Graduate Council Monthly Report

March 31, 2023   Submitted by Nancy J. Hamilton

Report of the Policy and Personnel Committee:

Approved for Graduate Faculty Affiliate Status:

Name	Employment	Ed. Level	Dept/Sch	College	Approval Date
Amanda Nolen	Georgia Tech	Doctorate	School of Ed.	CHASSE	3/8/23

Tabled:

Name	Employment	Ed. Level	Dept/Sch	College	Approval Date
Suzanne Coble	UA Little Rock	Doctorate	Criminal Justice	CBHHS	

2/22/23:
Update on Simple Syllabus Evaluation:
The policy subcommittee has created a Simple Syllabus Google Doc collecting some factual information about Simple Syllabus along with some questions that the subcommittee will investigate further. Members of the Council are invited to add comments to this document.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeoxVX7Rpc-hGEOZd9ww-40bXyU-jkUNNzYjjKUgqvee7et3g/viewform

A link to a training video for Simple Syllabus is located at https://vimeo.com/749328835. The password is **simple** (all lowercase).

The policy subcommittee will bring a recommendation to the full council regarding Simple Syllabus for the next meeting. They will meet with Dr. Finzer prior to the full council meeting. Questions that were compiled for Dr. Finzer.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LO4xgg3c_4yuvl297W4jbSjnyy-FeFyuF7Wg_149MeY/edit?usp=sharing

The subcommittee will also be discussing support for faculty members who are facing legal action from students.

3/8/23:
Dr. Crisp reports that David Montague and Erin Finzer are now open to making Simple Syllabus optional and to removing the requirement that department chairs approve syllabi before they can be published. Startup costs are approximately $19K, with maintenance costs $14K/year going forward.

Initial draft of recommendation: The Policy and Personnel Committee recommends (by majority but not unanimous vote) that Simple Syllabus be adopted with a two-year evaluation period whereby faculty are given the option to use it, unless individual programs vote to adopt Simple Syllabus.

Discussion:
The main reasons the administration has offered for adopting Simple Syllabus are

- To make sure that university policies are consistent across campus
- To make sure that syllabi are ADA compliant
- To ensure that there is an easily accessed repository of syllabi for the purpose of HLC requirements

Several council members commented that they agree with the policy subcommittee's recommendation as long as department chairs are not required to approve every change that faculty members might make to their own syllabi.

Dr. Berry noted that there are some required elements that HLC wants to see included that cannot be locked down as universal across courses (attendance, substantive interaction, grading scale and requirements), etc.

This might be part of the intention behind having chairs approve the syllabi. Chairs are already required to evaluate all syllabi every semester to make sure these requirements are met.

Modified recommendation: The Graduate Council recommends that Simple Syllabus be adopted, without the requirement that chairs approve syllabi, with a two-year evaluation period whereby faculty are given the option to use it, unless individual programs vote to adopt Simple Syllabus.

The council offers kudos to Dr. Crisp and the policy and personnel subcommittee for their work on this recommendation.

New Business:

Dean's Report:
2/22/23:
Dr. Berry has been working with the provost and the chancellor to raise GA salaries (9-month stipend) from $6450 ($3225/semester) to $8000 ($4000/semester) for the lowest-paid GAs starting Fall 2023.

This amount is not subject to Arkansas minimum wage laws because it is a stipend, not an hourly wage. The tuition package is not included in this amount.

The present minimum stipend of $6450 is currently stated in the university's GA policy, but the policy should be modified to say that the minimum is set by the institution. The policy needs to be edited so it doesn't need to be changed every time the stipend amount is adjusted. The current amount is purely historical and has not been raised in at least 20 years. At Fayetteville, the 9-month stipend is 11-12K and 18K for doctoral students.

The total cost to raise the minimum stipend from $6450 to $8000 = $85,000, a more than 10% increase in the university's budget for GA salaries. It will take nearly half a million dollars to get where we need to be to be competitive with other institutions. Increasing salaries further might require cuts in GA lines, which we want to avoid if possible.

UA Little Rock employs 340 total individual GAs, some full time, some part time.

https://ualr.edu/bursar/home/tuitionandfees/graduatetuitionfees/

Dr. Kuralt announced that Shames Al Mandalawi has been hired as the Grad School's new DCSTEM Graduate Advisor. Shames will be initially working closely with Dr. John Talburt and Dr. Liz Pierce to help with advising grad students in information science and information quality. She is expected to begin work in early March.

3/8/23:
Dr. Berry encourages everyone to nudge both grad and undergrad students to apply to participate in the Research and Creative Works Expo, which will take place on April 21. The deadline to apply is Friday, March 17. Poster printing will be paid for by the university for all participants.

Slate training for program coordinators is nearly complete. There will be two more opportunities to attend Zoom trainings for Slate; watch for announcements.

Dr. Berry announced that **the Grad School will no longer be granting blanket fee waivers for all applicants.** If professors or coordinators know of a student who really *needs* a waiver, please contact Dr. Berry, Dr. Kuralt, or Paula Baker to request one. Eventually there will be a form in Slate to request a waiver.

Dr. Berry announced that effective immediately, there will be **a new process for deferring applications and the start terms of admitted students.** All prospective students will now be required to submit a new application for the term in which they intend to start. This will not be a difficult process for applicants to complete in Slate, because all their information can be carried over from the old application to the new one. Asking students to reapply will save large amounts of work for our admissions counselors, which will enable them to process applications more efficiently.

Dr. Kuralt introduced Shames al Mandalawi, the newly hired DCSTEM Graduate Advisor, whose office is now in EIT 559.

The Graduate School is participating in recruiting events at UAPB (Mar. 8) and the DCSTEM Career Fair at Jack Stephens (Mar. 9). A Grad School Baseball night is planned for the UA Little Rock vs. UCA game at Dickey Stephens Park on May 16.

GSA president Imraul Emmaka reported that last week's hybrid format science writing workshop with Dr. Arya Basu was a big success. Two more GSA workshops are planned this semester, including one on stress management with Counseling Services. A GSA Bowling Night is planned for after spring break; stay tuned for more details.

Open Forum
2/22/23:
Noureen Siraj mentions that there are challenges with advertising for Applied Science, which many students do not understand. It's difficult to figure out what kind of research the institution supports or what kinds of facilities we have. She would like to make changes to the website, but they don't always get made.

Dr. Berry says that Grad School will help with promotional materials for programs, but can't always help with department websites. He hopes to create a more robust research page to call more attention to the research being done in specific programs.

Brian will be inviting people from across campus to a Research Support Summit to collect data about problems facing both faculty and student researchers. An announcement will be coming out in the next few days.