Meeting Minutes
Graduate Academic Affairs Committee
March 5, 2021 (online, 2 PM)

Present members and adviser: Christopher Eliot (Chair), Li Huang, Dimitrios Gounelas, Daniel Miller, Michael Dores, Stephen Hernandez, Renee McLeod-Sordjan, April Kinney, Daniel Gershman, Sergine Beaubrun, Elfreda Blue (Provost's Office), Suzanne Pike (Provost's Office), Evan Koegl (Registrar), Jean Peden-Christodoulou (Student Affairs), Monica Florio (Graduate Recruitment)

The minutes of December 10, 2020 were approved unanimously.

1   Bulletin "Badge Study" section problem

This committee worked with the Provost's office to produce a Bulletin section governing badges at Hofstra. GAAC approved the text in April 2018. Since then, a handful of badge programs have been approved. At the time, the committee thought of badges as something done by nonmatriculated professionals. Since then, however, programs have proposed badge courses of study open to, and even restricted to, matriculated students. The text of the "Badge Study" section of the current Graduate Bulletin contains text that is problematic for matriculated students. A set of minor changes solving this problem and addressing a typing error.

Suzanne Pike also suggested that the academic dishonesty penalty for badge study students be weakened from "must" to "may."

The committee approved these changes and recommends them to the Senate.

2   Online instruction support/UDL

The committee recalled upshots of Mitch Kase's and Joe Bartolotta's presentation about online instructional support. The committee considered ways to promote UDL, with the Senate Executive Committee having rejected our poll. A committee member suggested a UDL Awareness Week? Another recommended composing UDL materials to take to Chair's Caucus? Committee members asked about including in such a document cultural inclusivity and responsiveness in online instruction? Steve Hernandez will work on this.

3   Online exam security

Daniel Miller offered the following suggestions about developing online security for exams, based on reviewing guidelines from other universities.

1. Don't allow paper exams for online/virtual exams. Keep exams electronic.
2. Focus on the following kind of exam question types:

    a. Essay, text, and media entries (Open Response)
    b. Multiple Choice / True or False*
    c. Multiple Answer*

    d. Fill-in-the-blank(s)*
    e. Matching*
    f. Numerical Answer
    g. Formulas
    h. Direct File Upload (* Shuffle the questions and where they appear on the exam)

3. Potentially recommend exam security software like Respondus/Lockdown Browser
4. Short and informal assessments may be informative

The committee discussed whether to attempt to write a "best practices" document for faculty, informed by our research and the Provost's Office's experience in handling cases.

4 Graduate student academic support

The committee discussed whether graduate orientation could be improved and whether the Center for Academic Excellence (or a new entity paralleling it) could offer graduate support. It decided to conduct a focus group with representative graduate students, asking about various areas "Are you supported in terms of … ?" April Kinney and Christopher Eliot will work on this.

5 New business

No new business was introduced.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45.