

Winthrop University Graduate Faculty Assembly
April 20, 2012
(3:30 p.m., or immediately following Faculty Conference)
Barnes Recital Hall

Minutes

- I. Call to Order Don Rogers
Call to order at 3:29pm
- II. Approval of minutes of Graduate Faculty Assembly from March 9, 2012
Moved and seconded; voted for approval

- III. Report from the Vice President for Academic Affairs Debra Boyd
Graduate Tuition Waivers: This issue has multiple facets, but the overarching issue is that the model we currently use for funding graduate assistantships is not sustainable. When the current model was created, we received funding from the state for each graduate student we enrolled. Now, we do not receive any funding per student for graduate students (or undergraduates for that matter).

Faced with the current fiscal environment, all Executive Officers were asked to find possible sources of savings for next year. I asked the deans to review all budgets to see where savings could be found, a difficult situation since operating budgets in programs are very tight. Graduate Waivers were identified as possibility since we have expended for this fiscal year (2011-12) \$1,222,529.00 in tuition waivers and \$397,073.00 in stipends for a total of \$1,619,602.00.

We only targeted those assistantships that would be vacant at the end of this academic year (11-12) because we did not want any student who was currently in an assistantship to have his/her situation altered for 2012-13, given the expectation of most graduate assistants that the position will continue for two years based on performance. Graduate Program Directors provided information about the vacancies, and College Graduate Directors and Deans reviewed the information and submitted it to my office. Of the 144 assistantships we currently offer, we identified 44 as vacant (or available) for 2012-13.

We decided that the tuition waiver for vacant assistantships would be cut in half. The stipend remained untouched (\$1800/semester or \$3600/year for 20 hours per week) in order to maintain the number of hours to be worked by the GA (so that programs would not lose the functions provided by the GAs). No vacant assistantship that was required because of a grant or contract agreement was touched, and no assistantship was left vacant for 2012-13 unless the program requested that the assistantship go unfilled for next year.

Based on the number of vacant assistantships in each college multiplied by \$4599, deans were told how much money each college would be required to save through this plan. They were also told that they could adjust how they found those savings through the assistantships. They could simply offer half-tuition waivers to the students who were awarded the vacant GAs, or they could choose to leave a full GA vacant for the year. The choice was theirs.

Total Savings: \$189,000 (15% of the total waivers, 11.6% of the waivers+stipends), which is proportionally less than or equal to the savings contributions in other areas. (The bottom line savings may be higher because some have chosen to leave GA positions unfilled.)

This approach was taken because we needed to see savings for **next year** (2012-13). The next step will be to form a working group to develop a new model for funding graduate students, and we hope it will be a model that will support **more** rather than fewer students. The VPAA will be discussing this next step at the Graduate Council meeting on Friday and is confident that faculty involved in graduate education can help us envision a new method that accounts for the new fiscal realities we face **and** provides support in new and different ways for our students. We know that other institutions of our size and type offer a greater variety of support to graduate students, and fewer and fewer of those institutions offer full assistance for master's-level students. Any new funding model must be sensitive to the kind of work that would be done by a GA (because of IRS restrictions) and must be flexible enough to allow for variable structures and meet the needs of both students and programs.

Question: Is there any data that shows how this will impact the quality or quantity of our students and applications?

Boyd: We will ask program directors to monitor and inform

Question: This came out right before the change in federal funding?

Boyd: This was in the works beforehand, and the timing is unfortunate. We don't wish for our students to go into great debt for graduate work.

Please remember that graduate assistants in the same program already have different amounts of stipends.

We also have a graduate incentive scholarship that is no longer funded by the state. Winthrop will continue to fund the scholarship, and we will let the current students finish out their cycle. After that point, we will discuss any changes in the amount of the scholarship, the name, and what this scholarship should encompass.

- IV. Report from Graduate Council
Voted to admit Dr. Kathy Davis, PESH

Wanda Briggs

Voted on 22 curriculum actions and 5 program modifications. All were approved and require no further action except:
MEd in CSDV to increase semester hours from 51 to 60 – voted by assembly to approve

V. Unfinished Business

VI. New Business

VII. Announcements

VIII. Adjournment

Moved, seconded and voted to approve at 3:51pm.