

RAC

July 11, 2011

Attending: Bonnie Anderson, Lisa Bell, Rockne Bergman, Rhonda Bjurlin, Frank Blalark, Robert Bode, Brad Bostrom, Earlene Bronson, Amber Cellotti, Agnes Chagani, Kristin Cleveland, Gary Cooper, Bea Dehler, Dan Delaney, Tim Dicks, Stacy Doepner-Hove, Jessie Eastman, Eric Eklund, Jennifer Engler, Marta Fahrenz, Tina Falkner, Renae Faunce, Bonny Fleming, Carol Francis, Alison Frank-Quick, Wendy Friedmeyer, Teresa Fruen, Kate Gallagher, Jan Goodno, Stacey Grimes, Jeremy Hernandez, Constance Hessburg-Odland, Emily Holt, Lisa Hubinger, Linda Jagerson, Paula Jewell, Jill Johnson, Rachel Jorgenson, Bri Keeney, Sue Keirstead, Kara Kersteter, Nancy Killian, Kathy Klink, Nathan Kopka, Linda Lindholm, Stacia Madsen, Carla Mantel, Gayla Marty, Heather McLaughlin, Margo Mueller, Katherine Murphy, Nan Nelson, Ingrid Nuttall, Margie O'Neill, Laurie Pape Hadley, Cindy Pavlowski, Heather Peterson, Robin Peterson, John Poppele, Julie Prince, Genny Rosing, Cindy Salyers, Julie Schumacher, Mary Ellen Shaw, Gale Shea, Susan Suchy, Georganne Tolaas, Travis Trautman, Sue Van Voorhis, John Vollum, Kathy Walter, Anita Wallace, Susan Westacott

Review of June minutes

There were no changes to the June minutes.

Announcements

Sue Van Voorhis announced that funding has been allocated to the graduate education transformation project for the next fiscal year.

Ingrid Nuttall announced that Kasi Williamson has left the University for another position at Saint Louis University. Kasi provided communications support for the graduate education transformation related to Academic Support Resources' role on the project. Interviews are scheduled for her replacement.

PCAS and catalog update

Travis Trautman provided an update on the expansion of the Program and Curriculum Approval System (PCAS) to allow for the entry of graduate curriculum information (e.g., program information and updates). In March, ASR began work with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to redesign the user interface and architecture to allow graduate program information to be added to PCAS. At the end of this month (July), the goal is to go live with revamped undergraduate system, and the graduate forms. After the forms are live, student workers (under the supervision of John Poppele in the Graduate School) will enter the information gathered in the program worksheets; once this information is in PCAS, it will be able to be reviewed by the college contacts or their designates. The information will then be pushed live in the form of an online catalog at the end of fall semester.

The Student Records Training and Support Team has done review sessions of the system changes and will be doing formal training sometime in the fall.

Kristin Cleveland thanked everyone for their work to ensure the program worksheets were completed. Joe Schultz and Vicki Field have been doing a quick review of the worksheets to make sure the information needed has been included; as the student workers start entering the information at the end of July, John Poppele will spot-check the work. The data entry should take about two months; staff will be able to review the information in preview screens in PCAS. Staff will have a little over a month to review the (beginning in October). A PDF will not be created until the audit of the information is complete; instead, an addendum for the current graduate school catalog will be posted online. New policy information will also be included.

John Poppele noted that the review that Joe Schultz and Vickie Field have been conducting is simply a very cursory check just to make sure there were not any major errors in transferring the information from the worksheets.

Jessie Eastman asked for clarification regarding the review process; will staff be asked to make edits directly in PCAS, or will the edits be forwarded to someone else who will do the entry? Travis Trautman replied that staff will likely make the edits in PCAS to expedite the process. There will need to be guidelines, and training will be provided.

