

**DRAFT MINUTES
OF
GRADUATE COLLEGE FALL FACULTY MEETING
November 17, 2015**

ATTENDANCE

Approximately 30 Graduate Faculty attended the meeting.

WELCOME (Dean Forehand)

Meeting Called to Order at 4:07 by Cynthia Forehand, Dean of the Graduate College.

Introduction of Hannah Helme, administrative assistant to Dean Forehand.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Dean Forehand)

April 2, 2015 Minutes reviewed. No edits presented. Motion to approve Minutes made. Seconded. All in favor. April 2, 2015 Minutes APPROVED.

DEAN'S REPORT (Dean Forehand)

Strategic Initiative – Growing the Graduate Student Population. Dean Forehand reviewed the background of Strategic Initiative and explained that the University's goal is a 30% increase in the graduate student population over five years. Dean Forehand's personal goal is to increase the number of students in doctoral programs. Financial support for doctoral programs will derive, in part, from an increase in the number of paying graduate students in Master's and Certificates of Graduate Study programs.

Student Support Initiatives. Dean Forehand noted that there is relatively little professional development support for graduate education at the University of Vermont compared to other institutions. Dean Forehand explained the initiatives the Graduate College is taking to provide students with more support.

- Ombudsperson Office in place summer 2015, confidential within the guidelines of Title IX. The Ombudsperson position is part time.
- Working with CTL to initiate a process to develop a common GTA training course that all students will take across the institution. As part of this a more intensive teacher program will be developed.
- Graduate tutoring for Writing Center in place for spring 2016. Five graduate students from different disciplines have been hired to staff the Writing Center. Nancy Welch is setting up a non-credit course for tutors that will also be open to other students to learn to support writing. Tutors will be paid to attend this

course as part of their training. In addition to writing tutors, the writing Center will also run group writing retreats/writing camps in the Spring. The current commitment to the Graduate Writing Center is 3 semesters (spring, fall, and spring).

- Rex Forehand chairing a committee to look broadly at what we do now and what is most needed at UVM for next steps in professional development. This report is due to Dean Forehand in January.

Questions & Concerns Regarding Student Support Initiatives

Dean Forehand addressed questions regarding the current student support initiatives.

- When will the Graduate Writing Center open? The Writing Center will open in January 2016, at the start of the spring semester.
- Can students drop in to the Writing Center? Students should contact tutors to set up an appointment. The Graduate Writing Center will not be open at night for safety reasons, but students will be able to meet tutors at the library, etc. after the Writing Center is closed.
- Do English students need to take the common GTA course designed by the Graduate College? There may be exceptions to the course if students are already being trained at a higher level. However, this issue will need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Dean Forehand addressed faculty “wish list” for student support initiatives.

- Suggested that conversational support groups be set up for incoming international students. Right now there is nothing specific in place for this population, but the Graduate College is currently working on developing an equivalent to Global Gateways at the Master’s level.
- Suggested that the education needs be used when developing support for graduate students.

Dean Forehand thanked the faculty for their ideas. Any additional ideas can be sent to Rex Forehand, Dean Forehand, or Hannah Helme.

ADMISSIONS REPORT (Sydney Viray)

Admissions & Enrollment Management Fall 2015 Update starts on slide 5 of the [Dean’s Report Presentation](#).

Admissions Process Enhancements. Sydnee Viray addressed the three phases of admissions process enhancements.

- Phase I: Build and implement ADMIT to manage application materials. Phase I is now complete.
- Phase II: Revamp the application. Phase II is underway through making the four page application into a seven page application that makes it more clear what the Graduate Admissions Office is looking for from the applicant. The longer application is more customizable to the applicant and program.
- Phase III: Assist with recruitment efforts to meet program targets. Programs are encouraged to be in touch with the Graduate College with questions or ideas about recruitment.

Enrollment Comparisons. The new application and the application fee explain the slight drop in applications. More students are admitted because the applicants are higher quality. Enrollment numbers are stronger and the Graduate College Admissions Office is receiving more responses.

Application to Decision Time Savers. The Graduate College Admissions Office is working to create time savers.

