance cap is requested as University Health Services is trying to estimate the potential increase for that plan so that they don't have to ask for increases every year. Their contract is with BlueCross BlueShield, and University Health Services doesn't get the rating for the plan until after the first of the year and the numbers are estimated from those ratings. This only affects 300 to 400 international students. Members asked if the engineering initials UAS could be changed or deleted not to be confused with "University Academic Services" perhaps, begin the title with "Design Project Fee". Members asked about the parking fee and it was noted by Christie Hawkins that this is a three year phase-in of increases.
Members Approved.

5. Curricular Requests

**College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Course Requests**

Dr. Crauder had some concerns regarding the courses listed below.

AGCM 3203 sounds a lot like SPCH 2713 – was Psychology (the department that runs SPCH courses) contacted about this?

The Psychology Department was contacted and was fine with the course offering.

AGCM 5132 – was English contacted? I'm not sure there would be an objection, but this course is much broader in scope than Agriculture only.

Members requested adding "Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources" to the end of the title.

AGCM 5503 – Arts and Sciences has a graduate program in Emergency Management out of Political Science. Were they contacted?

The request needs to be taken to the Political Sciences Department to ensure that there are no objections.

Tabled pending conversations with Political Sciences and Fire Protection Services Departments. Bring request back in January.

LA 4453 – Arts and Sciences has an entire GIS program including a Certificate out of Geography. Was the Geography Department contacted? It is asked that the Geography Department be contacted.

Tabled pending conversations with the Geography Department. Bring request back in January.

College of Arts and Sciences

Course Requests

Tabled GWST 5103 – the course needs a different title. **Tabled until January.**

MATH1513 and MATH 1613 - questions about the description, general education credit and OSRHE/OSU requirements. After discussions, member agreed that the course request was okay.

Approved except for tabled course.

PEDAGOGY AND PERFORMANCE, MASTER OF MUSIC (408)

Program Modification: Change of Program Name

Change of Program Name to: Music, Master of Music

The Music Department at Oklahoma State University requests the program name change as the current name is deceptive in that it implies that the degree is a “pedagogy” degree. In substance, it is a conventional master of music degree in conducting and applied study with an emphasis on preparing teachers (as opposed to an emphasis on the academic specialty of pedagogy). Therefore, our accrediting body (the National Association of Schools of Music) does not regard the current name to be appropriate to the content of the degree.

Members Approved.

College of Education

Course Requests

Table CIED 4093, 4193, 6070 and 6090.

Members Approved with the exception of the above listed courses.

College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology

Course Requests

Supply chain management, IEM,
IEM 4893 - prerequisite typo.

Members Approved.

College of Human Sciences

Course Requests

Members Approved.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SCIENCE, MASTER OF SCIENCE (095)

Program Modification: Program Requirement Changes

Program Requirement Changes: Course requirement changes and changes in total credit hours for the five options.

The Department of Human Development and Family Science at Oklahoma State University requests the program requirement changes to provide students with the same foundations but develop competence in practice or research options within the degree giving students more flexibility and opportunity to more effectively target their desired expertise.

Dr. Fry asked that the summary paragraph be more specific.

Members Approved.

Spears School of Business

Course Requests

Member requested that the college review course descriptions and make some revisions.
Members Approved with changes.

Center for Veterinary Health Sciences

Course Requests

VMED7861 – Dr. Ross would like to have the description edited. Tabled pending revision of description and final review and approval by members via email.

Emailed revisions to the course description to members and members approved.

Center for Health Sciences

Course Requests

Take out in-depth focus onwording for BIOM 6893 and begin with discussions or topics.

Approved pending wording changes.

Graduate College

Course Requests

ENVR 5353 - take out first sentence and start description with “technique”.

ENVR 5453 - the description should begin with “Theoretical foundations”.

Members asked if the ENVR courses were presented to the other departments to verify that there are no objections to the offerings and Graduate College representation wasn't aware that this was done.

Members Approved: GRAD 5890 and INTL 5200; **ENVR courses will be reviewed in January.**

6. Other

Dr. Bruce Benjamin, Center for Health Sciences, introduced himself and stated that they are overhauling their Graduate program and plans to physically attend Instruction Council in the future.

January agenda - agreement on approval process structure for each college.

Adjourn: 10:30 pm