ImageNow usage report and discussion

Robert Bode provided an update on a recent survey to assess interest and attitudes about adopting ImageNow. There are two phases to the project for transitioning to ImageNow: Phase 1 focuses on granting view/print access to staff who need to see the information stored in the Graduate School Drawer, and the transition away from college and/or department staff receiving paper copies. The second phase will focus on granting access for staff to edit and store program documents in the drawer. The survey was conducted to assess how “ready” staff, colleges, and departments are to engage in these phases.

300 administrators were invited to participate in the survey, and 62 individuals ultimately completed it (20 percent response rate). The majority of respondents had not requested access to view the drawer, even though they are currently able to do so. The majority of those who have requested access have no experience with ImageNow. Staff who are familiar with ImageNow are the ones who have already requested access. There were many staff who had no prior experience with ImageNow, and are not exactly sure how they will be using it.

Regarding the type of training desired for ImageNow, more than half of respondents want online training; however, 43 percent prefer a classroom setting.

Most respondents indicated they regularly use the copies of student forms sent by the Graduate School, and most of them use the forms to take some sort of action, indicating the paper documents are part of a larger workflow. However, only a few staff said they prefer to use paper as part of their workflow.

Robert Bode noted that most of the people who responded to the survey are staff who are well-informed about the graduate education transformation; it is important to consider this when assessing the meaning of these results.

The conclusions from this survey are as follows:

- More communication is needed with staff who did not respond to the survey.
- Training opportunities should be offered in multiple formats (i.e., classroom and online).

Jessie Eastman asked who received the survey. The survey was sent to the DGS Assistant listserv.

Carol Francis said that because she is unsure of what kind of documents she will be using, she is also unsure how she will be using them. The documents are available on the Graduate School's website (direct link to file types: http://www.grad.umn.edu/faculty-staff/student_file_access/Color_DocType_4_Programs.pdf).

Information about requesting access to ImageNow is available on the Graduate School's website (http://www.grad.umn.edu/faculty-staff/student_file_access/index.html). Prior ImageNow users should check to see if they already have access.

Linda Lindholm asked if a DGS should request access. Robert Bode replied that if he or she really needs to see the original documents, he or she might want access. However, one can get a lot of the same information from UM Reports.

Graduate progress policies

Tina Falkner reminded the group that regarding full time equivalency courses (8333 and 8444), it is expected that students are only taking these courses if they have completed everything but their final milestone.

Tina Falkner asked the group for their feedback on a proposed draft of the degree progress standards policy. Someone asked how the submission of a program form will be noted in PeopleSoft; previously, this was done by the Graduate School. Tina replied that this is a procedural issue; once the program form procedure(s) have been determined, they can be linked to the policy. But procedures and policy will be separate from now on. Sue Van Voorhis noted that PCAS might assist with this in the future; Frank Blalark agreed. Other highlights of the discussion are as follows:

Master's programs

- Regarding the time limit for earning the Master's degree, the proposed language states that the limit is based on the student's initial enrollment in a program (not including transfer work). Students who switch programs will "reset" their time-to-completion "clock."
- It was noted that some programs do include a student's non-degree coursework as part of time to completion.

- It was noted that time to degree for dual degree students should be more specifically addressed in the policy.
- It was noted that in the section regarding S/N grading, there is no mention of international coursework that is graded differently than A-F.
- It was noted that the proposed language about S/N grades not being counted as part of a student's permissible credits seems too punitive.
- Under final exam committee section, it was suggested that the language regarding an adviser "always" sitting on the final exam committee be changed to "may sit." This would align better with current practice.
- Departments reserve the right to grant an exception to the time limit; how communication about (or approval of) these extension of these exceptions will be coordinated with the college is still an open question.

Doctoral programs

- The proposed policy allows for the possibility of a retake of final exams; this is not current practice.
- More clarification was requested regarding time limits for students who earn their Master's on the way to a PhD, including students who stop a program at the Master's level and re-start later.
- Students who stop a PhD program and intend to return apply for a leave of absence.
- It is **not** the assumption that students who are approved for readmission to a program are also approved for a time extension (these are two separate processes).
- Some departments allow students to switch between to programs (i.e., change major emphasis) and restart their time to completion.
- The proposed policy requires students to have a 3.0 GPA in order to complete their final milestone; this is a change from current practice.