- A week of training was completed this summer to understand international transcripts.
- International transcripts and materials are reviewed internally.
- Providing applicants with more control. Applicants able to upload unofficial transcripts and supplemental materials directly, and programs can view what is submitted right away. Once an applicant is admitted, the official materials can be requested.
- Recommenders can upload their letter of recommendation online as opposed to cutting and pasting their recommendation into the application.
- Accelerated Master's Program recruitment. Students are demonstrating interest in AMPs as early as their sophomore year, and presentations are happening across campus to recruit into AMP's.

Questions & Concerns Addressed by Sydnee Viray

Sydnee Viray addressed questions regarding international applications.

- Should programs go through agencies for international applicant's materials? Some agencies are legitimate, but they may not provide an exact translation, or they could be missing information so programs should try to work with the

applicant directly. The applicant should provide original documents in the original language.

- Who is in responsible for reviewing international transcripts and how is this going to be a time saver for programs? Sydnee will review international materials. This is a time saver because by paying attention to these materials now, the student will not run into issues later on. Materials do not need to be in English to be reviewed. International applications will be stamped to make it easy to tell what materials are and what is official.
- Can the Graduate Admissions Office help assist programs in reviewing transcripts that have been translated into English, but use a foreign grading system? Sydnee had been trained in this and has resources to help programs understand various grading systems.
- How can programs tell if they are working with the applicant directly if they are communicating through email? Programs should try to be as specific as possible in their questions to help identify if they are corresponding with an applicant or an agency. Programs should also pay attention the clarity of correspondence, and if this varies from email to email it may be a sign that they are interacting with an agency.
- Can reviewers receive an email notification when a material is added? The Admissions Office is working on figuring out how this service could work best. Programs also have the option to sort materials by most recent activity to help identify when new materials have been received. Dean Forehand noted that programs can review an application before it is complete and reach out to the student to encourage them to submit their materials. An incomplete application does not mean that the materials are not there at all, but because some materials submitted may be unofficial.
- Can programs be notified when applicants submit their admissions decision? Sydnee responded that the Graduate Admissions Office will be looking into this.

Dean Forehand addressed additional updates for Admissions & Enrollment Management.

- Old application documents will be rolling into WebXtender.
- The application is longer now because it is customizable.
- Sydnee now has rights to make changes to the system.
- All TRIO applicants will receive an application fee waiver.

GRADUATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIONS (Dean Forehand)

Graduate Executive Committee Actions Fall 2015 Update starts on slide 9 of the [Dean's Report Presentation](#).

Number of Meetings Subsequent to the Last Graduate Faculty Meeting. There have been six meetings since the last Graduate Faculty Meeting.

Reviewed. Course proposals should be submitted before January 2016. The Graduate Executive Committee looked at seven new or significant change course proposals, ten minimal change, deactivation, or delete course proposals, and 17 graduate faculty applicants since the last Graduate Faculty Meeting. The Graduate Executive committee also looked at new curriculum.

Approves. The Graduate Executive Committee approved a Certificate of Graduate Study in Epidemiology and an Accelerated Master's in Chemistry. Accelerated Master's Programs can only be created if there is already an existing Master's program, and these programs allow students to double count six, and in some cases, nine tuition credits. The Graduate Executive Committee also approved variable tuition requests for VMI affiliated MST in Math and MEd in Curriculum and Instruction (\$611/credit for out-of-state applicants), SEMBA (\$1,100/credit for out-of-state applicants), and Public Health programs because the rule that in-state students can only be charged 40% of the out-of-state tuition went away. Within this year Student Financial Services may have to hire additional people to handle the work load generated by variable tuition requests. The question to be answered is whether this will be charged generally to all units, or specifically to the units requesting variable tuition. The Graduate Executive Committee recommended that programs pay 100% of the single student health insurance premium for full time graduate assistants (GA, GTA, and GRA). This will be resourced by an increase of the benefit rate on their stipends. The Graduate Executive Committee approved a change to [Graduate College Constitution](#) (see [slide 12](#) for the constitution change language) – **Graduate Faculty VOTE** required. Hannah will send out a survey for this vote. (Update: The proposed change passed.)

