

University Council on Graduate Study
November 22, 2016
Minutes
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
817 Cathedral of Learning

Members Attending

Alberta Sbragia (Provost's Office and Arts and Sciences, Chair), Vivian Curran (Law), Joyce D'Antonio (Substitute, Medicine), Sandra Engberg (Nursing), G. Kelley Fitzgerald (Health and Rehabilitation Sciences), Ayres Mario Freitas (Arts and Sciences, Physics and Astronomy), Dennis Galletta (Katz), Nancy Glazener (Substitute, A&S Social Sciences), Mike Gunzenhauser (Education), Teresa Hastings (Interdisciplinary), and Sam Poloyac (Pharmacy)

Guests

Waverly Duck (Co-chair, The Year of Diversity Committee), Stephanie Hoogendoorn (Office of the Provost), Michelle Jackson (OAFAs), and Randy McReady (OAFAs)

The Year of Diversity

Dr. Waverly Duck, co-chair of The Year of Diversity gave a brief presentation about The Year of Diversity as well as some of the programming being planned for the year ahead.

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy Review

Stephanie Hoogendoorn, Michelle Jackson, and Randy McReady gave an overview of the proposed revisions to the university-wide policy 09-04-02 on Student Level and Academic Progress. Pitt is in compliance with federal regulations for the renewal of all federal student loans provided to graduate and undergraduate students. However, the current version of the policy that describes this process, [policy 09-04-02](#), needs to be updated to reflect this process. Note that the current version of our process is available online on the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (OAFAs) site at <https://oafa.pitt.edu/financialaid/satisfactory-academic-progress/>. Note that the eligibility guidelines in this policy are also used for most aid programs.

The revised policy has three proposed content changes:

1. The minimum GPA for graduate students is increased from 2.0 to 3.0, to match the graduation requirement for our graduate programs (except Law which is noted in the revisions). There may be other exceptions to be added.
2. For research and professional practice doctoral students, the statute of limitations will be used to determine the maximum timeframe allowed instead of the total credits of the program.
3. The definitions of the Student Level will be removed from the policy and placed in a separate guideline. The definitions will be reviewed and may be changed to reflect a four-year graduation rate. Additionally, the policy is currently named "Student Level and Satisfactory Academic Progress" and will be renamed as Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress.

The remaining revisions provide additional information about the current procedure in order to better communicate the policy and its implementation, especially the appeal process. Each spring after grades are posted, OAFAs will determine if students receiving aid meet the 3 SAP criteria. OAFAs will contact students who do not meet one or more criteria and suggest they file an appeal to continue their financial aid.

OAFAs manage this process and has drafted the attached revision, with input from the Office of the Provost as well other financial aid offices. After the presentation, the speakers encouraged questions and feedback from council.

Question: How many graduate students use financial aid?

Answer: Randy will pull this information and report back to council.

Question: Why is a Dean's signature not required on the current draft of the appeal form?

Answer: Discussions are still taking place as to who will be making the appeal decisions and who will be involved in the process. For example, could the entire process be completed within OAFAs.

Feedback: An opinion of the School of Education – It would be best to require the Dean's signature for consistency.

Feedback: The PharmD program requires a 2.0 GPA. This exception will need to be added to the policy.

Feedback: It would be helpful to provide more communication to the schools.

Response: OAFAs are planning programs at the graduate level to talk about financial aid in general.

Council approved the Minutes of the September 13, 2016 Meeting with the following revisions:

1. Update the heading of the Engineering proposal to the following: Proposal to Establish a new major in Sustainable Engineering leading to the new Master of Science in Sustainable Engineering (MSSE) degree type in the Swanson School of Engineering
2. Remove "joint" from the second paragraph of the engineering proposal. The MSSE is not a joint a program.

Announcements:

1. The annual Assessment Conference will be held on Friday, January 27, 2017 at the University Club from 8:30 am – 2:00 pm. Keynote speaker will be Helen Stubbs, Senior Consultant from Gallup. Registration will be open in December.
2. Tim Deliyannides and his group is in the process of updating the ETD templates. We have distributed the proposed timeline for implementation.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.