Once approved, the policy will apply to all students. Extensions can be granted; it has not been determined how the extension process will work (i.e., coordination of approvals between departments and colleges).

Degree program form discussion, part 1

Frank Blalark thanked all those who participated in two sessions regarding the degree program. The current degree program form that was approved by the Graduate School has sections for course work, adviser and committee information, and is also used to declare a minor. Practices differ between departments as to whether a student completes this form at the beginning of their program, at the end, or at some point in-between. Practice also differs regarding who fills out the form. A student may complete the form independently; in consultation with his or her adviser; or the DGS Assistant may handle the entire form.

It is proposed that the future process for gathering this information will be best served by breaking the form into at least three sections: adviser designation or change, coursework planning, and committees.

There are different tools that could be used to aid coursework planning, including the APAS audit currently used for undergraduate students, Graduation Planner, or the self-service functionality in PeopleSoft. It is possible that different tools might be available to complete different parts of these three sections. Ideally, there would be a tool that could accommodate the different processes that are currently established within programs.

Someone asked if it would be possible to create a tool that would allow students to enter in coursework that could then be submitted for approval; this should be possible. To help simplify the approval process, approvers would likely fall into either (or both) a DGS “bucket” or an advising “bucket.” The approval could happen at different points during the year—or the student’s tenure in the program—depending on the program’s needs. Any “auditing” of the student’s declaration of proposed coursework will take place automatically. That is, the courses students’ propose will be automatically compared with the courses they actually register for.

Frank Blalark also noted that transfer credits will likely be brought over as blanket credits. Sue Van Voorhis reminded the group that the University does not transcript specific course information from outside institutions; only credit totals are displayed on the transcript.

Programs that currently require the student to complete the form twice because they’re automatically earning a Master’s with their PhD will have to be looked at individually.

Someone asked if there would be the ability to see whether or not a student would want specific credits included as outside credits; this would be possible. Instructor information could also be included.

Stacia Madsen asked how DGS’ for minors would be involved in the review and approval process. Frank Blalark replied that there would be different processes for those programs that want a minor DGS to have oversight or approval rights.

Linda Lindholm asked if it is possible that different approaches would be available for different units, depending on what their needs are. Frank Blalark replied that this should be possible. Sue Van Voorhis noted that it is likely we will not be able to meet everyone’s needs, and that there will need to be some areas where there is a consensus about the best approach for all.

Genny Rosing asked about the implications for reporting if different tools are used. Frank Blalark replied that ultimately, all of the data would be in one place.

Report on future functions in Graduate School, ASR, colleges, programs

Frank Blalark stated that different colleges are going to require different levels of centralized services, depending on their programs and current organizational structure. The current plan is to work with each college individually to determine what is needed in order to completely “divorce” the college from the Graduate School. The Hubert Humphrey Institute will serve as the pilot program. The following areas will be addressed:

- Forms needed by the college

- Change of status requirements
- Readmit process
- Degree progress

Frank reminded the group that decisions will be made at the local level regarding curriculum and admissions. Not every college is going to use every form; however, no college should be creating their own forms to support processes related to graduate education. The goal is to provide individual solutions for each college, one at a time.

Someone noted that the original goal of the transformation was to elevate the quality of graduate education; how can we be sure that quality will increase when each college is going to be allowed to have their own solutions? Given resource constraints, it is possible that some colleges will focus more on decreasing the quantity of work they are required to do, rather than focusing on the oversight required to improve the quality. Frank Blalark responded that improving the quality of graduate education is a metric that rests at the collegiate level. Many of the decisions that speak to quality are currently happening at the local level; Academic Support Resources is only working to facilitate the work and decisions that are already happening at the local level.

Sue Van Voorhis noted that Academic Support Resources' role in the transformation is to improve student services. In short, the goal is to eliminate the runaround. Issues related to quality are bigger than this goal.

Registration exceptions best practices discussion

This item was deferred until the August meeting.