Questions & Concerns Addressed/Discussed by Dean Forehand

Dean Forehand addressed questions regarding the Graduate Executive Committee actions and the Graduate College Constitution Change.

- Can variable tuition be simplified? Next year three levels of tuition will be set, and programs will be asked to shift to the tuition closest to the rate they currently charge for efficiency. Student Financial Services has to be the only source for tuition cost to prevent incorrect information from being posted.

- Can lecturers be a part of the graduate faculty? Dean Forehand responded that Senior Lecturers can.

Dean Forehand addressed suggestions regarding the Graduate Executive Committee actions and the Graduate College Constitution Change.

- Suggested that the director of a program should hold a terminal degree in that area. Dean Forehand responded that this is already the case because in order to be hired as graduate faculty, someone has to have a terminal degree in the area they are being hired.

INFORMATION UPDATES

Apartment and Family Housing (AFH). AFH includes Fort Ethan Allan and Country Apartments. There has been approval to sell Fort Ethan Allan Apartments to Champlain Housing Trust. There is a larger goal to sell County Apartments, but not to the same buyer. There was a lot of emotional discord following the announcement of the sale AFH because the announcement came after the decision had already been made. In reality, the people currently living there will not be impacted because by 2019 90% of the students currently living there will have moved out. Dean Forehand is most concerned for single students and international students. Dean Forehand would like to solve where to house the international population before AFH is all sold.

Questions & Concerns Regarding AFH Addressed/Discussed by Dean Forehand

Dean Forehand addressed questions regarding the sale of AFH.

- Will the people who propagated this change be held responsible for finding new housing? Those responsible for finding new housing are the Graduate College, Residential Life, The Provost, and The President. What to do now will be guided by old complaints about AFH. The true goal is to have graduate housing, but it is not guaranteed that this will be subsidized. A meeting regarding graduate housing will be set up in the future.

Affordable Care Act. Dean Forehand explained the new Affordable Care Act mandate ([slide 14](#)). The current Student Health Insurance policy is compliant.

Fair Labor Standards and Postdoctoral Appointments. Dean Forehand explained the new rules in place for people employing postdoctoral students ([slide 15](#)). The [response](#) of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) should be reviewed.

FY17 Health Insurance Recommendations. Students should receive a 100% health insurance waiver. The one long term problem is that only about 60% of students currently take the insurance because of the \$700 charge. By offering a 100% waiver, students will no longer have to pay this. The fringe rate will increase, possibly up to 13%.

Questions or Support Regarding the Health Insurance Recommendation Addressed by Dean Forehand

- An English faculty member expressed support for this recommendation.

Stipend Levels. The Graduate College is in the process of collecting data regarding stipend levels at the peer institutions identified by the programs. Some programs are competitive but others are not. Most peer programs cover health insurance, but not the comprehensive fee.

Questions, Concerns & Suggestions Regarding Stipend Levels Addressed by Dean Forehand

- Suggested that stipend levels should be relative to the cost of living. This will be taken into account.
- Suggested that graduate students should be asked how much they make, how much they get from their spouse and/or parents, and how much they need to live. It was noted that this information is subjective.
- Faculty concerned about the other expenses students have, i.e. a computer, books, a car, etc. All that can clearly be done is to look at our competitors and see if we are at a level to attract the best students.
- Faculty have noticed that there has been an increase in the amount of work graduate students are doing off campus, and they are exhausted, leading to a decline in their quality of work. There are many contributing factors, and supporting graduate students need to be taken seriously.

Experiential Course Standardization Project (Additional Topic from Faculty). This is an undergraduate project. Dean Forehand requested that the faculty member forward the email received to her, as she was not aware this applied to graduate courses. Dean Forehand explained the background for this project. Faculty member concerned about the problems created by calling an internship a practicum in their program.

NEW BUSINESS

Tuition on grants. This topic can be covered at a later date, but it should be noted that it grants can pay associated comprehensive fees – but only the amount relevant to the tuition paid.

ADJOURN

The meeting concluded at 5:31 PM.