

GAAC 9/09/16: Attending: Karen Jensen (by phone), Holly Sherouse (by phone), Mitch Reed, Mike Castellini, Mike Daku, Sean McGee, Daryl Farmer, Sean Topkok, Roman Makarevitch, Robin Shoapes, Donie Bret-Harte

I. Donie Bret-Harte reviewed GAAC's by-laws and provided an introduction to GAAC's usual activities.

II. Donie Bret-Harte and Sean Topkok agreed to serve as co-chairs for 2016-2017. Thanks to Sean for volunteering to co-chair!

III. Updates from the graduate school. Mike Castellini is now the interim Dean for the Graduate School. Some issues that will come up this year are first, the impact of President Johnson's Strategic Pathways program on the graduate school. At the moment, there is no plan to have a single graduate school for the UA system. Strategic Pathways is a moving target. Mike will provide more information as it becomes available. Second, though graduate student health insurance is fine for this year (and in fact is slightly cheaper than it was), it will come back up as we consider the situation for next year. A third issue that will come up for discussion involves foreign graduate students. Faculty who support foreign graduate students with RAs are finding it to be prohibitively expensive, because foreign students are never eligible for in-state tuition. They would like UAF to change this policy. However, out-of-state tuition funds teaching assistantships (TAs), so changing the policy will lead to fewer TAs being available. The graduate school will also bring GAAC some smaller issues, including inconsistencies in the catalog on what programs say and what the graduate school views as best practices, such as the number of credits needed to get a degree being different in different places, etc. Another inconsistency concerns people who are getting a second degree in a different area. Finally, Mike indicated that the budget for the total TA pool went down this year; possibly as a result, graduate student admissions are down by 8% this year. Thesis completion fellowships and travel grants are also down for this year, but a few thesis completion fellowships will be funded in spring semester. Daryl Farmer noted that TA stipends were cut, because they are no longer being paid over the Christmas break. The students in the English Department, who are already among the lowest paid, are not happy. Mike indicated that the graduate school regards the TA rates as the minimum; departments can pay more if they have the funds.

III. Update on Courseleaf. Holly Sherouse gave us an update on the new catalog in Courseleaf, which is more interactive on line. The catalog will interact with DegreeWorks (for undergraduates first). Eventually, the catalog will interact with the course proposal process more than paper forms that we use now. It is planned that assigning course numbers will become more automated, and that course proposals will move electronically through approval stages including arriving at Faculty Senate. Separate forms for minor and major course changes will not be required, and the course approval process will feed directly into the catalog at the end. At present, the Registrar's office is developing the workflows for electronic course approvals, which should be finished some time this year.

IV. Update from Jayne. Jayne noted that GAAC members can see proposals posted for the 10-day review period specified by faculty senate, which will enable you to check to see what has arrived on Jayne's desk.

V. The first new review assignments of the year were made.

VI. The next meeting will be scheduled using a Doodle Poll, since several people were not available at this time. We anticipate that the next meeting will be held in approximately two weeks.