**Graduate Programs Council Meeting**

**Minutes**

**February 1, 2012**

Present: Shri Rao, Jody Eberly, Susan Hydro, Jean Slobodzian, Mark Woodford

Absent: Todd McCrary; Nita Ball

Excused: Stephanie Valentino, Jacqueline Norris, Marcia Blicharz, Cheryl Varghese, Jessica Solano

1. Minutes from December 7, 2011 and January 18, 2012 could not be approved, due to a lack of quorum. Shri will send out a request for an electronic approval of minutes.
2. Libby Alcaro joined the meeting to discuss the graduate non-enrollment policy and its compatibility with the current PAWS system.

Shri and Susan provided background history on the charge at hand: In 2009, the GPC focused on this topic, determining that if a graduate level student was inactive, the record should be “tagged” to provide accurate enrollment figures. However, Steering sent the item back to GPC, as there had been no formal charge given; now in 2012, GPC has received such a charge.

Libby explained that the policy could be modeled after the current UG policy:

* UG students who do not register for a semester are put on a “Leave of Absence” status and must contact R&R to enroll the following semester
* After two semesters of non-attendance/non-registration, the students are continue to be “Discontinued”
* The sequence for such students would be *matriculation*, *leave of absence*, and *discontinuation* (for either known or unknown reasons)

Several questions were asked of Libby:

**Q:** How can we make the process easy for graduate students to reactivate their status and return to their studies if they are within the timeframe allowed to complete their program?

**A:** There could be a pop-up module on PAWS with a simple format containing but a few questions on the form (e.g., Yes or No … I want to return to TCNJ; I plan to return in the fall/spring/summer semester of year). While this module does not currently exist, it can be sent to IT for their March spec/July activation, providing the request is approved by the IT committee).

Libby and Susan will work together to design the questions for the form.

Libby mentioned that this same idea might be applicable and useful for UG students, as well.

**Q:** Could information regarding non-attending students be sent to coordinators and chairs of departments?

**A:** Those who are advisors (generally the coordinators) would receive this information directly. Chairs might be able to be associated with this information. A test module would need to be devised, which Libby would bring to GPC for changes, etc., and then pushed into production.

**Q:** Is it possible to send reminders to students who are non-attending status when there is only one-two years remaining in which they can complete their program of study to be sure they are alerted that time is running out for them to finish taking the required courses?

**A:** Yes, that information is available. Reports can be generated and sent to graduate students much like the current alerts are sent to UG students nearing graduation.

After Libby departed, it was determined that the next steps toward responding to the charge should be:

* Susan will edit the document
* Shri will seek electronic approval of the edited document
* Current testimony will be collected (for student input, it was suggested that both electronic and in-class written surveys be used)
1. The second charge, relating to involvement of graduate students in governance, was discussed.

Based on feedback that Susan has received from graduate students, a need exists to have some type of organizing body that would represent the interests of TCNJ graduate-level students. Two possible venues for developing and/or maintaining such a student association would be through on-campus involvement or via an on-line forum.

Shri and Susan reported on results of their survey of such graduate level associations at local colleges and universities:

* Rider, Rowan, and Bucknell have “Graduate Student Associations” (though Rider’s organization states that it is based in Princeton)
* Kean has a “Graduate and Part-Time Student Council”
* New Jersey City University has no organization listed

While merit was seen for having an on-campus association, the question arose as to whether or not fees would be required, and if so, what purpose those fees would serve.

It was decided that Shri will invite Ceil to come to the next meeting to inform us if any money was currently available that could be allocated to forming such an association, or if fees must be assessed, and if so, how those fees should be used. In addition, Shri will invite the graduate coordinators to attend the next meeting, in order to give input into this topic.

There was general consensus that coordination of such an association go through Nancy, who currently coordinates the UG student association. In this way, there would be stronger graduate level representation and increased opportunities for synchronization of shared interests between UG and graduate students here on campus.

1. The Recommendations for Changes to the Online Policy Manual document was reviewed. Very minor grammatical edits were suggested, but overall the quality and depth of the work impressed everyone on the committee, who offered kudos and thanks to Susan for completing such an impressive document.

Susan will make the minor changes, Shri will send the document electronically to GPC for approval, and then it will be forwarded to the Legal Counsel’s Office.

1. Report from Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies

Susan mentioned that the deadlines for admissions are now beginning to occur, and that her office is involved in providing follow-up contact with those who have expressed interest in attending TCNJ graduate programs.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Slobodzian