Agenda for March 28, 2011 GAAC Meeting
9:00-10:00 a.m.
408 Rasmuson Library (Kayak Room)
Call-in number: 1-800-893-8850
Participants' PIN: 1109306

1. Discussion/modification/approval of agenda

2. Discussion/approval of minutes from 2-28-2011 meeting

3. Discussion items

A. Graduate school objective and indicators

Objective:
Enable master's and Ph.D. students to master a subject area or advance knowledge.

Indicators:
1. Employment or continuing education placement of recent master's and employment-place­ment of Ph.D. graduates report in the national Survey of Earned Doctorate and by unites.
2. Number of independently reviewed graduate student research and creative products (including articles and other publications, and juried shows and performances). This indicator also appears in the Discover theme.
3. List of successfully defended projects or thesis.

B. Stacked courses. Request for volunteer(s) to work with member(s) of Curricular Affairs Committee on joint project to study stacked courses and develop proposed guidelines for stacked courses.

4. Proposed motions

A. Academic dismissal of graduate students [see attached motion]

B. F-1 students (Regine) [see attached motion]

5. Proposals passed via email since last meeting

• 10-Tr_Trial Course: FISH F694 - Climate Change and Fisheries: Ecological and Evolutionary Responses

• 25-GNC_ATM F678 - Mesoscale Dynamics

6. Review of new GAAC proposals

• 99-GCCh_ BIOL F675 / 475 - Vegetation Description and (Ken, Jen, Amber)

11-Tr_Trial-GEOG-F694 (F494) Climate Change Processes: Past, Present, Future [previously listed as 98-GCCh] (Jen, Ken, Amber)

• 100-GPCh.: Program Change: M.Ed. - New concentration in Instructional Technology Innovation: (Sue, Anupma, Orion)
• 101-GNC_ED F650 - Current Issues in Technology (Anupma, Orion, Sue)

• 102-GNC_ED F651 - Web 2.0 Fundamentals: Participate, Produce, Publish (Orion, Sue, Anupma)

• 103-GNC_ED F652 - Fundamentals of Media Design (Sue, Anupma, Orion)

• 104-GNC_ED F653 - Instructional Design (Sue, Anupma, Orion)

• 105-GNC_ED F654 - Digital Citizenship, Internet Legal Issues, Digital Copyright and Fair Use (Orion, Sue, Anupma)

• 106-GNC_ED F655 - Online Pedagogy (Orion, Sue, Anupma)

• 107-GNC_ED F676 - Supporting Learning in Diverse Systems (Anupma, Orion, Sue)

• 108-GNC_ED F677 - Digital Storytelling (Anupma, Orion, Sue)

7. Other items?
Voting members present: Ken Abramowicz (Chair), Donie Bret-Harte (phone), Lara Dehn, Orion Lawlor, Anupma Prakash (phone), Sue Renes, Jen Schmidt (phone).

Ex officio members present: Anita Hughes, Laura Bender, Larry Duffy, Karen Jensen.

Guest: Jayne (notes)

1. Discussion/modification/approval of agenda
   Agenda was approved. Laura Bender mentioned the topic discussed last time about academic dismissal from a graduate program, and it was agreed to include this topic at the next meeting. Next meeting is scheduled for March 28.

2. Discussion/approval of minutes from 2-21-2011 meeting
   Minutes were approved without modifications.

3. Discussion item related to stacked courses (attached)
   Ken mentioned the most recent changes to Rainer’s document, which included taking out the content referring to workload credit and adding a statement (in caps) about the importance of stacked courses to master’s programs.
   Lara noted that it would only address new courses, not existing ones.
   Anupma felt there’s a problem with the stipulation that differences in level should be reflected by weekly assignments. A course might not have weekly assignments. Donie agreed, and was consensus on that point. Homework may also not be given on a weekly basis. New language is needed for this point.
   Lara suggested getting student input. Larry mentioned graduate student organizations could be invited for discussion or included in a poll. It was pointed out that no question for student evaluations exists on current SOI forms. Could one be added? Or use SurveyMonkey? Anupma noted that there is a wide variety of reasons for students taking stacked courses. Ken acknowledged that, noting that stacked courses are a fact of life here at UAF. It’s a complex issue, particularly in light of the fact that new programs are not being encouraged right now and reallocation will be on the rise.
   Everyone agreed that a senate discussion is needed. Open faculty forums could be held down the line.

4. Review of GAAC proposals already discussed (review leader is listed first, followed by the secondary reviewers)
   • 19-GNC_ATM F666 - Atmospheric Remote Sensing (Donie, Jen, Xiong)
     Approved on the condition that the reading assignments be written into the syllabus.
   
   • 25-GNC_ATM F678 - Mesoscale Dynamics (Xiong, Jen, Sue)
     Numerous syllabus modifications are needed. Ken will contact course instructor to request needed changes. [Modifications were made after the meeting. Approved by email.]
   
