

Graduate Academic & Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes for November 25, 2015

Attending: Daryl Farmer, Don Hampton, Mitchell Reed, John Yarie, Sean McGee, Anne Beaudreau, Holly Sherouse, Karen Jensen (by phone), Donie Bret-Harte, Jayne Harvie, Jane Monahan (guest), Mike Daku, Laura Bender, Mike Castellini (by phone)

I. Minutes from our meeting of 11/11/15 were passed.

II. Guest Jane Monahan from the School of Education gave us an explanation of the proposed changes in the community counseling program. The main change is to offer certification for clinical mental health, which requires a 60 credit minimum for professional certification and a self-study to become accredited by KCREP. There is a strong demand for professional certification by students in the program. The local military bases want professional certification, because it is hard to get certified counselors. Other minor changes involve adding personal interview, and disclosing that background checks are required. Also, the National Counseling Preparation exam will become the comprehensive exam in this program, which is more efficient and will allow students to get jobs in other states. Finally, some students want to do it all, both be clinically certified and to be a certified school counselor, in which case they can have both concentrations on their transcript. The counseling program is large, with 80 students, and they are not likely to be deterred by the additional credit requirement; in fact, many of them are requesting it. The national exam can be taken in the home community, proctored by someone outside of the department. GAAC members commented that this really makes sense for workforce development, and the certification will allow more graduates to be employed in Alaska. GAAC suggested that it would be key to provide a memo to President Johnson explaining why this program will go over the 45 credit maximum.

II. We received an update on health insurance for graduate students. Offering graduate student health insurance was developed under Provost when she was Graduate Dean, and is a relatively recent occurrence. The graduate student health insurance program is entirely self-financed. Recent trends include: 1) The number of graduate students is currently decreasing, because we are offering fewer TAs and RAs, due to declining funds. 2) The total costs are going up (currently UAF puts in ~\$1 million for grad student insurance). 3) The cost per student is around \$2000/student, but less is covered, due to increasing restrictions. All of these trends are negative. Other universities are dropping their graduate student health insurance because of changes to coverage mandated by the Affordable Care Act, and are directing students to get health insurance on their own, through the exchanges. Some students are also covered by their parents' insurance, depending on their age. GAAC wondered whether coverage through the ACA would be better. The graduate school can't answer this, because it depends on the students' income and potential subsidies. There is no requirement that universities provide health insurance. When Provost Henrichs was Dean, it was important to her, and it was a good recruiting tool. Now many of those other universities don't offer health insurance. GAAC members commented that this is a tough spiral, fewer resources = fewer students,

so even more expense. GAAC members asked that the graphs that Mike Castellini presented be sent around electronically, and Mike agreed. Anne Beaudreau requested that students and faculty have an opportunity to weigh in. Will stipends be increased to help cover costs? Mike Castellini commented that we can't give students money to buy health insurance, but the university could increase stipends coincidentally, which would depend on university's funding, and would be determined at a higher level. At present, UAF can't offer dental or vision to graduate students, which they could get through the exchanges. The expansion of Medicaid in Alaska should help quite a bit toward providing subsidies for students. Mike agreed to provide numbers for his Senate presentation in December. GAAC asked whether graduate students are not considered employees. Mike responded that at present, they are not employees for health insurance, because they must work 30 hours per week or more. The key question is how much an equivalent plan on the exchanges would cost. Mitch Reed will look into this.

III. Holly Sherouse provided data on deferred grades in graduate courses from 1997 to this summer. According to her data, there are 5774 deferred grades. There were (master's and ph.d) 1400 from 1997 to 2005 (24% of total), and in the last 10 years, only 464. Of the student with those grades, only 15 are not active. For context, these deferred grades in graduate courses are only about 10% of undergraduate deferred grades, and she is not concerned about these numbers. She doesn't think it is worth it to worry about deferred grades for graduate students. She will check to see how many are coursework grades. GAAC agreed that this is not a big problem. Holly suggested that reminders could be sent to faculty, or students could contact their professor or the registrar's office.

IV. GAAC passed the following course and program changes and proposals:

15-GNC: New Course: [**CE F607 - GIS Applications in Civil Engineering**](#)

18-GPCh.: Program Change: [**Master of Education in Counseling**](#)

21-GCCh.: Course Change: [**ED F620 - Language, Literacy and Learning**](#) (pending some small corrections)

22-GCCh.: Course Change: [**ED F630 - Curriculum Development**](#)

24-GCCh.: Course Change: [**ED F686 - Assessment and Testing in K-12 Public Schools**](#) (pending some small corrections)

V. GAAC's next meeting will occur in January, as many members are gone to meetings in December.