Graduate Academic Affairs Committee (GAAC)
Agenda: February 27, 2018  12:45 – 2:00 p.m.

Present: Debra Goodman, Diane Persky, Liudmila Patokina, Nick Santangelo, Zoran Sunik, Erin Ward-Ciesielski
Guests: Evan Koegl, Monica Conforti, Bob Brinkmann

The committee welcomed a new faculty member and senator, Zoran Sunik, from the Mathematics department.

**Minutes from 11-27-13** were approved with the following edits:

Debra Goodman (Literacy Studies/ SOE), Dennis Mazzocco (RTVF/ Comm), Nick Santangelo (Biology), Erin Ward-Ciesielski (Psychology), Liudmila Patokina (SOE/ Certification), Bob Brinkmann (Provost Office), Jean Peden-Christodoulou (Student Affairs), Evan Koegl (Registrar), Monica Conforti (Graduate Admissions)

**Repeated Course Policy**

The SEC requested that Hofstra Senate committees review the Repeated Courses Policy with regards to the issue of academic honesty. The committee was provided with the attached document, which is abbreviated here. The current bulletin copy includes the following sentence:

GPA exceptions will not be allowed when a grade in that course was given for academic dishonesty.

The committee was asked to discuss this policy and consider three suggested revisions.

1. The Hofstra Senate approved the following change which was forwarded to full faculty on November 28, 2016:

   GPA exceptions are not permitted for any course in which a grade of F was issued as the penalty for academic dishonesty. In all other instances of academic dishonesty for which the penalty was not the grade of F, it is at the instructor’s discretion whether GPA exceptions will be permitted for that course.

   Instructor discretion would be expressed through the ONLINE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY REPORT FORM:

   **Addition of an option to specify whether a repeat course grade exception will be permitted.**

   __ Student is NOT eligible for a GPA exception to the repeat course option for this course.

2. Provost Simmons asked the UAAC to consider an alternate wording for the policy, which limits the penalty for academic dishonesty for GPA exceptions to cases where it results in a final grade on the course, rather than a failing grade on the assignment.

   GPA exceptions are not permitted for any course in which a final course grade of F was issued as the penalty for academic dishonesty.
3. The UAAC reviewed the suggested change and approved a wording that would prohibit a GPA exception for any academic dishonesty, whether for a final grade or an assignment grade.

GPA exceptions will not be allowed when any grade for an assignment and/or the final grade in that course was given for academic dishonesty.

GAAC Discussion

Debra Goodman walked the committee through the full documents with the original bulletin copy and three proposed changes. She provided the committee with an overview of the discussion at the SEC meeting and the rationale behind each of the changes. She invited committee members to review the copy and share their perspectives.

Nick Santangelo shared that the Biology department is very active in reporting academic honesty infringements. It is common for undergraduate students to get into plagiarism difficulties with formal lab reports, for example. However, the academic dishonesty may be limited to one assignment out of many. He gave an example of a student who had a problem in one course during his first year and received a failing grade on one assignment. That student became an outstanding scholar and wanted to repeat the course to improve his GPA. Nick felt the student should have been allowed to repeat the course since he learned from the experience and the academic dishonesty was not repeated.

Liu Patokina pointed out that international students and students with a-typical academic backgrounds may need support in understanding plagiarism due to lack of background or differences in approaches in earlier academic experiences.

The committee went through the various policy statements and discussed the underlying issues. There was general agreement in the group that students have an opportunity to make up for a single mistake and that the instructors’ perspective should be considered. Committee members were concerned that they might be less likely to report Academic Dishonesty on a single assignment would irrevocably affect their GPA.

Zoran Sunik pointed out that the last sentence (original language) needs to be omitted from revised versions since it remains ambiguous.

Following the discussion, Debra asked for a straw vote on which policy each senator preferred.

- The five faculty senators preferred the original proposal (Proposal 1 above), which provided discretion to the faculty. The graduate student senator abstained from voting.
- The committee members do not want a policy, such as proposal 3 above, that restricts the GPA exception in case of an assignment as well as a final grade.
- Finally, the committee feels that the sentence “GPA exceptions will not be allowed when a grade in that course was given for academic dishonesty” needs to be omitted from revised versions since it remains ambiguous.

Five Year Accelerated Programs – Bulletin Language/ Discussion.

The GAAC reviewed a proposal for Accelerated Programs at the request of Provost Brinkmann. Bob shared with the committee that NYSED has changed its policy regarding five year dual degree programs (bachelor’s + master’s). For programs approved since 2017, the degrees earned are not conferred until the completion of the master’s requirements.
Hofstra has a number of dual degree programs on the books where the student earns the bachelor’s and master’s separately. These programs are not affected.

The proposal is to identify “Accelerated Programs” for “highly motivated, qualified students” where up to 12 hours of master’s coursework is taken during the undergraduate degree. This will be existing degree programs where undergraduate coursework is a typical pathway to the associated master’s degree. Accelerated Programs will have a plan of study coordinated by the two departments. The idea is for students to apply to the accelerated program after 60 hours of undergraduate coursework so that they can be advised into the appropriate coursework to complete both degrees.

Bob provided the committee with a draft bulletin copy and the committee went through it together and made revisions suggestions (attached). All committee members were comfortable with these revisions.

The revised copy should be going on-line soon. The Accelerated Programs are a repackaging of existing programs, and the programs have been reviewed through the C&S process. GAAC was asked to review the copy. Therefore, we will report back to the SEC and senate but we don’t feel Senate approval is required before moving forward.

Note:
We will return to our review of the graduate bulletin copy in next months. Towards this end, I have been collecting handbooks of doctoral programs. (Debra Goodman)