   • 38-GNC_EE F646 Wireless Sensor Networks (Orion, Donie, Lara)
     Revised syllabus was received by Orion, and looks good to both he and Lara. Approved.
   
   • 39-GNC_EE F668 Radar Systems (Orion, Donie, Lara)
     The syllabus revisions were not made. As a result, the proposal was not approved.
• 40-GNC EE F675 Robot Modeling and Control (Orion, Donie, Lara)
  Approved on the condition that the grading process be written into the syllabus. There was discussion about grading on a curve by the committee. Larry noted that the syllabus is very important and is used in a grade appeal.

• 27-GNP Master of Arts in Political Science and related courses [28-GNC, 29-GNC, 20-GNC] (Ken, Jen, Regine)
  The committee consensus was that the program needs more work at the department. Not approved. Concerns of the committee include:
  o Difficulty of passing new programs at statewide at this time.
  o Workforce development considerations
  o Almost all the required courses for the degree are stacked.
  o Potential impact on NORS student numbers.
  o Issue of necessary internal allocation of resources (NORS support is conditioned on keeping all existing TA positions, but new PS degree will require three new TA positions) [especially considering the fact that CLS is currently searching for a new Dean].
  o Issues with using internship option in lieu of a thesis requirement.
  o Discrepancies related to number of credits required (30-33 for Concentration in Environmental Politics and Policy, 33-36 for Concentration in Arctic Policy).

Larry suggested that Political Science might want to consider converting this new degree into a professional degree.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 AM.

(remainder of agenda items will be put on the agenda of the 3-28-11 GAAC meeting.)
Suggested addition to the UAF Catalog under

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL (current catalog definition) page 48 2010-11 catalog:

Graduate students – If recommended by the department chair, the graduate advisory committee, and the dean of the college or school, and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, a student will be dismissed because of unsatisfactory performance. Unsatisfactory performance is deemed as one or more of the following:

- Exceeding maximum time limit for degree.
- Not being registered at UAF for a minimum 6 credits per year unless on approved leave of absence.
- Having less than 3.0 cumulative GPA on courses taken since admission to graduate school.
- Being on probationary status for more than two consecutive semesters.
- Violating the Student Code of Conduct.
- Lacking progress as judged by the advisory committee and documented on the student’s annual report.
- Having substantive inaccuracies in the student’s application for admission.

If the student does not have a graduate advisory committee, dismissal can occur upon the recommendation of the department chair and the dean of the college or school, with approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

PROPOSED ADDITION TO THE ABOVE:

The consequences of being Academically dismissed from your graduate program are significant and may include all of the following ramifications. Your status will be changed from being a graduate degree-seeking student to a non-degree student. Any classes you may have pre-registered for will be dropped. You will have a printable notation on your transcript that will state you were “Academically Dismissed from Degree Program.” You will not be eligible to receive any teaching or research assistantships or other graduate fellowships. Opportunities to receive financial aid will be severely limited.
Motion to change the international graduate student program completion date so that it matches the program completion date applied to US citizens

Motivation and background
According to United States immigration rules students in F-1 status have to leave the country within 2 months of the expiration of their visa, or the end date of their graduate program, whichever comes first. Currently UAF considers students in F-1 status to have completed their graduate program 10 days after the date of their defense, whereas the graduate program for non-foreign students terminates at the end of the semester during which the students have fully met all UAF graduate school requirements which include signatures from all committee members, chair of department, and the dean.

It is common that students need several weeks or more to meet all graduate school requirements after the date of their thesis defense. In many cases, students are not given feedback on their submitted thesis from their committee members until the day of their defense. Apart from implementing the required corrections, some committee members may request an additional review of the thesis before it is sent to the chair of the department. Therefore, it is often unrealistic that all necessary signatures can be gathered within a 10-day period.

While recognizing the need to ensure students complete their degree in a timely manner, and in full compliance with USCIS guidelines, the 10-day time period is extremely short and adds considerably more stress to students at a time when they should focus on the completion of their degree. The current definition of completion date goes contrary to the general practice of a graduate thesis defense at UAF where committees may require substantial revisions to the thesis after the defense. Also, all graduate students should be treated the same regardless of their immigration status.

The short time period between thesis defense and program completion that is currently applied to international students has negative implications for these students. First, once the program has ended, the student can no longer be paid. This can be overcome by application for Optional Practical Training (OPT), however this requires a time- and resources consuming procedure including a substantial fee, and therefore adds another layer of bureaucracy for both the university and the student as well as additional costs and stress to the student during the very final stage of their thesis completion.

Motion
The graduate program completion date is defined as the end of the semester when the graduate student has fully met all UAF graduate school requirements. The definition applies to both US citizens and international graduate students.